

News and Current Events :: Christians, have we prayed, fasted for Afghanistan? - K.P. Yohannan

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Jesus said, "I will stand at the door and knock" (Revelation 3:20, NKJV). Now "in the midst of Afghanistan" theater of fear "it's the brutally abused, tortured, hungry, broken and bleeding who are literally standing at the door of our hearts and knocking. They are Jesus, asking for us to open our hearts to feel their pain and become the answer to their chaos, grief and pain (St. Matthew 25:35-40).

Today in Afghanistan, males will be executed on the spot, women will be raped, and adolescent girls will be taken as sex slaves for Taliban fighters.

What's happening right now in Afghanistan sends shivers down my spine and I'm sure yours, too. This could be my family, or yours.

But I want to ask you: is the horrific suffering in Afghanistan affecting the way you live your life? Or is your life just carrying on as normal? Because none of us should be acting "normal" while our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan wait in dread for the Taliban to appear at our doorstep.

You and I have a crucial role, one that should disrupt our "normal" lives: we need to be on our knees in prayer.

Nowhere to Hide

We've all seen the shocking images of people clinging to an airplane as it took off from Kabul airport. There's no flight to freedom for the suffering multitudes in Afghanistan, no place to hide. Innocents will soon be hunted like animals. I just heard from a contact there that many people and entire families have been wandering in the wilderness for over a week, desperate to escape the country. Everywhere, the Taliban lie in wait, preying. If the Taliban find any evidence on people's phones that they're a Christian, they're killed instantly.

Are we sympathetic? Of course! But does our sympathy actually drive us to our knees in prayer? Have we shed tears of real anguish for the people of Afghanistan? Have we fasted for a single day for the Christians of Afghanistan?

Have you?

This is a spiritual battle that can be won only in prayer and fasting. The question is: do you and I have the fire in our bones? Do we grasp our vital intercessory role in this theater of terror? Or is Afghanistan just another crisis in the news that we can skip over on our way to Starbucks?

The other day, I was on a two-hour phone call listening to first hand reports of the utter devastation and suffering taking place in Afghanistan. After I got off the phone, I was sort of in shock. But not for the reason you think. I was realizing how little my emotions had been engaged as I listened to the reports. Was the report I heard horrible? It was! In all honesty, the picture in my mind was like something after a nuclear explosion wipes out an entire city. But where were the tears for my brothers and sisters?

In the book of Lamentations, Jeremiah describes the distress of captive Jerusalem like this: "When her people fell into the hand of the enemy, with no one to help her, the adversaries saw her and mocked at her downfall. I called for my lovers, but they deceived me. My priests and my elders breathed their last in the city, while they sought food to restore their life" (Lamentations 1:7, 19, NKJV).

Dismayed by the lack of concern for others' suffering, Jeremiah "the weeping prophet" cried out: "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?" (Lamentations 1:12, NKJV).

Brothers and sisters, let's not be among those who "pass by" while captive Afghanistan is destroyed, women and children are massacred, and the innocent are raped and slaughtered.

Having traveled around the globe for decades, my experience has been that Americans are the most caring, generous people in the world. But so often our wallets are our substitute for what matters most—devoted time on our knees before God, the One who can move mountains.

We read in our Bibles about the powerful prayers of Elijah, Abraham and others, yet we often don't seem to have the expectation that God will answer when we knock on His door.

One preacher put it this way: "On a scale of 1 to 10, too often our expectation of God doing something miraculous when we pray is about minus 5."

Do you believe God is willing and able to work a miracle—even now—in Afghanistan? Even the Taliban are not beyond his reach. Acts 8 records that a man named Saul went door-to-door, terrorizing Christians, but God transformed him into the greatest missionary ever, the Apostle Paul!

What about if you were to ask your pastor to take 15 minutes during the worship service this Sunday and set it aside to pray and intercede as a congregation for the suffering millions in Afghanistan?

God moves when we choose to enter into the suffering of others. If we think for one moment that similar suffering is not coming to our doorstep, leaving us at the place of brokenness and needing intercession, we're mistaken.

Today is anything but normal. It's a day when many in Afghanistan genuinely fear they will not see tomorrow. A day when a simple knock on the door could be the last they hear.

At this very moment, Jesus, bleeding and broken, is knocking at my door, and yours.

Will you answer it?

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