

## Orphans in the Storm

John 14:15-31

### John 14

15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--

17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

19 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

20 "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

25 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

29 "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

30 "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

31 "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

(NKJV)

**“No, I will not abandon you or leave you as orphans in the storm – I will come to you.”**

John 14:18 The Living Bible – Paraphrased

ACCORDING TO WORLDORPHANS.ORG:

There are an estimated 153,000,000 orphans worldwide. Some of these orphans have lost one parent, some both, and some are "virtual" orphans that have been turned out onto the streets by their families, but all are vulnerable and in need of help. Without assistance these orphans continue in the cycle of poverty, HIV/AIDS, trafficking, prostitution and slavery that haunts developing countries. Through our family focused programs - we equip, inspire, and mobilize the church to care for orphans and vulnerable children. Churches engaged. Children restored. Communities transformed by the Gospel of Christ.



### **John 16**

31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?"

32 "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

### **Voice of the Martyrs Newsroom – Pakistan: A Routine Faith**

In July 2012, "Edward John" was teaching classes at a sewing center located in Karachi, Pakistan. Open to both Muslim and Christian students, Edward took the time to begin classes with a Bible reading and prayer. It was this routine that interested Abia Ismail, a Muslim student who had registered to attend the sewing classes.

Abia asked many questions about the Bible, and her curiosity only grew more intense. She wanted to have her own Bible and read it for herself. Hesitant to give a student from a Muslim family a Bible, Edward refused her requests for weeks. In September, he relented and she took home a Bible. That would be the last time he would see her.



*Illustration 1: Pastor Edward, not shown, continues to evangelize and share God's Word in Pakistan, like these two pastors are doing*

On Oct. 9, class began as normal with a Bible reading and prayers. The students had begun their lessons when Abia's brother and another man stormed into the room. Abia's brother threatened to shut down the sewing center, furious that Edward had given his sister a Bible. He accused the pastor of converting Muslims to Christianity.

Two days later, the men made good on their threats. Abia's brother and five other men came into the classroom with weapons. Firing into the air, the men shouted that the sewing center was now closed. As nearly 60 students fled for their homes, the men turned on Edward, using the back end of a gun to strike him in the head. As he fell to the floor from the pain, the men began punching and kicking him, and used sticks to beat him. The men dragged him from the center and threw him into the streets of Karachi.

The following week, Pastor Edward had tried to return to the sewing center to retrieve some of his belongings. Under pressure, his landlord had evicted the pastor and the sewing school. When Pastor Edward arrived at a bus stop near the sewing center, Abia's brother spotted him. The pastor was beaten for a second time, dragged into an empty house where Abia's brother enlisted the help of other men who pummeled him with their fists, kicked him, and savagely beat him for more than six hours. As the blows rained down, he prayed, "Forgive them, Lord, because they don't know what they are doing." He escaped alive, but he and his family were forced to move to a new location.

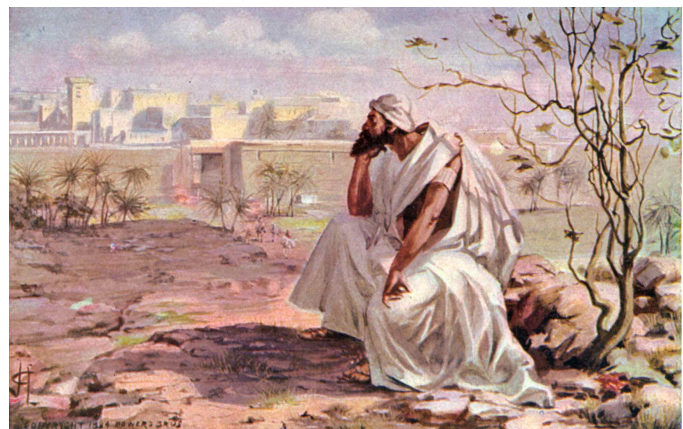
In spite of everything, he continues praying for those who wanted to kill him and to stop his ministry. Though his sewing center has been closed, Pastor Edward continues to minister with another pastor. He told VOM workers, "Although I was in trouble, I haven't stopped my evangelism work. As I get the chance, I serve the kingdom. I always ready for friendship evangelism."

With all that he's lost, Pastor Edward cannot stop sharing the Gospel or reading the Word with those around him. It's his routine.

VOM Sources

## **Iraq: Hard Choices in Mosul**

The eyes of the world turned last month to the northern plains of Iraq, to a city where Jonah first delivered Jehovah's message thousands of years ago. Today the story of Nineveh (now called Mosul) isn't of a messenger of Jehovah going into Nineveh, but of thousands of Jehovah's followers being forced out of the city. The IS (Islamic State) told Christians if they don't leave Mosul their alternatives are subjugation to Islam or being forced to follow a different god—Allah. Or they will be killed.



The Christians that fled the city—it is reported that the remaining 200 Christian families left prior to an IS-imposed deadline of July 19—left behind all of their possessions, as demanded by the radical Muslims. Those who tried to carry more than the clothes on their backs were robbed at IS checkpoints on their way out of the city.

The cross on the Cathedral of Mar Afram in Mosul—the Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church—was pulled down and replaced by loudspeakers to broadcast the Islamic call to prayer. Middle East Concern, a VOM partner ministry, reports: “A few Christians remain in Mosul, including some elderly or infirm who were not able to leave. In some cases, Christians are being shielded by Muslim neighbors. There are [also] credible reports that some have been compelled by the IS to convert to Islam by reciting the Islamic declaration of faith before a Sharia court.”

Most of the Christians described in these sad news reports are part of the historical Christian community in northern Iraq, primarily Syriac Orthodox or Catholics who are considered by Muslims to be “Christian” because they were born in Christian families.

There is another group of Christians in northern Iraq too: those that were born into Muslim families but have consciously made the choice to reject

Islam and follow Jesus. It is important to understand that these believers do NOT have a choice to pay a tax and save their lives. These converts are, in the eyes of IS, apostates. If IS fighters learned of their faith, they would give these believers two choices: return to Islam or be killed.



VOM is ministering to both groups of believers. Already VOM is caring for 2,000 displaced Christians who have fled Mosul; it is likely that number will increase. We are also working with Christian converts in the region who risk their very lives to witness of the love of Jesus to Muslims—even radical and violent ones.

As we look through the eyes of TV cameras into this volatile region, may we be reminded daily to pray for our brothers and sisters suffering such hardship and violence. And as we pray for them,

let us also pray for their persecutors, that some of those hunting believers today will become believers themselves in the days and months to come.

Meanwhile, in the city of Qaraqosh, 20 miles southeast from Mosul, streets are deserted and countless shops are shut. While the town is under the protection of the Peshmerga, IS militants clashed with soldiers here in June, which forced thousands of Christians to flee to safer ground. This once bustling town has also become a hub for Christians who fled Mosul. In an unfurnished townhouse still under construction on the outskirts of the city, two families sat on the floor as they discussed the future of Iraq. "I want to be a Christian but IS took us to the mosque and tried to convert us to Islam," mother of three, Flora Adwa, show here, said. She added that the owner of the townhouse had allowed the two families to temporarily stay at the home.



(Photo: Sophie Cousins for USA TODAY)

### The Talking Points

- I'm Leaving
- The Holy Spirit is coming
- You will need Him for Righteousness
- You will need Him for Peace in daily life and the other practical fruits of the Spirit
- It won't be automatic – you need to abide and learn to walk in the Spirit, asking, seeking, etc
- If I don't leave, He won't come. He will lead you into a deeper relationship with Me.



### Acts 2

32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

33 "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

(NKJV)

## **John 16**

5 "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'

6 "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;

11 "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

(NKJV)