

# KOINONIA KONNECTION

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## **A KING FOR THE EMPTY HANDED**

*“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” -Matthew 9:35*

There are many unbelieving mouths who, despite their utter rejection of the spiritual uniqueness of Jesus, are yet quite willing to proclaim Him a “great teacher.” Few there are who would question the moral impact of Jesus upon the world, and most would certainly credit this impact to the profound moral power of Jesus’ instruction and example.

The Church, of course, is not blind to the moral example of Christ. The recent rise of the WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) media campaign in broader evangelicalism is testimony to that. And despite the limitations of the phrase (for we certainly cannot take upon ourselves the prerogatives of Divinity), its intention is not an unbiblical one. No doubt, one significant ministry of our Great Prophet was to reveal the Law of God in the pattern of His life.

But let’s think on that for just a moment. Let us pretend that this is the limit of Christ’s ministry to us...that of *moral ideal*. I would assert to you that if this is all there is to Jesus, then the Rabbi from Nazareth makes for a very poor ideal indeed. Not that there is anything lacking in His example. His life was truly perfect, flawless. He kept the Law from start to finish. But there lay our problem: His perfection. An ideal, a hero, if you will, is somebody that we can *follow*. He’s someone after the life of whom we may pattern

our own lives, with the reasonable expectation that we may, despite our weaknesses, walk in the steps that he walked. If Christ stands before us merely as a pattern of virtue, then there’s no sense in following Him. His is a matchless life with which our sin-shattered lives can never compare. Indeed, perhaps we might yet mold ourselves after His example with a spirit of pessimistic fatalism. Perhaps we might follow Him for His goodness--yet all the while we would realize deep within that attaining to His ideal is a depressing impossibility. But that would make for a very dismal (and pointless) religion.

What’s the point of spirituality without eschatology? Why seek if you can never find? These are unanswerable questions for those who limit the ministry of Christ to a mere moral example. Liberal “Christianity,” Jesus cults (such as the JWs), and admiring unbelievers all sink on the same ship when it comes to having Jesus as their moral ideal: *They can never match up to the matchless example of Jesus*. And for the person who takes the Bible seriously, this moral inability on humanity’s part is chillingly fatal in its implications, seeing that without holiness “no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14) And what is “holiness” but a perfect conformity to Christ Himself, who embodies holiness (Heb. 7:26)?

So is it really of any benefit to celebrate Jesus as a great teacher? Can we glean anything but despair from His unattainable instruction and perfect life? Only if there is something more to Jesus than His simply being a great teacher. And thanks be to God, there is certainly something more to Him! The text at the beginning of our little devotion clues us into that

essential difference: We read not only that he went about teaching and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, but also that He made it His business to heal “*every sickness and every disease among the people.*”

“Well, that may be very moving, even awe-inspiring,” you say, “but what does that have to do with what you’ve been talking about? How does Jesus healing the blind and lame in ancient Galilee give me hope in the face of His impossible, unattainable ideal?”

Friend, consider the encouraging words of J. Gresham Machen, one of the founders of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church: “From the first, Jesus appeared not merely as a teacher, but also a healer; He brought not merely guidance, but active help; He had not merely authority, but also power.”<sup>(1)</sup> Those words, friend, fill the Christian message with a depth and fulfillment which no mere moralistic religion can hope to accomplish. Christ doesn’t merely *proclaim* the truth to you, He *applies* the truth to your heart by His power. Those miracles of healing which accompanied His speaking ministry were not simple magic tricks, designed to impress us. Nor were they only signs to verify the truth of what Christ taught. His miracles were symbols, living dramas of the Great Purpose for which Christ came into the world: to *heal sinners*. He came not merely to instruct sinners, but actually to rescue them from sin’s power.

In order to illustrate this encouraging point, I would turn your minds in a direction which, to a dedicated monarchist like me, is a particularly favored one:

Imagine a king. A great king. Under this king is a vast array of landholders and peasants, each with his particular responsibility to the king. Picture in your mind one man among these many hundreds of thousands, a simple farmer. One day a proclamation from the king is distributed among all his subjects. Upon reading

the proclamation, our farmer discovers that he must turn over a certain percentage of his crop to the king for the support of the Kingdom. Those who neglect to pay their due will face confiscation of their property and imprisonment. Of course, being a good and loyal subject, the farmer gladly makes plans to obey the king’s edict. However, just before harvest, a fire breaks out in the farmer’s barn, and the barn, together with the whole crop, is burned to ash. What will the farmer do now? In a matter of days the king’s emissary will come demanding the king’s percentage! A great fear strikes the farmer. Surely, he will lose both his land and his liberty when he fails to pay his tax!

The farmer, however, has underestimated the goodness of his king. The local lord informs the king’s emissary, when he arrives, about the fire at one of the nearby farms. The emissary kindly communicates to the farmer that he need not worry, he’ll be able to meet his quota (and he will have food to feed his family through the winter, too).

“How can that be?” asks the farmer.

“It’s very simple.” replies the king’s emissary, “The king is going to give you what amounts to a full harvest, and then he’ll take a percentage of that which is given for himself.”

In our little story we have a benevolent king (if only all kings and rulers were so kind!). As is appropriate for kings, the king makes a proclamation regarding his demands. If those demands are not met, there will rightly be punishment. When levy time comes for our farmer, he stands before the king empty-handed. So what does the good king do? He gives the farmer all that he needs, and then takes his percentage from what he himself has given to the farmer.

(1) Machen, J. Gresham, *God Transcendent; The Banner of Truth Trust*, Carlisle, PA, 1982. p.75.

*-continued on back cover*

# **FAMILIES IN FOCUS**

## **THE DUTIES OF PARENTS - PART 4**



### **8. TRAIN THEM TO A HABIT OF FAITH.**

I mean by this, you should train them up to believe what you say. You should try to make them feel confidence in your judgment, and respect your opinions, as better than their own. You should accustom them to think that, when you say a thing is bad for them, it must be bad, and when you say it is good for them, it must be good; that your knowledge, in short, is better than their own, and that they may rely implicitly on your word. Teach them to feel that what they know not now, they will probably know hereafter, and to be satisfied there is a reason and a needs-be for everything you require them to do.

Who indeed can describe the blessedness of a real spirit of faith? Or rather, who can tell the misery that unbelief has brought upon the world? Unbelief made Eve eat the forbidden fruit, she doubted the truth of God's word: "Ye shall surely die." Unbelief made the old world reject Noah's warning, and so perish in sin. Unbelief kept Israel in the wilderness, it was the bar that kept them from entering the promised land. Unbelief made the Jews crucify the Lord of glory, they believed not the voice of Moses and the prophets, though read to them every day. And unbelief is the reigning sin of man's heart down to this very hour, unbelief in God's promises, unbelief in God's threatenings, unbelief in our own sinfulness, unbelief in our own danger, unbelief in everything that runs counter to the pride and worldliness of our evil hearts. Reader, you train your children to little purpose if you do not train them to a habit of implicit faith, faith in their parents' word, confidence that what their parents say must be right.

I have heard it said by some, that you should require nothing of children which they cannot understand that you should explain and give a reason for everything you desire them to do. I warn you solemnly against such a notion. I tell

you plainly, I think it an unsound and rotten principle. No doubt it is absurd to make a mystery of everything you do, and there are many things which it is well to explain to children, in order that they may see that they are reasonable and wise. But to bring them up with the idea that they must take nothing on trust, that they, with their weak and imperfect understandings, must have the "why" and the "wherefore" made clear to them at every step they take, this is indeed a fearful mistake, and likely to have the worst effect on their minds.

Reason with your child if you are so disposed, at certain times, but never forget to keep him in mind (if you really love him) that he is but a child after all, that he thinks as a child, he understands as a child, and therefore must not expect to know the reason of everything at once.

Set before him the example of Isaac, in the day when Abraham took him to offer him on Mount Moriah (Gen. xxii.). He asked his father that single question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" and he got no answer but this, "God will provide Himself a lamb." How, or where, or whence, or in what manner, or by what means, all this Isaac was not told; but the answer was enough. He believed that it would be well, because his father said so, and he was content.

Tell your children, too, that we must all be learners in our beginnings, that there is an alphabet to be mastered in every kind of knowledge, that the best horse in the world had need once to be broken, that a day will come when they will see the wisdom of all your training. But in the meantime if you say a thing is right, it must be enough for them, they must believe you, and be content.

Parents, if any point in training is important, it is this. I charge you by the affection you have to your children, use every means to train them up to a habit of faith.

#### **9. TRAIN THEM TO A HABIT OF OBEDIENCE.**

This is an object which it is worth any labour to attain. No habit, I suspect, has such an influence over our lives as this. Parents, determine to make your children obey you, though it may cost you much trouble, and cost them many tears. Let there be no questioning, and reasoning, and disputing, and delaying, and answering again. When you give them a command, let them see plainly that you will have it done.

Obedience is the only reality. It is faith visible, faith acting, and faith incarnate. It is the test of real discipleship among the Lord's people. "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John xv. 14). It ought to be the mark of well-trained children, that they do whatsoever their parents command them. Where, in deed, is the honour which the fifth commandment enjoins, if fathers and mothers are not obeyed cheerfully, willingly, and at once?

Early obedience has all Scripture on its side. It is in Abraham's praise, not merely he will train his family, but "he will command his children, and his household after him" (Gen. xviii. 19). It is said of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, that when "He was young He was subject to Mary and Joseph" (Luke ii. 51). Observe how implicitly Joseph obeyed the order of his father Jacob (Gen. xxxvii. 13). See how Isaiah speaks of it as an evil thing, when "the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient" (Isa. iii. 5). Mark how the Apostle Paul names disobedience to parents as one of the bad signs of the latter days (2 Tim. iii. 2). Mark how he singles out this grace of requiring obedience as one that should adorn a Christian minister: "a bishop must be

one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." And again, "Let the deacons rule their children and their own houses well " (1 Tim. iii. 4, 12). And again, an elder must be one "having faithful children, children not accused of riot, or unruly" (Tit. 1. 6).

Parents, do you wish to see your children happy? Take care, then, that you train them to obey when they are spoken to, to do as they are bid. Believe me, we are not made for entire independence, we are not fit for it. Even Christ's freemen have a yoke to wear, they "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. iii. 24). Children cannot learn too soon that this is a world in which we are not all intended to rule, and that we are never in our right place until we know how to obey our betters. Teach them to obey while young, or else they will be fretting against God all their lives long, and wear themselves out with the vain idea of being independent of His control.

*Teach them to obey while young,  
or else they will be fretting against  
God all their lives long.*

Reader, this hint is only too much needed. You

will see many in this day who allow their children to choose and think for themselves long before they are able, and even make excuses for their disobedience, as if it were a thing not to be blamed. To my eyes, a parent always yielding, and a child always having its own way, are a most painful sight ; painful, because I see God's appointed order of things inverted and turned upside down; painful, because I feel sure the consequence to that child's character in the end will be self-will, pride, and self-conceit. You must not wonder that men refuse to obey their Father which is in heaven, if you allow them, when children, to disobey their father who is upon earth.

Parents, if you love your children, let obedience be a motto and a watchword continually before their eyes.

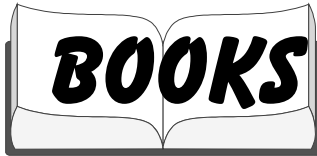
-by J.C. Ryle

# YOUTH'S CORNER

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H	E	F	M	Q	W	J	O	C	K	E	V	T
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G	V	L	E	H	T	I	C	Y	D	T	Q	M
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T	A	I	O	C	N	P	M	F	L	E	L	D
S	E	F	K	R	D	U	D	O	L	L	L	I
J	F	E	R	O	D	T	N	I	H	E	K	S
M	I	N	E	A	T	A	A	B	C	W	S	T
K	E	N	E	M	I	E	S	E	H	T	D	H
B	Q	D	N	A	N	D	M	Y	M	F	O	E

## PSALM 27:1,2

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION; WHOM SHALL I FEAR? THE LORD IS THE	STRENGTH OF MY LIFE; OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID? WHEN THE WICKED, EVEN MINE	ENEMIES AND MY FOES, CAME UPON ME TO EAT UP MY FLESH, THEY STUMBLED AND FELL.
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## BOOKS IN REVIEW

We live in a day when Biblical preaching is absent in many churches. There is "sharing", "suggesting", "stories and anecdotes" and lots of preaching meant to appeal to the hearer's "felt needs and emotions". But there is little authoritative, expository preaching of God's Word to be found. God's pronouncement about the people of Israel that they were destroyed due to a lack of knowledge is applicable to the church in our day as well. Sad to say, many do not even know what Biblical preaching is and therefore cannot discern when it is missing. That is why this book on preaching with chapters written by various authors is so necessary in our day. With chapters on "The Primacy of Preaching", "The Foolishness of Preaching", "Expository Preaching", "Preaching to the Mind", "Preaching to the Heart", "Preaching with Authority", and others, this book is a must read for all who love the Lord and His kingdom. It will help congregations know what true preaching should be like as well as guide you in holding their pastors to this Biblical standard.

**Feed My Sheep:  
A Passionate Plea for Preaching**  
Publisher: Soli Deo Gloria  
285 pages (paperback)

*-submitted by Cope Jonkman*



# MISSION SPOTLIGHT

## IRAQ

Back in the 60's Bob Dylan challenged a whole generation with the lyrics of a song; "Get out of the way if you can't lend a hand for the times they are a changing." In today's political climate of intense competition for power, dirty politics have become the norm. In this struggle between parties Iraq has become the political Whipping boy. It seems that many have lost sight of the possibilities there. We seem to, as a nation, have lost our perspective; we won the war in Afghanistan and Iraq; we are a presence in the Middle East, working for the possibility of democracy in those regions. To compare Iraq with Viet Nam is ludicrous, those who do so were either too young to remember that conflict or have seared their conscience to the point of shamelessly exploiting the past without regard to the facts. More Americans were murdered in America last year than have died in Iraq. More people were killed in auto accidents last year than have died in the whole war effort. We hear news today like, the Taliban are regrouping, Al Qaeda is regrouping, why would this be? Obviously they have been dispersed and damaged. What few are saying these days is that no one over there wants us to leave Iraq. Not the Sunnis, the Shi'ites or the Kurds. Why is this so? They understand the possibilities of civil war between these groups. If we pull out, simply put, hundreds of thousands could die. Iran has ambitions to assimilate the Shi'ite portion of Iraq, thereby strengthening its power in the region; this is nuclear Iran we are talking about. Turkey has ambitions for the partitioning of Northern Iraq and the destruction of Kurdish autonomy. Saudi Arabia feels compelled to get involved to protect Sunni interests in the region. All of this looms on the horizon of an American pull out. This is the political reality, but how about the Gospel reality?

I can understand the political fervor over our nations Mid East involvements, but what about our fervor as believers for the lost of this portion of the world that has been closed to us for so many years? It was Christ who said, "Go ye into all of the World." We as believers have been given an incredible window of opportunity into the Muslim world and despite all the nay-Sayers in the news, there are many volunteers of the faith who are ready, willing and able to go. One percent of missions giving has been allotted to reach the Muslim world, this is practically a default to Islam; no wonder our world is so troubled today.

Like most efforts, those who go must be sent, they can't go it alone; "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?" (1Cor. 9:7). "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that

preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:14-15)

The simple truth is that missions cannot happen without those willing to go. Those willing to go cannot do so without those willing send them. There is a unique symbiosis here, that is, a mutually beneficial relationship. Goers + Senders = Harvest and Harvest = Reward in this life and the one to come.

I still believe that Believers are the most potent force on the Earth; contingent, of course, on our willingness to act upon what we believe. The Lord said, "All things are possible to those who believe." I still believe we can change our world.

We need some like-minded partners to lend a hand for the next leg of the journey.

Here are a number of small projects individuals like you as well as individual churches can take on over the next several months. These things can be accomplished immediately and have a lasting impact upon real Kurdish people in Kurdistan of Iraq.

### **VILLAGE MEDICAL OUTREACHES:**

We are involved with Six Kurdish Villages: Passe Village, Geleka, Dakhan, Koreme, Geze Widow's Village and Baban (Yezedi Kurds). The cost of each village medical outreach is about a \$1000.00. This includes medication, transportation and workers. A full report and photos will be sent to all who participate.

### **THE WIDOW OF GELEKA AND HER CHILDREN:**

This is about a woman in the village of Geleka whose husband was killed when he stepped on a land mine out in the mountains where he was gathering food for his family. He left behind eight children. We have helped to keep the children clothed and in school at a cost of \$1200.00 per year. This is not a great deal of money but it makes a great difference concerning this family's future. In addition, it has an impact on the village as a testimony of Christian concern and care.

### **GOLISTAN AND HER FAMILY:**

Golistan is a young widow, she was cast out of her In-laws house after her husband was killed in an auto accident. Her child was forcibly taken from her by her husband's family as well as the dowry given her at her betrothal. She was forced into the arranged marriage at age fourteen by her father, who has since acknowledged that this was a mistake. Many here are coming to see that the old traditions are not the best and are now open to change.

Golistan is still a young woman; because she is no longer a virgin (very important to Muslim men) she is considered by most as used goods. She has no education and her future is very bleak. She is looking for a way out of Islam and for a new life; we can help by getting involved with her future. A number of people have expressed interest in helping her after hearing her story, but no one has yet stepped up to the plate. Her father and brothers are very open to us; they have a small very modest home (even by Kurdish standards) under construction that needs to be finished. For \$2000.00 we could furnish this family with a home of their own. For another \$1200.00 we could start this young woman's schooling and make all the difference in her future.

**IDP VILLAGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT:**

IDP's are Internally Displaced Persons. There are large number of these folks who live in schools, prisons, such as Nzarke fortress and various other government buildings because there is no housing available to them. It's hard for us to comprehend the long-term consequences of 4000 destroyed Kurdish villages. Saddam had all but destroyed the whole of the Kurdish infrastructure.

I met with the Governor of Duhok Governate, the second largest in Kurdistan and discussed these problems and proposed building an IDP village in the region to accommodate the problems of the Governate. He was very enthusiastic and agreed to supply basic materials and land. He asked if we could build 450 houses, I told him no, but that we would attempt 50 houses; if we accomplished that goal we would attempt 50 more the same way until the job was done. For the price of one American Home, we could construct a whole village. The average cost per home at this time would be about \$4000.00 to \$6000.00 this is something that could be accomplished by individual churches as a project.

**AIRFARE FOR JACK (TO GET BACK TO IRAQ):**

Then there is the missionary himself. Our missionaries can do the job, but they can't send themselves. The British Airways Missionary Fare is about \$1160.00. Once in Iraq, Jack's upkeep is pretty reasonable about \$1480.00 per month - this includes food, housing, fuel, and telecommunications. The essential team members, Mohammed and Khaled cost an additional \$1400.00 per month. This includes the use of Mohammed's car.

These are opportunities now! The doors are open, we have favor with the Kurdish Regional Government and these people are in need of our help. They will never forget those who help them, nor the testimony of concerned Christians who entered their world, not with weapons but with love and compassion. These are POSSIBILITIES which can change the future. If those who are able would take on part or all of one of these needs, we can get the job done.

As I wrote this article I read something I would like to share;

it's from my morning devotional and it's written by Oswald Chambers.

**THE IMPOVERISHED MINISTRY OF JESUS**

Where then do You get that living water? (John 4:11). The well is deep and even a great deal deeper than the Samaritan woman knew! (4:11). Think of the depths of human nature and human life; think of the depth of the wells in you. Have you been limiting, or impoverishing, the ministry of Jesus to the point that He is unable to work in your life? Suppose that you have a deep well of hurt and trouble inside your heart, and Jesus comes and says to you, Let not your heart be troubled (John 14:1). Would your response be to shrug your shoulders and say, but, Lord, the well is too deep, and even You can't draw up quietness and comfort out of it? Actually, that is correct. Jesus doesn't bring anything up from the wells of human nature, He brings them down from above. We limit the Holy One of Israel by remembering only what we have allowed Him to do for us in the past, and also by saying, of course, I cannot expect God to do this particular thing. The thing that approaches the very limits of His power is the very thing we as disciples of Jesus ought to believe He will do. We impoverish and weaken His ministry in us the moment we forget He is almighty. The impoverishment is in us, not in Him. We will come to Jesus for Him to be our comforter or our sympathizer, but we refrain from approaching Him as our Almighty God. The reason some of us are such poor examples of Christianity is that we have failed to recognize that Christ is almighty. We have Christian attributes and experiences, but there is no abandonment or surrender to Jesus Christ. When we get into difficult circumstances, we impoverish His ministry by saying, of course, He can't do anything about this. We struggle to reach the bottom of our own well, trying to get water for ourselves. Beware of sitting back, and saying, "It can't be done." You will know it can be done if you will look to Jesus. The well of your incompleteness runs deep, but make the effort to look away from yourself and to look toward Him.

As Dylan said; "Get out of the way if you can't lend a hand, for the times they are a changing."

Come on! Lend a hand, roll up your sleeves and get involved! There's a world out there to win and lives to save. You can be part of the solution, instead of being a part of the problem. Let's focus together on the Possibilities!

Jack Harris  
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I believe that if there is one thing which pierces the Master's heart with unutterable grief, it is not the world's iniquity but the church's indifference.  
~John Owen

## **A KING FOR THE EMPTY HANDED**

**(CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER)**

This is precisely what Christ does for His people. Christ, as Prophet, makes known the will of God. His is a hard will. A firm will. So hard and high is that will that nobody can possibly keep it, with the exception of Jesus alone. Yet, at the hour of disaster, when payment is about to come due and we stand empty handed because of our faithlessness and sin, Jesus shows himself to be a Great King as well as a Great Prophet. He pours out the bounty of His righteousness into our hands and heart. "I will it," says He, "be thou clean." Thanks be to God that Christ is not only the *Wisdom* of God, He is also the *Power* of God! (I Corinthians 1:24) By Christ as Wisdom, we come to know God's will. Through Christ as King, we come to obey God's will.

It might be well at this point to recall how that Power comes to be at our service, being the ministry of Christ's Priesthood at Calvary; but that is not my purpose in this brief meditation. *I desire the reader presently to celebrate with me the kingly power of Christ.* Christ is, most certainly, our great example of honor, virtue,

and character. He is the embodiment of all that is good. The embodiment of the Law. But friends, there can be no joy in following Christ if only to be left far behind Him in holiness. Praise God that Christ is not content to serve merely as our moral example. From Christ is both example and empowerment. His is the power which will draw us to Himself, to be as holy as Himself.

Jehovah commanded His people, "Be holy, as I am holy." (Leviticus 11:45) These words can inspire nothing but terror and foreboding in those who look to Christ merely as Teacher and Example. These must have more of Christ than that. It is not enough that Christ be for them Prophet if they value their eternal souls. Christ must become their King. It is not sufficient merely to hear His teaching, it must be implanted within. Learning about the holiness of God is a far cry from possessing it.

-by Edward W. Ludt

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For Christ's Crown and Covenant

Services: Sundays at 10:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.

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