

Groggs in Dominica

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Where We Are Now And A Bit About It

Physically, we're in a different village than a week ago. More specifically, we're in a housing edition on the outskirts of a village. The village and parish both go by the name, Saint Joseph, St. Joe for short.

We've had to learn different bus stops, manage an increase in bus fare since the distance from town is further, locate the nearest police station (per Jason's bail requirements) and convenience shops.

While I have no doubt that our new place is straight from the Father, we're struggling with its size. It's a two-bedroom, one-bathroom, upper apartment. There's a small balcony on the front, just big enough for my rocking chair. The front door is actually on the side of the house and the back door opens to the roof of the back part of the lower house.

When it was just the girls and I living here, the small space was nice and cozy. Hannah went to work immediately, putting shelving units and her sister's bedframes together, organizing and tidying everything. I was amazed at what she was able to accomplish in such a short time.

After the first couple of days, the girls started back into their school, and we tried to settle in and start the process of relaxing. We slowly stopped jumping at the sound of vehicles passing or people talking or walking nearby.

Since we're in a housing edition, there are more people and activity

than where we were living. The longer we're here, the more having friendly people around has a comforting feeling to it.

A couple of days ago I sent the girls less than a block away to a house with a little store residing under it. I wanted to see if they had lemon juice. While there, they met a 10-year-old girl who offered the limes on her mother's tree. The next day, she showed up at our door with rocks she'd painted. She offered them as gifts to my girls and then stayed and chatted for a while. She wanted to give us one for Nathan as well but said the paints Pastor Steve had given her were gone. I look forward to the day we can find our tote of paints and the girls can spend time painting with her.

This is where I say, "Remember Pastor Steve and Desire, from the last newsletter?" God wasn't done using them in our lives. You'll see I mentioned Pastor Steve had given the little girl paint. (He works at a paint store.) We're close to where he impacts his neighborhood because our apartment is the upper story of his house.

It's still under construction, but livable. "Under construction" has been the story of my life regarding abodes anyway. As I thought of Jason possibly getting bail, I was not blind to the fact that Jason could bless Pastor Steve by helping with the construction process.

Second Incarceration Roseau Jail & Stock Farm. Again.

During Jason's second incarceration, which started May

... PRAISE ...

- Jason was granted bail!!!!!!
- Continued fervent prayers of the Saints on our behalf.
- Those that have stuck by us through thick and thin. This includes several non-Believers.
- All the many ways God has shown us He is still with us and He sees, knows and cares.

... PRAYER ...

- Clarity for our lawyers regarding the upcoming Customs case.
- Confusion and disorganization for the prosecution.
- Truth and Justice to be had.
- Repentance from Sandra and Deborah.
- Peace, healing and safety for all of us. There's been a lot of trauma.
- Finances.
- Ability Jason to apply for a Work Permit and have it granted in quickly.
- Wisdom and great discernment moving forward.

4th when he was arrested by Customs, I visited him every chance I could. I wasn't able to visit him in the Roseau jail, but once he was back on remand in prison, I could go every Wednesday. On the first visit, I took all three girls, on the next two visits I only took Hannah. For me to take Eliyah would require making an appointment and getting her visit approved by the prison Superintendent since she's a minor.

I thought I had accomplished that on the Tuesday before our first visit but since I couldn't get anyone to answer the prison phone before we arrived, she wasn't approved. I didn't realize the reason for calling ahead was to make sure of the approval. The prison's website is definitely lacking in details.

But God. As the girls and I were sitting in the waiting area, knowing that only Hannah and I were going to see Jason (Gracia volunteered to stay with Eliyah so she wasn't by herself), a senior officer came in and said ALL FOUR of us could go see Jason! I didn't even ask if Eliyah could be approved. Someone took it upon themselves to do it. We were absolutely thrilled!

Let's top that off with the front gate guard that day being one of the women who work in the female section, one that I'd made friends with. Another female guard that had been nice to me during my stay, was in the visitor area. They both were pleased to see me and meet the girls. I gave them both hugs.

During this visit, and each subsequent one, we tried to keep Jason abreast of what was going on in the world and in our lives. Eliyah kept notes from World Watch, which we read to him and he'd send us home with notes he'd taken during the week. Everything that came in and out had to be searched, thoroughly read by the guards, and signed off.

After these visits, Hannah and I would walk from the prison down the hill to do some grocery shopping, then catch a bus home (first to Belfast then to St. Joe).

I realize I haven't said much about our mental, emotional, or spiritual state during this time. All of these "states of being" had already been rubbed raw during the first ordeal. There was no time for any healing, not even time to apply a bandaid, as we were thrust headlong into the second ordeal.

While I would love for our whole family to be enrolled in some serious Biblical counseling, it doesn't appear to be practical any time soon.

The girls will be traveling to the States in about three weeks for 1 or 2 months and will be receiving some much-needed TLC from family and friends. They're looking forward to being spoiled.

Remands

The Forgotten

Remand: Someone whom the court has sent back into custody to await their first hearing or next hearing. They are still innocent until proven guilty, but for some reason have not been granted bail.

This is what Jason was, a Remand. It's also what I was when in prison and Hannah and Gracia as well when they were in jail.

Stock Farm Prison has roughly 200 Remands and about 100 convicts. They are all males, of varying ages and charges. These men go before a Magistrate via the internet every seven days, only to be told they were remanded for another seven days. For some, this has happened repeatedly for years.

These men, innocent until proven guilty, are treated worse than the guilty. They stay locked in their cells for 23 hours a day. They are allowed out twice a day to shower and have about one hour of recreation time. Some have representation, some do not.

All seem to have been forgotten by the system.

May 4th – June 2nd

The Missing Month

This section should be full of legal/court proceedings. However, as Jason's current case is ongoing, we aren't allowed to discuss it.

I can discuss the things that are finalized and that includes Jason's bail. Friday, June 2nd found me at High Court, waiting anxiously for Jason's bail hearing to start. I didn't have to wait long since he was first on the list. As I stated in my update, there were a couple of tense moments when we thought the Judge may not be satisfied enough to grant bail since the prosecution was putting up such a fuss.

But God. During a one-hour break (for both the defense and prosecution to gather items needed) the Judge heard a bail case for a man accused of murder. The prosecution had no issues allowing him to be granted bail. When the Judge heard that, he railed on the prosecution, accusing them of discrimination against Jason. He told them when we came together again, they were going to drop any complaints they had against Jason getting bail.

Now that he's out, he's putting weight back on (he thinks he lost 15 to 20 pounds). He's finally started sleeping through the night for the last couple of nights but he's finding that he's very weak from a month of doing nothing.

I, however, am finding it much harder to regain a full night's sleep. I'm still having times when I find myself suddenly very sad and starting to cry. This past week I had two days where I was completely exhausted and took a couple of naps each day. I'm sure it's all part of the trauma and will just take time to heal.

Our Ministry

How to Continue and Where

For two of the groups we'd been helping with, saying school is almost out for summer break is an easy way to say that Child Evangelism Fellowship and the Christian Fellowship Club won't be meeting for a couple of months.

Jason's ministry in the prison obviously is on hold for now.

Although he was told that if he came back to teach, most of the remands would come listen, so that's a future ministry we're going to look into.

Now comes an interesting turn of events. Jason has found himself to almost be a celebrity. He's "known" by people he's never met before. Strangers are approaching him to say hi and congratulate him on being released. They want to shake his hand, wish him well, and encourage him. I've even been thanked for standing by him through all this. With each person, given the chance, he continues to touch on Christ or chaos.

We would like to get involved with Chances Children's Home, where Eliyah and Nathan were sent early on. We've already donated quite a bit of items to them. I wish we'd known about them before we moved down here, even if they're government-run.

What Lies Ahead

In this Ever-Changing World

While I probably won't declare anything with certainty anymore, unless it's already past, there are some things we're looking ahead to.

The apartment we're living in really is too small for our family. However, with our current financial state and this being the abode Jason is living in during his time on bail, we can't move anywhere else. Plus, we can't say no to a gift from God (the rent is free).

And while I realize this sounds way too close to the situation we just left, regarding construction on an abode we're living in, the current plan is for Pastor Steve and Jason to work TOGETHER in adding a room to the upper apartment. It will give us the room needed to bring Nathan back to us, Lord willing, at the end of the summer.

It will also give Jason something right up his alley to do in all his free time. He can't find paying work until he gets his work permit and he can't even apply for his work permit until the government figures out who is going to be in charge of work permits for foreigners. This has been our issue for the past year. And yes, it's still an issue.

There are people that want Jason's help with their projects but they won't be legally able to pay him. Maybe we can look into bartering.

Court Update

Current Case, Pre-Trial

Yesterday was Jason's first court appearance after being "freed" on bail. I don't think much was accomplished other than the prosecution rambling on too long. They want to combine everything into one "Grand Trial" to make things go faster. Our lawyer needs time to look over their arguments and decide what is best for us. The matter has been adjourned until July 4th.

Jason and I are both looking forward to the time we can put this whole mess behind us. I know you all are too. I've heard several times you "just want us to come home," to be safe back in the States. First, please remember that the safest place you can be is in the will of God. We must remember that the security God provides can't be shaken by anything. And while I know we can't physically leave right now since we have a matter before the

court, we don't see any leadings that would cause us to think God is done with us here. In fact, I would say we're currently seeing the opposite.

Jesus is King!

Until next time,

the **Groggs**

*When this life is over,
there will be perfect justice
done before a perfect, holy,
and righteous Judge.*

*From the deadly sword deliver
me; rescue me from the hands
of foreigners whose mouths
are full of lies, whose right
hands are deceitful.
Then our sons in their youth
will be like well-nurtured
plants, and our daughters will
be like pillars carved to adorn
a palace. Our barns will be
filled with every kind of
provision. Our sheep will
increase by thousands, by tens
of thousands in our fields; our
oxen will draw heavy loads.
There will be no breaching of
walls, no going into captivity,
no cry of distress in our
streets. Blessed is the people of
whom this is true; blessed is
the people whose God is the
Lord. ~ Psalm 144:11-15*



Sunset from our new home. God is good.