

STUDY THREE

THE EVANS FAMILY IN JAPAN || MPC PARTNER PROFILE

John Evans visits MPC this Sunday! With our financial support, the Evans family are working towards planting a church in Chiba City, Japan. So this week we'll take a short break from our series on Psalms. We'll profile their ministry in Japan, study the Bible passage John will be preaching from, and pray for them together.



THE EVANS FAMILY

The Evans family are now entering their second term in Japan. John, who's a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, is married to Rose, and they have six children: Asher (1998), Isabelle (2001), Lily (2004), Ivy (2007), Jairus (2010) and Boaz (2013).

Before moving to Japan, John pastored a church in Helensvale on the Gold Coast. They're now living in Chiba City, and this year they've have been joined by the Chase and Ramsay families, who'll be church planting with them. They're also seeking Japanese nationals to join them.

1. Imagine that circumstances somehow led you to live in Japan! What would you enjoy? What would you find most difficult?

FEELING WEAK IN JAPAN

Japan's population is both aging and declining. This is also reflected in the church. Not only are there not enough Japanese Christians to evangelise their own people, but over the past 15 years there has been a significant decrease in the number of missionaries going to Japan. With few Japanese Christians going into ministry and the average age of pastors above 60, Japan desperately needs gospel workers. Currently there is one church per 16,000 people. Missiologists say that to effectively reach a nation with the gospel, there needs to be one church per 1500 people. In that case, Japan needs 70,000 more churches.

- Population: 127 million
- Less than 0.2% attend church
- More than 95% don't know who Jesus is
- Japanese are the largest unreached people group in the developed world

SHARING THE GOSPEL IN JAPAN

Last year in the Unawkwarding Jesus series we talked about plausibility structures, and how people need to know lots of Christians before even considering that Christianity might be plausible.

2. How easy then would it be to tell people about Jesus in Japan? How adequate would you feel for the task?
3. How would it feel trying to plant a new church like the Evans family? Would you feel you had a strong chance of success, or a weak one?

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

As Paul writes his second letter to the Corinthian Christians, some false teachers have come to Corinth. They're far more impressive in a worldly sense than Paul - better looking, better speakers, more charming and persuasive. So the Christians in Corinth are in danger of falling in with them and losing their faith in Jesus. To keep the Christians loyal to the gospel he preached to them, Paul must compete with these super-apostles in their boasting. But as you'll see, he's not exactly happy about it.

Listen to or read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, listening for the paradox Paul puts forward. There's a link on the usual page of our website. www.new.mpc.org.au/singwithjesus.

4. What does Paul boast about first? v1-4
5. What good does he say that will do? v1
6. What would Paul prefer to boast in? v5
7. Why would Paul prefer to boast in that? v7-10

CHRIST'S STRENGTH IN JAPAN

While they're still learning the Japanese language and culture, the Evans family are already preparing to plant a church in the Chiba CBD, with a focus on reaching young people, and discipling, training and equipping the next generation of gospel workers for Japan.

8. It might seem like a daunting task, one anyone would be too weak for. But from Paul's perspective, why is this such an exciting opportunity?

PRAY FOR JAPAN

In Japan more than anywhere else, it's obvious the power must come from Christ himself. So pray for the people of Japan, that Christ's saving power really would be displayed in weakness.

Pray specifically:

- That God would raise up more gospel workers for Japan from overseas
- That the Evans family would find daily strength and joy in the gospel while in Japan
- That God would fire up the Japanese church for evangelism and discipleship
- That God would raise up more Japanese Christian leaders
- That the gospel would penetrate the hearts of the Japanese people despite such strong cultural forces working against it