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“God, See Us in Our Plight”

The following story is the eyewitness account of Josh Yates, a Reach the Rest representative working in Kurdistan (Northern Iraq). He is serving at the center of the refugee crisis resulting from ISIS.

Today I had the opportunity to enter the largest Christian village in the Nineveh Plains, and one of the oldest Christian communities in the Middle East. Christians have been living in this region since the time of the early church.

Because of its strong Christian

heritage, this village was one of the first targets for ISIS when they swept into Iraq in 2014. The majority of Christians fled. Those who did not were exterminated. With a former population of around 65,000 living in 25,000 homes, it is now a ghost town...burned out homes, desecrated altars, piles of rubble strewn with spent and unspent cartridges, and unexploded improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Several areas are still burning.

When the October push to liberate Mosul was initiated, it began here in the Nineveh plain. As ISIS was pushed out of the village, the evidence of violence against Christianity is remained—crosses broken and thrown down, Bibles with pages torn, riddled with bullets, and the Islamic creed scribbled across the pages. Witnessing this devastation was shocking.

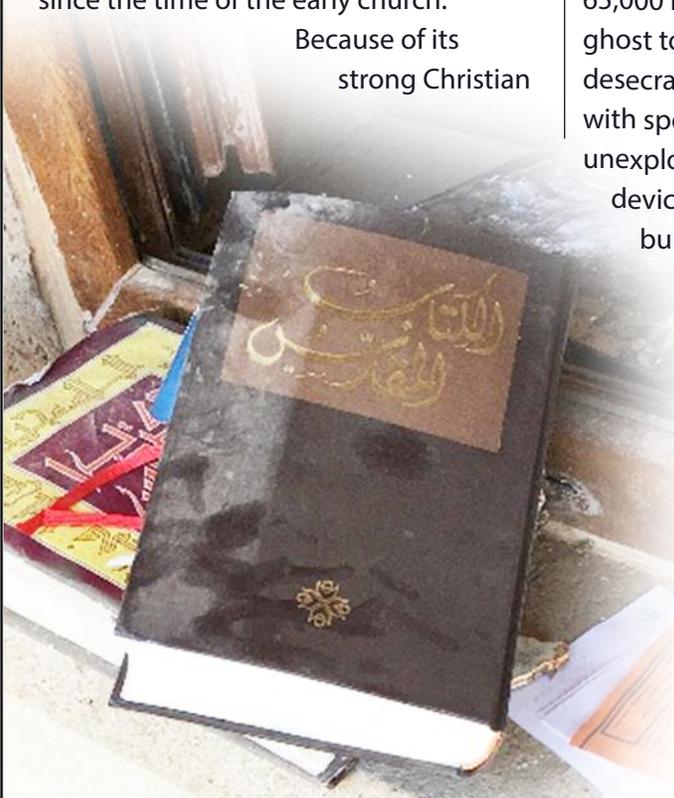
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Josh Yates

Prayer Points

- Pray for displaced people who have lost their homes after being targeted by ISIS. Pray for the hurting and desperate people who are searching for physical and spiritual answers.
- As ISIS has invaded the cities and towns, violence against Christianity is rampant. Pray that the church of Christ will continue to be bold and grow despite persecution.
- Pray for humanitarian efforts within the refugee camps. Many live in tents and are searching for ways to survive the harsh winter. Pray for national workers that are using this time of crisis to be the hands and feet of Christ to meet needs and also present the Gospel.
- Pray that God would supply necessary funds and personnel to assist in the humanitarian efforts and the rebuilding process in the areas devastated by ISIS.



ليتقدس اسمك

تري أليس اسمه مقدسا قبل إن نصلي "ليتقدس اسمك"؟ نقول: ان اسمه مقدس وهو قدوس وواهب القداسة. لكن عبارة "ليتقدس اسمك" معناها ليتقدس اسمك في افكارنا. وقد سائل: ما الفائدة من هذا؟ نجيب: الفوائد كثيرة، فعندما نفكر بلاه قدوس واسمه مقدس، نؤكد استحالة ان نكون ابناؤه ان لم نكن قدبيين كقوله "كونوا قديسين كما ابي أنا قدوس" (1بطا: 16). ثم لكي يتقدس اسمك في أذهاننا وألسنتنا وشفاها، مثلما يهتف السرافيم قائلين قدوس قدوس... الخ. ثم ان كلمة "ليتقدس" تعني ايضا يتمجد، لذا فنحن نصلي اليه ليوهلنا لسيرة فاضلة وصالحة كقوله "يرون اعمالكم الصالحة ويمجدون اباكم الذي في السماء" (مت: 5: 16) وتتجلى الاعمال السيئة والشريفة والسيودة. وفي حالة عدم وجود ذلك فسوف يقولون هذا ما يعلمهم اياه ايمانهم كقول الرسول "ان اسمي مجدف عليه بين الشعوب بسببكم" (روم: 2: 24). وقد علم الرسل ان يقولوا في صلاتهم "ليتقدس اسمك" أي من المؤمنين وغير المؤمنين. فبالنسبة الى المؤمنين لكي يزدادوا ايمانا بك وباسمك. واما بالنسبة الى غير المؤمنين فللكي يلبوا دعوة انجيلك. وبذلك تشبه الرسل بالابن والروح فعدوا شفعاء بالبشر كالابن والروح القدس. ان صلاة "ليتقدس اسمك" مطلوبة لانها تشير الى اننا قد سمونا وتآخينا مع الذين يهتفون قدوس قدوس قدوس كما كتب اي مجدين الله.



Beautiful, historic churches were burned and used for shooting galleries; homes spray painted with Koranic verses. I spent the day walking through tunnels that ISIS had dug. I was broken hearted as I prayed for the persecuted and those who had lost everything.

The village remains a hot bed of

controversy. ISIS has not been totally driven out and there are other Islamic groups who want to control this area. We dropped off food to the Christian militia who is guarding the village. They are longing to see the Christian community return. I watched a few families trickle in. They were, no doubt, trying to make sense of what has happened and trying salvage anything from the situation. The vast majority of these displaced families are currently living in 15 by 6 foot structures in refugee camps. They are attempting to make a life in the midst of the devastation and

chaos.

Their hope is to return to the lives they once had.

The most poignant moment of the day was seeing what had been written on one of the remaining walls of a bombed-out church, "God, see us in our plight." It was handwritten and marked with the date—two months after ISIS overtook the village. Please stand with us, and with God, as He sees our brothers and sisters in their plight.



REACH the REST

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