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Ramadan - a Dangerous Time for Secret Believers in Afghanistan

Last month was extra difficult for our families hiding in Afghanistan. The month of Ramadan brought with it an expectation from neighbours to attend the mosque, participate in prayers and join Quran readings and fast-breaking meals. For secret believers, their lack of participation draws attention and suspicion from all around them.



Over the years we have seen violence, death threats, rapes against Christian refugees markedly increase during this time... so we are well aware that the dangers facing those in Afghanistan are very real and very frightening.

For the families hiding in Kabul, it has meant being even more vigilant. During Ramadan, they had to get up at 3am each night, to turn on the light... so that they didn't attract suspicion for not being up. This time of heightened danger meant staying out of sight and mind to an even greater level than normal. They are surrounded and can't escape.

"Our neighbour had a Quran reading... they brought the Mullah and use loudspeakers in our building from 1 o'clock until night. We couldn't join the bible class that day because it's too dangerous. I was so upset."

It's an intense and scary month if you are a secret believer in Afghanistan. It's hard for us in the west to comprehend the intensity of the pressure faced by these faithful families. We are so proud of them. Thank you to everyone who has been praying. Thank God they were kept safe during this time.

Update on Family now in Iran

In our last newsletter, we shared with you about a family who had to flee to Iran, following the Taliban placing wanted posters for them in Kabul.

For now, they have managed to find a small apartment to stay in, but this has used up all they had left - they had to sell everything they have. The place is empty except for a small rug and blanket on the floor where the family of five sleep and live together.



In their new, but very empty, home for now

Like so many, fleeing the persecutors means ending up destitute in a foreign land, with little hope. The family have a visa and hope to be able to get a work permit, but for now the father is searching for any odd unofficial jobs to make ends meet.

"I don't know what to do. I am always in prayer. My wife and I barely eat once in 24 hours. Our children do not have enough food. Our house is completely empty. I only have a small blanket which I put on the frozen floor to sleep. Thank God the weather is warming up now, but the ground we are sleeping on is cold. I got into trouble because I don't have a work permit and so no-one will hire me. God is testing us to

see how much patience we have but it is hard for the children to understand. Please pray for us."

They managed to borrow a basic phone so they could stay in contact with us, but they ask for your prayers. Pray for the father to get a work permit, and for him to find work. Also for continued strengthening of faith, and for the family to hold ever tighter to the hand of our King Jesus.

For now, they at least know they are not alone, and that there are people who care about them. That makes a world of difference and we are humbled to be able to stand alongside them, but it is hard to watch our family suffer so much. Please remember them in your prayers.

"Even with all these problems, I thank God so much for your existence. When i receive your messages, I feel peace. I feel that I am not alone. I feel that someone is worried about us. I feel that we are valuable to someone. I feel stronger. All this pain and suffering is not enough to break me. Please keep praying for us."



"Pray for those who Persecute you"

Meanwhile, at the House of Faith, we continue to hold bible studies and discipleship classes, attended both in person and via zoom for those in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This past month, we studied the life of the apostle Paul. The flock were astounded that the things Paul did before his conversion were so similar to the persecutions of the Taliban, ISIS and the Iranian regime. The story of the stoning of Stephen was one close to home, as everyone in the class was familiar with the reality of execution by stoning. These are stories very meaningful for ICC's beneficiaries.

Loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you is a challenging command, especially when you know personally, the reality of this depth of persecution.

Yet, the story of Paul's conversion and subsequent ministry is so radical and so amazing.

"You mean Jesus can even change someone as bad as the Taliban?! Imagine what could happen to my country if Jesus did this with the Taliban leaders today!"

We were challenged to pray. It was an incredibly humbling experience to pray together as a scattered flock, some still suffering similar persecutions to those by Saul. We prayed for the Taliban and for the Iranian regime and all those who are persecuting our brothers and sisters.

"This study was really good. I wanted revenge for my persecutors but now my ideas have changed. They destroyed my life. But now I understand we must forgive them. We should keep praying for them and asking God to do the same like Apostle Paul. Maybe if we keep praying, something amazing will happen!"

"I don't know what we'd do if ICC wasn't here"

Here in Greece, all of our beneficiaries are worried about the ever increasing cost of living. With the loss of government support, and many



A sample of spinach and oregano from Goshen.

organisations having left, there is little to no support available now. Jobs are few and far between, especially for refugees and asylum seekers. They are doing their best, learning Greek and English, trying to get jobs but the situation currently is very challenging for them.

Most of the families who come to the House of Faith receive additional support from ICC in the form of supermarket vouchers for food, help with medicines, glasses and eye tests, and other basic needs. But the cost of food just keeps going up. Food in Greece is far more expensive than in the UK for example!

Thank God we have the House of Faith where we can provide extra meals, and Goshen where we can grow vegetables to supplement this support! The new growing season is well underway, and fresh vegetables are already being distributed!

Please pray for provision to cover these increasing costs. Several of the families are being entirely supported by ICC (including housing, utilities, as well as food and basic necessities), while prices continue to rise and donations fall.



A Miracle in Goshen

This is Jenny, ICC's mouse hunting and therapeutic cat in Goshen. Jenny is very much loved by all of ICC's beneficiaries, including those in

Afghanistan and Pakistan. She is everyone's cat, and brings much joy and laughter to all. She's also a very calm and patient friend to those visiting Goshen.

Last week, Jenny was bitten by a horn-nosed viper (the most dangerous viper in Europe), after sticking her paw into its nest. It was not a dry bite - the venom was injected into her. The chances of her survival were slim. The local vet has no access to anti-venom, so the only one who could save her was our King.

We anointed her with oil and prayed for a miracle in Jesus' name. We prayed that just as the apostle Paul was not harmed when he was bitten by a viper (Acts 28), so she would also be unharmed.

Her little paw swelled to 3 or 4 times its normal size and was really painful. She should have died within an hour or two of being bitten. But glory to God, He saved this little cat. She is completely unharmed!

All of us at ICC are so relieved but also deeply encouraged. If our King cares enough about a little cat to save it from the viper's venom, how much more does He care about us. When we call to Him in trouble, He is faithful to answer. We can trust Him. We thought this would encourage you too.



Jenny's snake bitten paw



A much loved friend

Current ICC Needs

Please continue to pray for provision for:

- ability to meet needs of beneficiaries with rising costs/ falling donations.
- ability to cover core costs of ICC's day-to-day operations
- rain during the summer months in Goshen!

[Make a Donation](#)

THANK YOU

Thank you to all of you for your prayers and support. We couldn't do this without you. Thank you for encouraging us to keep going, and for backing us up in prayer. We are so grateful for you. Many blessings to you all in the name of our King Jesus.

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