

Rua Mestre António M. Taborda, 6
Lisboa, Portugal
15 de Abril de 1948

Dearest Mother,

Well, I have preached my first sermon in Portuguese. It was quite a feat for me. I must confess that I felt very poorly prepared for it, and walked into the pulpit with fear and trembling and a prayer on my lips that I might say the words I had ready to say with Divine help. And by God's grace I carried through to the end, although there were many places where I made errors in speaking.

I say that I was poorly prepared. First, I forgot until five days before the time that I had agreed to preach last Sunday. Then I ~~very~~ struck a snag in the writing of the English copy of the sermon and because of that was unable to complete the translation by myself. It was necessary for me to have my teacher correct the first part and write the last part. Afterward it was necessary for me to learn in short time how to say the words correctly. When I came to the pulpit, I could not say them as they ought to be spoken.

Now I'm endeavoring to catch up and arrive at the place where I think I ought to be. Of course we are all the time studying, but sometimes our work is lacking in method. For this reason we don't improve our vocabularies as we ought to, and when we reach the point where we want to use more words than we have at our disposal to use, it is then that we must spend time and more time to learn what is the correct word to use in the correct place. Of ~~course~~ ~~course~~ knowledge comes little by little, but there are times when I get the feeling that I am going to know all too little when we head for Angola, and must somehow stretch my legs enough to cover the distance between poor and faltering Portuguese and fairly fluent conversational Portuguese, if not also the written, in the remaining weeks between now and the first days of September.

However, along with the above confession about something of my feeling about the first sermon, may I also say that I really enjoyed being in the pulpit again, and have made up my mind to preach a practise sermon at least once a week for Snr. Ribeiro, pastor of the church in which I first preached here in Lisbon. It will be like going back to the Seminary. It will also be good for me in ways besides in the improvement of my speaking ability in Portuguese. Now I shall be able to get back into form as a preacher. Since this is to be part of my work in Angola, it is good to go to it with a will now. And all was not depressing last Sunday. Despite the fact that I felt very tired and disheartened when I had finished delivering the words I had to say, and, in the words of one of our Methodist friends here, "as if I had been speaking Portuguese," I also had the feeling that I had covered a good deal of rough ground before coming to smooth ground. At the moment I feel a little like being on smooth ground because I have been over the road of preparation and now know what passing over it is like. Do you understand me? There is plenty of rough ground ahead yet, but since I have passed over much, now I feel the road of study fairly smooth beneath me. I know now something of what I must do in order to be at all prepared for an examination in this language and entrance into active work in Angola.

We are managing well in our new house. The boys are happier here than they were in the other house. Because of this we don't have to spend so much time taking them to the gardens, and can better plan trips from which we can all benefit.