



Malawi Class and Landscape



First, I couldn't resist the picture of a storm rolling in one morning in Malawi. Malawi's landscape is stunning and I may throw in random pictures from the trip in the next few updates just to share them with you.

Second, class. It was utterly enjoyable. We taught the Old Testament books of Ruth and Jonah in order to reinforce the principles my colleague, Ethan, and his teams had previously taught for understanding and communicating the narrative portions of Scripture. Ethan is uniquely tuned-in to the Malawian cohort's struggle to track with our rather aggressive pace. He made this judgment call out of concern that jumping to Old Testament Poetry without the confidence that the trainees understood the previous course would undermine our goals with the trainees. Ethan is one of TLI's longest-standing staff members who has many years of field experience prior to TLI. It was really helpful for me, in many ways still a newbie by comparison, to not only be on a trip I was not leading but to join a trip led by someone much further down the road than me. I was helped immensely by his sensitivity to the trainees' comprehension and his bold move to deviate from our normal pattern. It turned out to be a wise plan for the trip!



Ethan and I co-taught the course. We decided on this to give me Monday and Tuesday to do a lot of observation and relationship building before teaching the Jonah portion Wednesday through Friday. Ethan and our two other teammates are regulars to this training site. Having two days to observe how they have adapted to the unique setting in Malawi was really helpful. As you can see in the pictures, our days together consisted of walking through the story of Jonah carefully as a class and spending a lot of time in small groups rereading the story, growing in the practice of making simple observations, asking questions that the text itself compels us to ask, searching for answers within the text itself and making theological connections when appropriate, and thinking deeply about how the story and its parts should affect us and our congregations today. Each group would then share their discoveries with the class. We would interact together as a class around each group's comments.

When Ethan asked the class Monday morning how many knew the story of Ruth, three of our twelve trainees raised their hand. A few more raised their hand when I asked the same question Wednesday regarding Jonah. This means about half of my class was unfamiliar with one of the most familiar Old Testament stories to many of us. What a privilege to spend three long days with these eager servants of God in the four chapters of Jonah. I am hopeful our team was helpful and that the trainees went back to their homes and ministries a little further along in their understanding of, and love for, God and his Word.



Respond and Encourage

Taking a second to respond to this update makes a big difference for Rudolphs with TLI.



Leave an encouraging message

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