



Dear friends,

February 25, 2017

I have now been in the Philippines for over a month! I can't decide whether I feel like I just arrived or like I've been here forever. Either way, it's been pretty great.

Almost all my time so far is spent teaching, lesson planning, and grading. I just finished up teaching Isaiah in my bible class. Each week, I have the students read a selection of chapters from the bible and journal on them, writing about things they like or dislike and questions they have about the passage. Marking those journals is my favourite part of the class as they often have wonderful insights and questions. Here are some of my favourite comments they have had:

- "While I was reading I felt so sad for the Lord because the temple was broken by the Babylonions that was made by Solomon son of David." [2 Kings 25]
- "God is saying that He will rebuild from the ashes. This can relate to a lot of people including me, because whenever you are hurt sometimes you feel torn but God builds and plants a seed from your ashes." [Isaiah 6]
- "I like how God just keeps talking to Isaiah. He even gives him a name for the baby. I like how he said 'with his strong hand on me.' God is just so amazzzzing." [Isaiah 8]
- "It made me think that I also want to listen [to] God's voice, because sometimes I'm confused if it's God's voice or if it's my voice." [Isaiah 9]
- "While I was reading this chapter it made me sad because it reminded me of Jesus dying on the cross for my sin. If Jesus was beside me right now I would give him a big hug and say to Him thank-you Jesus for all the things you have done for us." [Isaiah 53]
- "It was the story when Jesus was crucified because of us, because he loves us. I learned and heard about this story a lot of times, but when I read it I learn it and feel different because God teaches me everything new." [Mark 15]

A couple weeks ago was our Middle School Outdoor Education week. We took all the Middle School kids out to Taal, where we hiked a volcano, went snorkeling and scuba diving, and learned about God and his creation! I led a squad of twelve Grade 6 boys. We called ourselves the "Vesuvius Vipers." It was great to see them grow and bond throughout the week.



My Outdoor Ed squad of twelve wonderful Grade 6 boys!

At the end of the third day of Outdoor Ed, we had a chapel service in which the speaker talked about hiding *in* God instead of hiding *from* God. She ended the service by giving time to quietly pray or confess to one another. I saw some of my boys go off to a corner of the room together. When I went to check in on them, I found them all crying and praying together about their sin, God's grace, and their family members who are not believers. It was amazing to see God working within my squad.



Our entry in the sandcastle competition. We created a massive viper watching as Mount Vesuvius erupted and destroyed the city of Pompeii.

In two weeks, the quarter is ending and we will have a week without school for March Break. Most of the teachers here go on vacation during March Break, either travelling somewhere in the Philippines or to a nearby country in Asia. However, I have decided to stay here as I want to spend the time preparing my classes. Next quarter I'm teaching Apologetics and Salvation and I haven't put much thought into it yet.

Adjustment to the Philippines has been good. My house is mostly furnished now which makes life a lot easier. I borrowed a table and some chairs and purchased a futon couch, an oven, a washing machine, and a bookcase. It goes a long way to making it feel like home! I also now have functional internet in my home. Now I can Skype!

I do still have a lot of things to learn though! Last month I had one shocking incident when a colony of ants started living in my bed! Fortunately, my neighbours helped take care of me and gave me ant poison and a change of sheets. The other missionaries here are very generous and kind and I've managed to make a few friends. Which is great as I still feel like a child who doesn't know how to do simple things like pay the water bill or use public transportation.

Here are some ways you can pray for me during these next few weeks:

- Please pray for my students. After Outdoor Ed, I had my grade 6 boys fill out a reflection survey, talking about what they learned and how they want to continue growing in their faith. Two of the students wrote that they wanted me to mentor them and twelve of them expressed interest in joining or starting a Bible Study. I'm not sure what either of these things will look like but I'm thankful for their eagerness to learn more about God.
- I'm still trying to find a church to attend regularly. I'm getting sick of not knowing where I'm going to church each week so I'm going to choose one and attend there regularly. Please pray for God's guidance and patience in this.
- Despite learning a lot, there are many things I don't know how to do here and the independence is getting to me. Please pray that God gives me courage to try new things and patience with my inability to do the things I want to.
- I've been here for almost two weeks now. So far I've had few problems with loneliness or culture shock but I expect it will start coming soon. Please pray that God keeps me focused on him as my strength.
- Faith Academy is looking for a lot of new staff members for next year. Please pray that God provides the staff we need. I'm attaching their staff needs to this email. Please consider whether you or someone you know may be being called to come serve God here in the Philippines.

Thank-you so much for your support and your prayer. I couldn't do this without you and am very grateful for the community back home that God has given me. As always, if there is anything I can do to pray for you, please let me know!

God's Blessings,

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