

Dear Friends,

Where has the time gone? Just like that, the Christmas season is upon us and the fall semester is almost over. Let me update you on how I've spent these past few months...

It always seems more difficult to meet students during the second semester. By now, they've found their regular routines and groups of friends. Some who showed interest in the gospel at first had changes of heart over summer break. So we focus our energies on those who are still around, available, and open to learning more about Jesus Christ.

I've been following up two "seekers" this semester. Both are freshmen that we met through mission teams this summer. Every Thursday at lunch, our team gathers in the Kobe University cafeteria for an informal group Bible study. Because **Kazu** and **Atsumu** often come on Thursdays, I also invited them to meet up with me one-on-one.

**Kazu** came to Summer Camp in August and has visited church a few times this semester. Before we started our weekly Bible study, a teammate shared a booklet with him called *Knowing God Personally*. At the time, Kazu prayed to receive Christ, but through our ongoing conversations it's become clear that he still doesn't believe...yet.

Last week we spent an hour discussing the question, "Why did Jesus have to die?" In the end, it boiled down to two points that Kazu still hasn't grasped completely: 1) we are sinners, and our sin is serious enough to deserve death; and 2) because God loves us, Christ died in our place to save us from that sin. It may take some more time, but thankfully, it seems like those truths are starting to sink in.

**Atsumu** seems to have a better handle on the gospel than Kazu. But there are other factors that keep him from believing it. For one, he said he feels at peace when he's at the altar for his deceased father. Although he hasn't said it, I'm sure Atsumu has thought about where his father might



Enjoying fall in the Kobe mountains!



**Atsumu** (far right) and the group after one of our Thursday Bible studies



**Kazu** introducing himself at our Friday night chapel a few weeks ago

be if the gospel is true. He worries how his single mother might respond if her only son were to become a Christian. So for now, sadly, the cost of following Jesus is too great.

Besides prayer and God's grace, what I think Atsumu needs most is Japanese Christian community. There, he has people who share his background and have wrestled with similar questions of faith. There he has relationships that can support him if things get rough at home. Next week might be our last Bible study, but there are still chances for Atsumu to find a good church this Christmas. Please pray that God would lead him to one he can call home.

Besides Kazu and Atsumu, this semester I've also been discipling a Christian grad student named **Atsushi**. What an encouragement meeting a young Japanese Christian who really wants to grow! Together we've been learning about how to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. I've also been challenging him to take steps to share his faith and make disciples himself. Recently, we went out to talk with people about Jesus at the Kobe University School Festival.

So most of my time on campus this semester has been spent with these three men, and I'm very grateful for how I've seen them grow—even when it hasn't always been in my timing. Now Christmas is right around the corner, and it's the best chance we have all year to introduce Japanese people to Jesus. Besides initiating spiritual conversations on campus, we'll be hosting a couple large outreach events this month. I'll be giving the gospel message at our Christmas party on **December 13th**. Please pray that many Japanese students might come to know the Savior this holiday season.

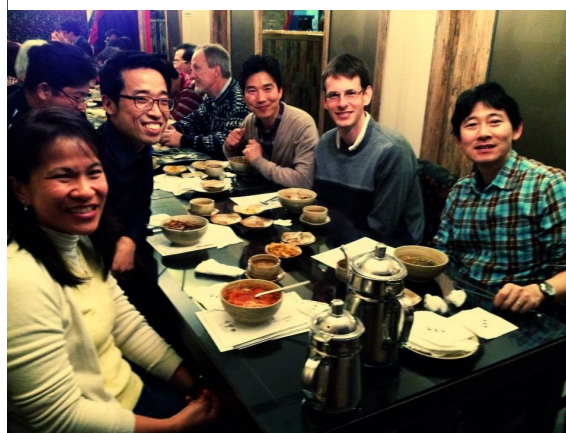
From **December 14th-January 16th**, we're returning to the States for some much needed R&R with family after a busy year of ministry. We'll also be stopping by many of our partnering churches and reconnecting with supporters during our month back. We hope to see you very soon!

Merry Christmas,

*Ryan & Jungshin*



**Atsushi** shares the gospel at the School Festival last month; it was his first time talking about Christ with a stranger!



Dinner with staff at regional campus leader's training in Seoul, **11/22-28**

### **PRAISES & PRAYERS**

- *Praise* that **Kazu** and **Atsumu** are slowly taking steps toward Christ, and that **Atsushi** is growing as a disciple!
- *Pray* that many Japanese students might receive Christ through events on **December 13th and 20th**
- *Pray* for our time reconnecting with family and ministry partners in the U.S. Here's our travel schedule: **12/14-25 (ID)**, **26-30 (So Cal)**, **12/31-1/7 (VA)**, **8-10 (MN)**, **11-16 (Bay Area)**

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