



Pictured Above: A snapshot from the BVBI Christmas Party Ugly Sweater Contest in the Fellowship Hall.

New Year Newsletter

Crossover: Happy Holidays!

----- STEVEN JAEGER

Seasons Greetings! 2023 is officially here and I couldn't be more excited for a new year since I can remember! I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year holiday season. My heart is filled with joy and thanksgiving for your continued support that, with God's blessing, allows me to remain at Bear Valley in preparation to work in the ministry of His Kingdom in a very special way. The first school semester ended a few days before Christmas, and it quickly became a bittersweet moment to savor. To be here is a dream come true and to see how quickly time goes by when you

get a moment to stop and look back at what has been experienced fills the heart in many ways. Not long after we finished our final exams, a December snowstorm came for a visit that locals say the likes of which hasn't happened in several years. As temperatures dropped to as low as -11 degrees Fahrenheit, we received up to 12+ inches of snow in just one night! I got to experience a few new things like driving in what felt like a small blizzard, shoveling my car out of snow, and making a snow angel. Despite not yet having any snow boots, I'd say my first December in Denver was a success! (:



Scripture In Loving Color – Galatians 6

----- S. JAEGER

Verse 6 – “Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.”

Author’s Note: It is my hope that this letter reaches you well and is able to mirror the beauty of God’s Word as I have experienced it in this way. As we reflect on what once was in 2022, and now make plans for 2023, I ask for a special prayer for all, but also for those who have experienced especially difficult circumstances that were not expected; that as we continue to deal with the challenges, faith will be strengthened and supported.

My plans were to return to Georgia to spend time with my home congregation in Dahlonega and to visit other supporting congregations in the area. But to my surprise, my scheduled flight back home was canceled not once, not twice, but three times in the span of eight days. During this time, I made the effort to keep my heart open to the Lord and as a result, my prayers drew me closer to His Word in much-needed ways. As the days passed by and I kept myself busy with waiting, I found myself remembering Jesus during His time in the garden of Gethsemane as He prayed to God three times concerning the circumstances before Him. Three times Jesus prayed and opened His heart to God, sharing His desires and feelings. And three times Jesus finished His prayer, saying, “nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 25:39, ESV).

This moment in Jesus’ life was fresh on my mind as we had just finished learning about His life from the perspective of Mark. Through the Lord’s guidance, with the help of Michael Hite’s teaching, I learned that this example of Jesus is one of learning how to accept the circumstances as God graciously allows...

...them to play out. From Jesus’ example, we learn that to do so is by trusting in God’s power to control all things for a good purpose. And it is in the trust we give to God that His peace comes into our hearts and helps us to move forward confidently with a strengthened faith.

With these things in mind, as I was expecting my flight to be canceled a third time, I experienced a beautiful peace because of the Scriptures that brought to life the relational aspects of God’s love in a very special way – by submitting to His wisdom and by following His ways.

So, while I didn’t get to do what I wanted this winter break, now I have an opportunity to do something far greater, share this story with you so that you also may be encouraged and strengthened in your faith as we all prepare to move forward in this new year. Sometimes things don’t go the way we planned no matter how much we try to make them happen. Yet when we choose the faith to which God has called us, then we can have peace in our hearts that helps protect and guide us as we strive to move forward.

