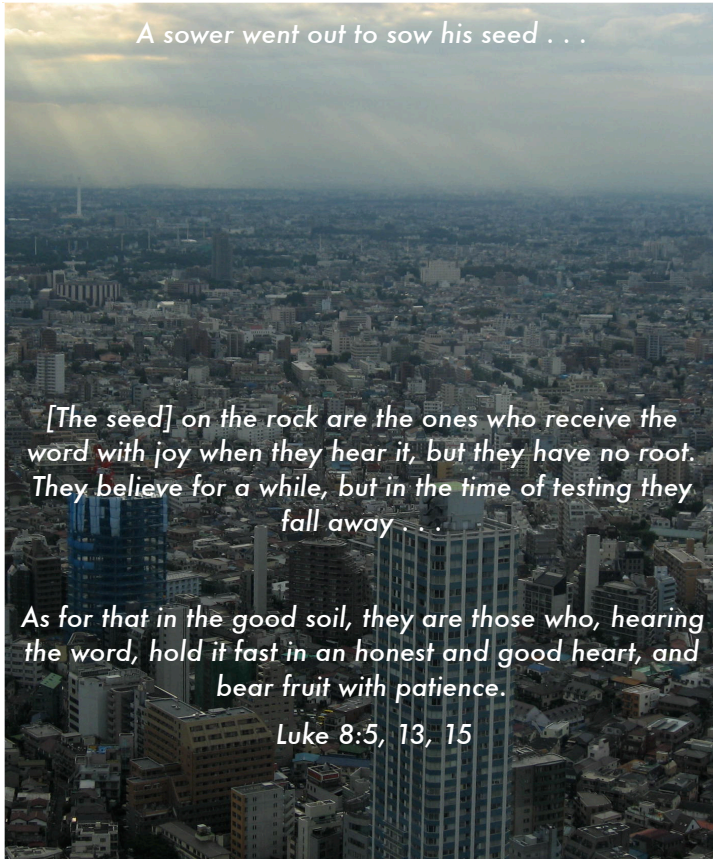


Jessica Joy's Japan Journal

November 1, 2007



(from top to bottom: Junko from Tsuda University, Yuri from ICU, ICUHS Manga Messiah Bible study, Mari and I right after she prayed to receive Jesus!, Halloween party, students at the Halloween Party)

Sowing seed (update of October)

Has it already been a month since my team's arrived? And yet it seems longer than a month since so much has happened! For now, our team's focus is on Hitotsubashi, Gakugei, Gaidai, International Christian University and Tsuda Women's College. Plus at ICU High School, we started an English lunchtime and an after-school Bible study. During the after-school Bible study, a Japanese student will read a short section from the Bible in Japanese and then in English we role-play through the same passage using the *Manga Messiah* - the New Testament in Japanese comic form. I wish you could be there to hear it! It's one of my favorite times of the week. To reach the sports fans of Japan (it was playoff time for baseball teams in both Japan and America) for the past couple of weeks, we gave away DVDs made by Athletes in Action of Red Sox players' testimonies (subtitled in Japanese) and the *Power for Living* book produced and promoted largely by the national champion team Sapporo fighters' baseball manager Tray Hillman. And of course, in lieu of Halloween, we threw a big Halloween party where about 80 new students came from all over and heard about Jesus in a fun and safe environment. We played carnival games, ate lots of candy, took pictures, had a slideshow, costume contest, had Jonathan (the team leader for the other American team here) give his testimony based on the party's theme "The Masks We Wear" and discussed his talk in small groups . . . Everything was a huge success on multiple levels! Students gave us a lot of positive feedback - surprisingly many of the students said Jonathan's story/the small group times were their favorite part of the night!

Receiving with joy (praise the Lord!)

"What? Jesus came back to life after three years? Why?"

"No, not three years, three days."

"Three years? He really came back to life?"

"No, three days!"

© This is not an unusual conversation in Japan when explaining the gospel to students. But it amazes me how many students who have gone to Christian schools or even church for most of their life in Japan also don't know about Jesus. The above conversation was one that Laura and I had with Mari, an International Christian University High School student. Mari's been coming to our English lunchtimes at ICUHS and she also came to our first after-school Bible study. But it wasn't until Laura and I had dinner with her before going to our Halloween party that we really got to talk with Mari to see where she was at with Jesus. Though Mari knew Bible songs from church, had memorized a couple of verses and had taken a Christianity class at her high school from a Christian teacher, she really didn't know anything about Jesus. As Laura and I shared the awesome news of how Jesus came to this earth to pay for our sins so that we can have a relationship with God, we could see the dots being connected in Mari's head and the light bulbs going off. That night, on October 31st, she prayed to receive Christ with us! Praise the Lord!

Two other students from Tsuda University (a woman's college that Laura, Kelly and I started going to) and a Hitotsubashi Chinese-exchange student also prayed to invite Jesus into their lives this month with our team. I could barely believe it! I truly do give the thanks, praise and glory to God!

Rocky soil (Please pray)

As joyful as I am about our new brother and sisters in Christ, I have become more and more aware of the condition of the "soil" in Japan. It's pretty rocky here. Students who initially receive the gospel with joy often give up "Christianity" when faced with opposition from family or friends. Please pray for Mari and for the three other students as they begin their new life with Christ. Also pray for Hisako, the student from Gaidai who prayed to receive Jesus last year just as I was leaving to go back to America. She's one of the students who faced serious opposition and social pressure from her two friends to not be a Christian and told us she can't be a Christian. Please pray for her faith.

Good soil (It takes prayer to cultivate it)

Seeing the gospel take root in the hearts of students is definitely the best part of being here though. The other night Bun was at our apartment and told us how he couldn't live without Jesus or the Bible. Right now he's working at an internet cafe in Kabukicho, the worst part of Tokyo, and a lot of Japanese mafia go there. He says he thinks the mafia should receive Jesus easier than most Japanese and he wants to tell them about God but he's scared. I just love Bun's heart! He came to know Jesus through a STINTER a year and a half ago. Please pray for him and other young believers like him to keep pressing on towards Jesus. And I'll be praying for you to press on towards Jesus too!

Until the world hears,

Jessica Joy Tekawa

