

# With Jesus on the Road to Saspán

*In a tiny village on a mountain in Guatemala, I gained a better understanding of how Jesus paved the way for us to know the Father.*

Like so many other poor communities in Guatemala, the village of Saspán is way off the beaten path. To get there you first must travel on a two-lane highway from Chiquimula, then turn onto a one-lane dirt road that winds precariously for two miles up a mountain. The scenery is spectacular, but if you look too long you might drive right off the side of a cliff. It's best to wait until you arrive at the top to enjoy the view.

I went to Saspán last Monday with my friend Oto, a pastor who was born in this village, and Roque, a Puerto Rican minister who leads a church in Pennsylvania. We came to preach at Iglesia Cristiana Nueva Visión (Christian Church of New Vision), one of two growing evangelical churches in this town of 1,000 families. The church's pastor is Oto's sister, Gisela, an energetic young woman who has a particular concern for the children in this isolated community, many of whom lack education and proper nutrition.

**"God's truth keeps marching on. The gospel is advancing. The road that Jesus paved at Calvary keeps stretching forward."**

I've been to Saspán before, and Gisela's parents always welcome me to their modest home before the church service

begins. When I arrived this week they begged me and Roque to rest for a few minutes in the hammocks hanging on their tiled porch. While roosters crowed in the yard we swayed in the mountain breeze and talked about how simple life is there.

Gisela's father told me that when his father settled in that area, the road to Saspán was just a narrow footpath amid small plots of corn. It evolved into the dirt road I had seen on my previous visits. But this month, for the first time, government work crews are busy pouring gravel and smoothing the road's surface. Later this month they will pour asphalt. Even though most people in the town don't have cars or motorcycles, they are finally getting a paved road.

Later we walked farther up the steep mountain to the church for the afternoon service. About 75 people gathered in the unfinished building. They sat in plastic chairs on a dirt floor, and most of the people moved to the left side of the building because the right side was completely open to the hot sun. (Gisela is excited that a church youth group from Florida is coming soon to help install windows and lay a concrete floor.)

When Roque and I stood to preach, I noticed several young children sitting in the bushes outside the church. They had been listening intently to the worship, and seemed to be considering whether they should get any closer. Finally Gisela invited them in, and they sat along the back wall.

My text for the day was Hebrews 4:16: "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (NASB)." I told these precious people that Jesus had paved the way for us to come to God. He is our forerunner and our Trailblazer. As our high priest, He went into heaven with His own blood and made a way of access for us—so that we would no longer be cut off from the Father.

When I made reference to the road that was being paved on the side of their mountain, everyone began to smile. They have welcomed this progress. When I compared the road to Saspán to the road Jesus paved for us to reach God, they clapped and cheered.

When Roque and I opened up the altar for prayer, almost everyone rushed to the front. They understood that if the way has been paved by His mercy, they don't have to hesitate to approach the Savior. They don't have to hang their heads in shame. There is a road for them now. They can come with full assurance of His love.

In the simplicity of that moment I gained a new appreciation for what God is doing in the world today. The Holy Spirit is reaching thousands and thousands of villages like Saspán—isolated towns, unreached tribes and rural communities that don't have much access to technology or modern comforts. Yet God has beaten a path to their door and they are responding with passion and gratitude.

While we in the sophisticated West are preoccupied with our financial setbacks and weak investment portfolios, God's truth keeps marching on. The gospel is advancing. The road that Jesus paved at Calvary keeps stretching forward.

I am so thankful that He allows us to be a part of His road crew.

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