

*Our roadside banner
for our Gospel Meeting*



Tom Rainwater
126 Jay St.
Chittenango, NY 13037
(315) 687-9135
therainwaters@verizon.net
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Dear brethren in Christ,

Greetings from the Empire State! Due to an influx of northern air, we went from unseasonably warm weather to very cool weather this past week. In fact we had snow flurries on Mother's Day which, according to the locals, hadn't happened in 14 years. I'll be glad when the overnight frost warnings are over so it won't be necessary to protect our flowers and other plants.

Things are going well in the church here. We are running continual ads in the local papers. The ads are rotated every week from offering our Bible correspondence course to offering a home Bible study to offering answers to any Bible questions people might have. So far, two people have contacted me from the ads. One elderly gentleman from the Rome, NY, area is asking me all kinds of questions. It is refreshing to see someone interested in learning more about the Bible. I hope our discussion through the mail will generate a face-to-face study.

My wife Sonia and I continue to study weekly with Dave and Raegan Roy of Waterloo, NY. They are a young Christian couple with 5 children who need a lot of encouragement and are willing to learn and grow. It is always uplifting being with them.

It seems like we are making progress with our neighbors. As I mentioned before, one of them is coming to study with our group at our house every Wednesday evening. She brought a friend with her once. We are going through the book of Acts with emphasis on the plan of salvation and the work of the New Testament church. Other of our neighbors have expressed interest in coming on Wednesday night to see what we are doing. It seems that since the one neighbor is coming, the others have become more curious about what we are doing in our mid-week studies. One of the families in our neighborhood is having problems as the husband is neglecting his wife and children. My wife Sonia has been to visit the women in that family almost every day trying to encourage them. The mother told Sonia a couple of days ago that they have been praying about what to do and plan to start meeting with us for Bible study. I hope and pray that she will follow through with that. Another neighbor said that he is interested in Bible study but wants to wait until Spring. Aside from the fact that it is Spring already, I hope he will have more urgency about wanting to learn more about the Bible. We have lived in this neighborhood for over 4 years. Though our neighbors warmly welcomed us to the area and have always been very nice, it has taken this long for them to begin to trust us in religious matters. I'm sure there are lessons in this about the importance of persistence, patience, and the need to constantly be a good example to others.

Our gospel meeting is May 21-23 with Lee Tosti, who preaches at the congregation near Watertown. We are advertising this in the newspapers and putting up two banners by the road and highway. We have postcards to hand out to people that advertise the meeting and provide info about the church here. Every gospel meeting is an evangelistic event for us, so please pray that we will find more people willing to study the Gospel.

In past letters, I've given pointers about "fishing for men." In this letter I have one point for you to consider: Whenever you are talking to someone about the truth, don't let the conversation turn into an argument. Yes, we have the responsibility to state and defend the truth, but it's important how we react when a person first makes a statement of error. If we react with an exasperated or strong, "That's not right!" or "You're wrong!", then we immediately put him on the defensive. If challenged in such a way, people usually feel a need to stick to what they've said though they might not completely understand it. It becomes more a matter of pride than conviction. Consider the ways Jesus reacted to questions even when asked by an unfriendly audience:


(1) Sometimes He would answer by asking a simpler question. (cf. Matthew 12:24-26; 21:23-25). This was done to focus the discussion in the right direction and engage the person's intellect and reason rather than his pride. When a person correctly answers the more obvious question (cf. Matthew 21:31; Mark 12:16; Luke 14:5), then he will feel more compelled to have to accept the conclusion that follows.

(2) Sometimes Jesus answered with a parable. Proper illustrations are effective in explaining something clearly that the person is having a hard time understanding. Jesus often used physical illustrations to open people's eyes to spiritual truths.

(3) Sometimes Jesus referred to a relevant passage of scripture that the person should already clearly understand. (Matthew 12:2-8; 19:3-6; 22:42-46). If the person is honest and believes that the Bible is the word of God, then he will see that his incorrect view is not in harmony with plain Scripture. If at that point, he still resists, then he is not arguing with you, he is at odds with God. Whatever the situation, speak to everyone calmly, respectfully, and with love.

Thanks again for supporting me in the work here in central New York. Your interest, your assistance, and your prayers are greatly appreciated. I could not be in New York without your help. Keep praying for us and the other small congregations in NY State that love the lost and want to be a shining beacon of light to them for truth. May God be with you in all you do!

Your brother in Christ,



Tom Rainwater