

## Teaching for 11-7-07

### Jesus In Our Midst

There are some pretty dramatic stories coming out of Middle Eastern and North African countries related to Jesus Christ and His manifest presence. In parts of the world that seem spiritually dark and devastating, Jesus Himself is showing up to bring hope and truth!

In one story related by Joel Rosenberg in his book *Epicenter*, an Iranian man walked into a Christian Church for the first time. Church members were nervous, not knowing his intentions. He began to share biblical truths with them, indicating he had knowledge of Jesus Christ. In talking further with him, they realized that he had never been a part of a church—but that Jesus Himself had been appearing to the man and personally discipling him for two hours every day for the past year! He finally had the courage to identify with other believers (pg. 218).

An Algerian pastor recently related another story of a Christian woman who lived in a remote village in Algeria where there had been no missionary presence and no Bibles. The pastor was intrigued upon hearing about the woman, and met with her to listen to her story. She said that Jesus had appeared to her while sleeping—and then began teaching her on a regular basis. She was able to quote Scripture (without owning a Bible) and speak of spiritual truths because Jesus Himself had taught her!

Imagine such an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ that you know without a doubt that Jesus is caring for you in the most loving and personal way! This is happening with increasing frequency in dark places where people are desperate for hope and healing.

### True Transformation In His Presence

In Western culture, we can debate whether Jesus actually speaks today in such profound ways. We often build our theology based on our own personal experiences, and then expect Jesus to fit within our parameters of explainable phenomenon. We show up in church, sing a few worship songs, hear a sermon, run a program or two, and then go home believing that we have truly met Jesus. Perhaps we have.

But perhaps there's more.

There are many people in other countries who will tell you that there is so much more to the person and work of Jesus Christ. They have come to the end of their own resources, often through war, persecution, or other devastation. In their hunger and thirst for deliverance, Jesus is welcomed with open and desperate hearts—and He shows up in mighty and wonderful ways! They are experiencing Jesus as their only hope for healing, and He is not disappointing them. There is no question that Jesus is in their midst—and the result is true transformation that changes everything.

The Apostle Peter lived with the full reality of Jesus' redeeming and healing power that dramatically changed his world. Yet he quoted the Prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-29) about a day that was *yet to come*:

*“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy”* (Acts 2:17-18).

Given the number of Muslims, Hindus, and followers of other religions who are coming to faith in Christ because Jesus is appearing to them in dreams and visions, one could certainly make the case that these are unprecedented days!

### **Come, Lord Jesus!**

*Come, Lord Jesus* is the theme of the new *Transformation Prayer Guide* that is coming out this week. It is an invitation for Jesus to come in our midst as *Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King*. It is an acknowledgement that there is so much more to Jesus than we can begin to imagine or understand. It is a heart cry to seek the Lord Jesus more fervently and fall in love with Him more deeply.

Our prayer for you in the coming year is that your heart will increase in its longing for the manifest presence of Jesus Christ. Our desire is that the prayer guide will be translated for you from words on a page to the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit at work within you.

By praying faithfully and seeking the Lord with humble and repentant hearts, we believe this next year can be one of truly experiencing the manifest presence of Jesus Christ in our own nation. When Jesus shows up, may we be prepared and eager to receive Him!