

# PASS THE ORANGES

RESTRICTED

By AK

We kept pausing to pass out oranges. Listening to their stories, we were overwhelmed with the horror of what these women had endured. Three years in captivity with ISIS had etched wounds on both hearts and faces. There were moments of heavy silence, as they recalled those stories which could not be spoken. Our team from the peace camp didn't know what to do with such pain. The sweetness of the oranges was meant to remind us all, in some small way, that life could go on. A taste of hope.

We hadn't asked them to share. We had come to the refugee camp only to love them, not to re-open their wounds. But we had barely made it through our introductions before they began talking. So we listened, deeply disturbed by how evil could so greatly rob human beings of their dignity.

Yet these women still had such dignity, sitting there, eating oranges.

A young girl beside me was asked if she would now go to school. She shook her head. Maybe one day. Not now, not this soon. She had been rescued only fifteen days ago. In the ensuing silence, I heard children playing outside, children

Three years in captivity with ISIS had etched wounds on both hearts and faces.

conceived in captivity. It sounded like my street in North America, except that I don't live in a makeshift tent, pitched in the scorching heat of a refugee camp. I have never had helicopters circle me with video cameras while I experienced a violent genocide. I have never been an item in the international news - being known about, but never known, never asked how I was feeling.

We asked permission to pray before leaving, unsure of how this would be received. Suddenly we found ourselves in a circle, holding hands. They smiled, more than we had yet seen, even as tears spilled down their faces. We lifted our requests to the Father, asking him to bring back their husbands and their sons. Asking him to heal their wounds. Asking for his blessing.

My cheeks were kissed more than a dozen times before we left. All of us were embraced, our hands and shoulders squeezed tightly. We didn't deserve such gratitude, and it almost made me cringe. What had we given? A listening ear? Empathy? We could barely comprehend such suffering. All we could do was to sit still, witness their pain and pray. Perhaps that was the best thing we had to offer.

That, and the oranges.

# NEVER FORSAKEN

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

By Nikki White

His forty-three years on the mission field saw the tragic death of six of his children, as well as his first wife. He lost his health, was crippled by a fall, and was rejected by his financial supporters because he adopted the ethnic garb of the local people and dared to deploy single women as missionaries. His life was threatened by those he sought to evangelize, and he was consistently criticized by his own mission agency.

Hudson Taylor had every reason to feel forsaken.

Yet, on September 4, 1869, at the age of thirty-seven, he wrote, "The Spirit of God revealed to me the truth of our oneness with Jesus as I had never know it before... I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed!) that He had said, 'I will never leave thee.'"<sup>1</sup>

This promise sustained Hudson Taylor for another thirty-three years as he went on to found the China Inland Mission.

Our brothers and sisters across the globe are clinging to this promise daily. Some face hostility from animists who fear for the safety of their villages, believing that Christians incur the wrath of neglected spirits. Others provoke the anger of Buddhists whose children, in choosing to follow Jesus, cannot be counted on to offer the sacrifices needed to secure a happy eternal state for their parents. In some regions, Christians are persecuted by angry, radical Islamists who condemn them for their false teachings about a divine Messiah and a triune God. Even tolerant Muslims still lash out against the global imposition of the self-indulgent consumerism they associate with Western Christianity. And here in North America, the Church is regularly shredded on Facebook by angry rants of perpetual social outrage.

Christ's promise of oneness both beckons us in, and sends us out.

God's people face slander, mockery, loneliness, sickness, oppression, demonic opposition, injustice and violence. But never are we forsaken. Christ's promise of oneness both beckons us in, and sends us out. In our oneness, his joy becomes ours, pressed down, shaken together and spilling over.

Let us remember to surround our global family with our fervent prayers, to remind them frequently of our love and support and to embrace the oneness into which Jesus invites us.

"And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20, ASV).

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, Dr. and Mrs. Howard (2013-05-25). Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret (p. 149). . Kindle Edition.

# Daily Prayer Guide

# November 2018

| Sunday                                 | Monday                                     | Tuesday                               | Wednesday                     | Thursday                                | Friday                                  | Saturday                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
|  |  |                                       |                               | 1<br>Cecil & Tracy Ramos<br>Thailand    | 2<br>G & G<br>Restricted                | 3<br>Jon & Bonnie Esau<br>Thailand       |
| 4<br>K & K<br>Austria                  | 5<br>Travis Jost<br>Burundi                | 6<br>John Ervin<br>Worldwide          | 7<br>Barbara Block<br>India   | 8<br>B & M<br>Germany                   | 9<br>Doris Goertz<br>Japan              | 10<br>D & M<br>Austria                   |
| 11<br>A & R<br>Restricted              | 12<br>Jeremy & Adrienne Penner<br>Thailand | 13<br>D & S<br>Restricted             | 14<br>Katie Mount<br>Thailand | 15<br>Oasis<br>Restricted               | 16<br>Richard & Hazel Funk<br>Austria   | 17<br>Somdy & Chanh Jusse<br>Thailand    |
| 18<br>Tyler & Cheryl Schulz<br>Burundi | 19<br>PK & C<br>Restricted                 | 20<br>Alan & Colleen Foster<br>Panama | 21<br>Liana Penner<br>Peru    | 22<br>Einer & Girlesa Zuluaga<br>Panama | 23<br>Junji & Hitomi Nukaga<br>Thailand | 24<br>Heinrich & Annie Rempel<br>Germany |
| 25<br>MT<br>Restricted                 | 26<br>Johann Matthies<br>Germany           | 27<br>Bob Davis<br>SE Asia            | 28<br>R & M S<br>Restricted   | 29<br>Jen Schmidt<br>Mexico             | 30<br>Walter & Ina Reimer<br>Germany    |  |