



How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Romans 10:14

My last night in Liquidambo I was blessed to have the opportunity to actually share a message with the people of Liquidambo in Spanish. I focused the sermon on Luke 12 where Jesus is telling his disciples not to worry about the things of this life. At first, when preparing the message it seemed a difficult topic to preach on. Here in the States telling people not to worry about clothes or food doesn't seem too much of a challenge. They might not be able to afford what they want, but in many ways basic needs are met. How do I tell this to people, many of whom while I'm speaking, aren't wearing shoes and are worried about their harvest and whether or not they'll have food tomorrow?



When wrestling with the Word I realized that it doesn't matter if you have a lot of money or a little, people still fret about these things daily. When looking deeper into the issue we find that it's ultimately *death* that makes us worry. What happens if we don't have clothes or food? We die, right! This is our true concern. Christ addresses this in saying "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?" The good news of the Gospel is that Christ defeated death. In the text it even says that our Father is *pleased* to give us the kingdom. When we recognize every good gift is from Him and that He is in control we are free to fully live and bring glory to Him.



Our last week in Guatemala we held the inauguration for the first phase of the church in San Antonio. The morning of the inauguration we ran into a major traffic jam due to a huge landslide covering the road. Not being sure how long it would take to clear, we took dirt roads for three hours to advance maybe 10 minutes down the normal road. But we made it in "time." All the villagers had decorated the ground with pine needles and were very excited. That afternoon we held games for the kids and gave out prizes. The

inauguration was a joyous event! They held a ribbon cutting and everybody walked in singing "When the Saints Go Marching in." We then prayed and dedicated the building to His use. The service ended up lasting over three hours. I was able to share a bit as well during the service. I spoke of the importance of being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance. I reminded them that at the start of the summer there was no church in "our" plans. And now they have a church! I also spoke on how God uses other people to answer prayers and meet needs through the prompting of the Holy Spirit; their church being evidence. After the service we all enjoyed tamales made by the villagers.



Leaving San Antonio was exceptionally difficult! During my time there I had made many genuine

relationships. As I was leaving, many of the kids handed me many homemade cards expressing their appreciation and sorrow that I was leaving. Veronica wrote me a letter that cut to my heart! It was touching to see the fruit of my time there and the relationships made. I now wait for the day that I am able to go back and see them again!



I had many mixed feelings leaving Guatemala. I was eager and excited to see friends and family whom I haven't seen in awhile, but in many ways Guatemala was becoming home. I knew it was going to be hard to say goodbye, but I rest in the fact that the work done in Guatemala is not temporal. I don't see this as an end of a journey, but a transition to what comes next on the quest Christ set before me.

I arrived home several days before Thanksgiving and it was great to see family and friends. I stayed in Sacramento for the holidays and moved back to Reno full time the beginning of January. Now the question everyone is asking, "What's next?" I am still trying to discern exactly where God is leading me. In many ways I believe that could mean missions full time or some other form of ministry in the future. While on the mission I never felt like I was supposed to be doing anything else. So we'll see where I end up. God knows! Right now I am focusing on my relationships here, working, and serving in the church. I am also taking a class at a local Bible school on Acts and Pauline Literature and am excited for what the semester has in store.

I received a call last week (Jan 27th) from Robin and Steve who returned to Guatemala mid January after their time in the States. On their first day back to Liquidambo they hiked to Milia's village (the malnourished girl we had been helping) to see how she was doing. Milia had gotten very sick while we were gone and died within minutes of Robin and Steve arriving. Hearing the news was devastating! Especially being back in the States feeling helpless and wishing I was back in Guatemala.



My last day seeing Milia before leaving I had gotten to see her walk and was blessed to witness one of her first smiles in months. We even got her to giggle when we tickled her, something we had not seen in all the months working with her. Milia's mom said she continued to do well after we had left for a while. Milia was able to chase after her puppy and she even had told her mom that she was going to be as big as her house one day. We give thanks for the time we had with Milia and trust in God's sovereignty. Because of our interactions with Milia we now have relationships with people in a different part of the village we had never known prior, and trust that God is still at work in their hearts in a mighty way!

I am excited to see how God will work through the ministry this year while I'm back in the States. I know I'm where I need to be and I see my time back in the States as further preparation for what comes next. I look forward to several short-term mission trips this year. The first mission opportunity is a two-week mission trip to Sighișoara, Romania February 11th-25th. There is a small team of five people who are planning on going. There is an orthopedic surgeon named Don and his wife, my friend Brian who is going to help with construction, Robin an RN who I lived with in Guatemala and myself. We are planning on holding four medical clinics in Gypsy villages as well as helping with some construction projects. I am excited to see how God will work on this trip. It would be great for people to commit to prayer faithfully while we're on the trip. This is a very important aspect to any mission and a very real way to be a part of it. Having a community of supporters backing the mission is very important to me and is the way I believe God designed missions to operate. I will write an update letter on our time in Romania when I return.



Taking stitches out of Icidro, the leader of Liquidambo, who was attacked with a machete for no apparent reason.



My attempt at making a handmade tortilla and it's actually round! It looks easier than it really is...Carmen was so impressed she had me make the rest of the tortillas.

Prayer Requests and Thanksgivings:

- Thanksgiving for my time in Guatemala
- Praise God for the ways He provided for needs while abroad
- Praise Him for our safety while serving overseas
- Glory to God for the lives He touched and the people who have their eternities sealed by the blood of Christ
- Pray that the Holy Spirit is preparing the hearts of the people in Romania for our time there
- Prayer for the Romanian team in that we go forth unified and in boldness as witnesses of Christ
- For wisdom and compassion as we hold the medical clinics and that we can be vehicles of God's mercy
- Continued prayer for Strong Tower Ministry throughout the coming year

Thanks again for all of the prayers, support and encouragement! It truly is a privilege to serve our Lord in this manor and to share His love and grace with other. Please keep myself and the team in your prayers while we are serving in Romania. I know God hears the prayers of His children and that they're not in vain! Thanks again!

In Him,



Saying good-bye to Veronica's family! I miss them a ton and can't wait to see them again!

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Who knew?

Guatemala is the unique home to the Great Kite Festival that is held yearly on November 1 (Day of the Dead). These are all homemade kites constructed out of crepe paper and bamboo rods for support. They then attach ropes to them and several men run with it in hopes of getting the kite in the air. The only problem was that many of the kites came sporadically crashing down into the crowd nearly nailing people. There's no way this could be held in the states because there'd be way too many lawsuits. I actually caught video of a guy being taken out by a giant kite. It was pretty sweet. National Geographic was even there filming the festival too for a documentary. It was definitely an experience!