



January/February 2024

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. — 1 Corinthians 9:27

A well-maintained steel boat will last 75 years, and if the steel hull could tell the stories of her voyages and the careers of those who worked with her, I'm sure there would be some interesting volumes. Work accomplished. Storms weathered. Times at dry dock getting repairs. But the reef is no place for any boat. Those 75 years will be significantly shortened if a boat gets near the reef.



I was reminded of this truth in December when Becky and I visited the Oro Province. While traveling the sea, we came across this ship in the picture. The people who were with us had come to know this place as “The Shipwreck” and it was but a landmark along the voyage. When I asked for the story, nobody could remember how it came to be. It was just a careless moment by a captain that prematurely ended the lifecycle of this boat, and then left a hunk of metal to be observed by future generations. Despite what has been accomplished in our first 21 years of ministry here in Papua New Guinea, I pray that I will keep this body under subjection and steer my course faithfully, following Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

The 10th of January 2024 was a dark day for our city. The police effectively went on strike over a glitch in the payroll, and within two hours, looters had overrun countless stores all across the city, leaving many of them in piles of arsonist ashes. I typically do not write about dark days, but this one was particularly dark; and it exposed how closely the wickedness of sinful hearts lies just below the surface of a facade that calls itself Christian. At two points that day, I was concerned that my race on earth was complete. The Lord was gracious and chose to leave me here to continue to work. Thankfully no-one else on our ministry team was in harm's way that day; and it was only by my own decision to insert myself into a violent situation to save the lives of others that I was endangered. I must thank the Lord publicly for His grace; and thank you for your prayer on our behalf.

I'm happy to report that the church and school are spiritually healthy; and I love this ministry! We had two students get saved on the second day of the school year; and have had many new visitors in the church. Several of the church visitors are families from the school as I have been focusing on Godly Parenting. There are several families that I'm concerned for—please pray with me for their salvation and sanctification.

Sincerely,
Matt and Becky Allen