

Introduction:

This week began by an opportunity to preach in a church in the capital city of Lilongwe. Although the building was large, there were no chairs on the concrete floor, so they spread out an old tarp and about 300 people were sitting on the floor. Usually they have a few chairs and they allow me to sit upright, but in this case, I was sitting on the floor with everyone else. Although they can sit for hours on the floor, I find my muscles beginning to cramp after about half an hour.

Like most of the congregations, they wanted to hear the lessons on life after death and the family. So they had me preach an hour, allow the people to stand and sing one song, then preach another hour. After I finished, they stood and sang a song and immediately sat back down on the floor for another hour and a half for the invitation and the Lord's Supper. In all they sat for about four hours on the concrete floor without complaint or even discomfort. While I had 1.5 hours and was very uncomfortable.

Monday was a day to do errands so we went into Lilongwe. We had a lot to do so I was dropped off at the Passport office to renew my passport. After I finished I walked into town to do some errands while William Chitsulo took the vehicle to do other business. One wrong turn led me into the open markets where local vendors sell produce and used goods. It was exactly what you would imagine a third world market to look like. It was very crowded and a little uncomfortable being the only white person in the entire market. I worked my way to the south and west where I knew the businesses of town were located. I found a 100' footbridge to cross the river and started to cross it when I was told it was a private bridge. When I asked what that meant he told me I needed to pay 20 kwacha (less than 3 cents). I gladly paid the money and soon found my way back to town.

Tuesday morning we began our trip to the next village. None of us knew how far away it was so we left a little late, thinking it was an hour or maybe a little more. After an hour and a half, I asked the preacher we had picked up to guide us if we were getting close and he said we were barely halfway. Since these are dirt roads that are both dusty and very bumpy, this was not good news. We finally arrived tired and stiff from the three hour drive and began classes immediately and taught for the rest of the day.

We had not been told what the arrangements would be for the night, so after the lesson we went to a mud floored hut for dinner where we sat on the floor on a mat. While there we were told we would take our baths which turned out to be a grass covered enclosure with rocks to stand on and open to the sky. With the wind blowing through the grass, it was a little cold but I was grateful to wash of the dust and sweat from the day. After dark we drove to another building where we were to sleep. As always I am filled with some concern wondering what type of building we would be given. This time it was a mud hut with a mud floor, smelling strongly of a musty odor. The room we were given was not level. With a 2" drop from head to my feet as well as a slight lean to the side. Fortunately it had a window that brought in fresh air.

That morning we were told the lessons would be cut short by one day due to a funeral that would be conducted and would require the attendance of all the brethren. This is their custom whenever someone in the village dies and the chief is very strict about it. So we spent a full day preaching and teaching, finishing everything by four, when began the three hour drive back to Lilongwe.

Our final three days for the week were spent in a small village to the West of Lilongwe. The first day was a smaller crowd so we met in their church building with mud pews, a mud pulpit and a grass roof. I am sorry I haven't sent pictures this year. I forgot my camera charger and could not get one here so I will use some of the pictures I took with my phone and post them after I get home.

The second day we sat outside on the school grounds for the entire day. We had to keep

shifting our seating so I could stand in the shade and not get sunburned. We ate lunch with the head teacher of the primary school(grades 1 - 8). He was both teacher, principal and superintendent. I am excited to be entering my last week and looking forward to coming home.

Thanks for all the prayers. It has been a safe and productive trip.