

Hello my friends, I hope you are well. Sorry I haven't sent an email since last year... (I'm sorry I couldn't not do it)

Happy New Year! We made it to 2026! But like also 2026 is not a real year to me. I'm still a little bit in shock

Join the Google photos album to finally figure out what the white guy who keeps emailing you looks like: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/4P9d4ozmNzrznkWr7>

This week was a little hard like last week because of New Year's Eve and Day. It's a really big holiday here in Brazil and nobody wanted to answer the door and if they did they were probably super drunk or something.

Also the end of the week got a little chaotic but I'll go into that in a little bit...

***Notable Events:***

- We spent New Year's Eve at Leda and Calixto's house. We got told by our President that we had to be off the street at 7pm for safety reasons, but we could be at a member's house if they gave us a ride home. We were getting ice cream and planning on just going home for the night but then they called us and asked us to come hang out. Calixto made some churrasco which was pretty good. When we got home we watched all of the fireworks that random houses just had going off. I sang Auld Lang Syne to commence a New Year as well, pretty awesome.

- On Friday, I went on my first division (exchange) here in Brazil. I went over to the Casa Grande C area and spent the day with Elder Arrington, our District Leader. It was a pretty good day, we put one of their friends on date for baptism so that was awesome!!

- Also on Friday night, while visiting an Inactive Member of The Church's house, her dog bit me! It was on the outside of the pants, but it did break the skin a little bit (didn't tear the pants at all though so we balling) The dog is fine as well, for those asking.

- On Saturday, I got home and cleaned the bite wound a little bit and then we went to lunch. After lunch, I sent our Mission Leaders a photo and told them about it and they were like, "Church protocol is to go the hospital and make sure you won't die" but because I've only been here for a month, I don't have the correct identification for just any hospital. So we went to a hospital in Santo Amaro (like 50 minutes away from Parelheiros) which was pretty sketchy. Met some fun characters while there. We were there at the hospital for about 5 hours, and they didn't even give me any shots. Basically the policy they have here in

Brazil is that, if you can monitor and be in contact with the dog that bit you, you just gotta wait 10 days since the incident to see if the dog dies. And if it doesn't, you're good. If it does, then they'll give you the vaccines you need. Crazy policy, I know. So anyway, we were at the hospital for 5 hours for literally zero results. And then we got home at 1am!

- Sunday was pretty awesome though. It was fast and testimony which is always incredible and powerful. None of our friends, nor any of our recent converts, ended up coming because of rain which is disappointing. Then we had lunch at a member's house and they invited like everybody so there was like 25 people there and we were watching The Chosen in Portuguese. We tried to visit some of our friends but none of them answered which was frustrating. Then we visited a ward member, Pedro, and he made us French Toast which was incredible and I probably ate like 7 pieces.

### ***Spiritual Thought:***

This week, I read in Jacob 5 a little, which talks about the allegory of the tame and wild olive trees. I highly recommend reading it, because though it is a long chapter, it is a fantastic chapter.

Anyway, something that stood out to me while reading it was how many times it says something along the lines of, "It grieveth me that I should lose this tree". This type of sentence is said 8 times in the chapter.

The Lord of the Vineyard grieves even if one tree in his vineyard is lost, and perishes. He'll do anything to ensure that these trees survive and bring forth good fruit. In verse 51, it says, "Yea, I will spare it a little longer, for it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard."

In this allegory, we are the trees in the vineyard. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Vineyard. He wants us to be healthy and to bring forth good fruit, and He will do whatever it takes to make his Vineyard do as such. **He will never give up on us, just as the Lord of the Vineyard will not give up on a single tree in an immense and grand vineyard.**

President Jeffrey R. Holland said in his talk, "Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You" back in April of 2016,

***"His divine love and unfailing help will be with us even when we struggle—no, will be with us especially when we struggle."***

I testify that our Savior grieves when we struggle, but that He knows exactly our struggle. Every trial we go through is felt perfectly by Jesus Christ. When you feel bad, or unworthy, or unable to face the challenges in front of you, remember that Christ will not let you go. You are His beloved tree in His vineyard, and He will do all that He can do to make sure that you are healthy and bringing forth good

fruit. And He will not give up on you. The world, other people around us, may give up on us, but He will not. He is not of this world. He is higher. And He knows we can be too.

I love you my friends. I hope you have a great week and I miss you dearly. If you want to reach out, please do! I probably haven't heard from you since last year! I promise I will read every email you send to me. I love you so much and more importantly, our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, do too.

- Elder John Gee

Pics this week include:

- Beautiful sunset on the first day of the year
- Lionel took my phone when I was in the bathroom and started taking photos
- Last week's P-day activities
- Waiting in the hospital







