

My week began in Chalinda which is the home of William Chimcande. The church has 150 members, and he asked me to preach lessons to strengthen both the Christians and the church. I decided on a comparison between the children of Israel leaving Egypt and our own sojourn after baptism. I began with the power which baptism holds as illustrated by Paul in Romans 6:3-8 and Col 2:11-13, for it is baptism that offers the power to spiritually join us to Jesus. *"We were buried with him through baptism so that just as Christ raised from the dead even so we also might walk in newness of life."* It is through baptism that we contacted His death and were bought with His blood(Acts 20:28). It the same power that God exerted with Noah and the ark. Just as eight souls were saved through water, the true antitype that saves us is baptism. Since an *antitype* is the true spiritual reality and the type is the picture, the ark is the type(picture) of the true power of baptism. All who entered the ark were saved through water, and all who are baptized are saved through water. This was the introduction to prepare them for I Cor 10:1-13. Paul compared what Israel did when they Egypt with Moses to enter the wilderness with Christians who left the world and now strangers and pilgrims. Paul began this comparison with baptism. He called Israel's passage through the Red Sea being baptized into Moses. Hence, just as Israel was baptized into Moses we are also baptized into Christ(Gal 3:27). Even after the ten plagues and Pharaoh sending them away, they were still under his power for he was coming with his army to bring them back. But once they passed through the Red Sea the power of Pharaoh was destroyed and they were truly free. In exactly the same way, were slaves to sin and are now free(Rom 6:15-23).

Yet with all this power, they all fell in the wilderness. Of the 603,550 men who left Egypt(Num 1:46), only two(Joshua and Caleb - Num 14:28-30) entered the promised land. They fell in the wilderness because of sin, lack of faith, stubborn rebellion, and lack of reverence to God. Paul sternly warned that we face the same temptations and the same dangers. It did not profit them because of lack of faith. *(For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard. Heb 4:2).* So now it is our turn. We have to take all the gifts and blessings God has given to us through Jesus death on the cross and be faithful till death(Rev 2:10).

I concluded with God's advice to Joshua. Even with all that he had already done to prove himself God still gave him great wisdom that led to his salvation and will for ours too.

*Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Josh 1:7-9*

If we want to leave this life faithful, we need to heed these words. We must never stop observing God's word and never turn to the right or to the left. We must never let that word depart from our mouth, but talk about it all day long to others either in evangelism or edification. We must never stop thinking about God's word, but meditate on it every waking moment in the day and in the night. By always thinking and talking we will be able to observe to do all that is written in it. Joshua did exactly that and at the end of his life had words of wisdom we too should heed.

*Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh 24:14-15*

The sermon was well received and I believe it will do some good.

This completed my time with William so the next day I drove the two of us back to Madisi(about one hour) where we caught a minibus to Mponela and left our baggage. We then journeyed to Njinge for classes on Monday and Tuesday. The minibus was filled to the point where we had to cram ourselves in. A woman was sitting in front of us holding a very unhappy chicken who made noises I had never heard from a chicken before. I have seen them bring goats, full containers of diesel and petrol, 50 kg bags of maize, etc. but this was the first chicken. After finishing in Njinge we headed to Dowa North for two days. I left William and began

with a new translator for two days. We spent the night in his home, and it was back to a grass roof and bamboo mat. Chimcande left me with the motorcycle and I had a much larger man guiding me back. He took me back a different way, climbing steeper hills and much rockier terrain. It was a difficult ride and we nearly fell in the sand several times. I was a happy man to arrive back at Madisi and turn over that motorcycle.

Later that evening, I found myself sitting on the back of a chabaza in the dark on bumpy dirt roads. When going somewhere too far to walk, but with no minibus service, there are several waiting with bicycles that have a padded seat behind the regular seat that also has handles for your hands and pegs for your feet. I don't like it because I am so much heavier than they are that they find it harder to move with me. I especially didn't like it at night in the dark when you could not see the bumps. But we made it to a minibus and were soon on our way. We did not return to Mponela until very late.

Due to a miscommunication, I had nowhere to preach on Friday. So I took the time to go to Lilongwe to get another 30 days. They only give 30 days at the airport, so you have to go the immigration and pay for extra time. It always a long ordeal, but the computers had been down for two days so the lines were even longer. We then returned to the Bible society to pick up another 340 Bibles.

I am preparing to leave in a few hours for the capital city of Lilongwe where I will be preaching for a large congregation in the city. This is the first time I have preached in a city congregation and I am looking forward to seeing what differences there might be. I'm not looking for padded pews, but am hoping for a little more comfortable arrangements, but will just keep my mind open and prepared for whatever may come.

Thanks for your prayers and for taking the time to keep up with my activities.

Your brother in Christ,

Alan