



God Gives Refugees Peace That Can Never Be Taken Away

The boat was overloaded with refugees trying to make it to Lesbos, Greece, when suddenly the engine stopped. Were they going to be among the many fleeing the horrors of their homeland only to lose their lives in the cold Mediterranean waters?

A young boy prayed to the “God of his father” to save them, and instantly the motor started!

The Arabic-speaking boy didn’t know Jesus, but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob answered his prayer and brought them safely to Lesbos.

The boy’s father had already met Jesus before he arranged to put his wife and five sons on the rusty old boat. Being a Christian amplified the danger they faced at home.

Now they found themselves in a squalid refugee camp where hope quickly fades under the pressure of boredom and mounting desperation.

Community Bible Study is taking the light of the gospel into Lesbos and refugee camps across Europe.

“Hear about the ‘Christian Jesus’”

CBS trained workers go into the camps and invite anyone who wants to hear about the “Christian Jesus” to join them for lunch and a discussion. Using the CBS Luke lessons in Arabic, they often start with the lesson about Jesus calming the storm, because the refugees have had the experience of using small boats to get to Greece.

Many come to hear about Jesus. Most have seen firsthand the hatred of the Islamic extremists, and their hearts are open to the gospel message. Some are already believers, like the father of the five sons. Others have had dreams about someone telling them about Jesus. They learn that Jesus is not just a prophet—He is the Son of God; He *is* God.

Those who choose to become followers of Jesus are organized into small groups with CBS leaders. The leaders train them to use the Bible study lessons to begin growing in their faith.

The boy who prayed to the “God of his father” now knows Jesus for himself. Despite their traumatic past, he and his four brothers, who were recently baptized, now have true security and peace that cannot be taken from them ... *ever*.

Horrific Traumas

The traumas any typical refugee has experienced go far beyond anything most Americans can even begin to imagine. Their homes and possessions have been taken from them or destroyed. They have lost their vocations and income. They have suffered from physical abuse. They have lost friends and family, often violently. One young man saw his mother and



Refugees in France worship God in a makeshift church.

father killed right in front of him. Then his cousins were raped before being killed in front of him too. “Where was God at this time?” he asked. Those kinds of questions are never easy to answer. But as the CBS leader struggled to teach him about forgiveness, the Holy Spirit ministered to and helped the young man as only He can.



Scenes from a refugee camp in Europe.

In many Middle Eastern countries, being a Christ follower is difficult. Often it’s hard even to find other believers to fellowship with. One man at the refugee camp had met Jesus while living in his home country as a young adult. Meanwhile, in another part of that same country, a young woman also came to know Jesus. A Christ-following mutual friend introduced them. They immediately liked each other and soon were married in an Islamic ceremony because their families had no idea that they were Christians. They lived under cover for a long time, but eventually they were found out. From then on, their lives were extremely difficult. However, in the refugee camp, they can now raise their two children as Christians, and for the first time, they are free to worship openly.

As CBS international director, I have had the opportunity on multiple occasions to meet with refugees from Syria, Iraq, and other places. Of all the tragic losses they share, the one I hear most is the loss of hope and dreams. Like all of us, refugees long for a better tomorrow for themselves and their children. But in a refugee camp, that dream is shattered. At least apart from Jesus it is.

Outreach Expanding in Middle East

Already, the CBS Arabic outreach touches refugee lives in France, Germany, Finland, and the Netherlands, in addition to Greece. With God’s empowerment, we expect to be reaching refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and other places in the Middle East. This CBS effort will reach those who do not yet know Christ, His salvation, and the hope He gives for a better tomorrow not only in this life, but also in eternity to come.

In Galatians 6:10, Paul instructs us, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” As the CBS family, we are part of that “household”—and so are the CBS leaders who work so hard to serve God’s growing family in these refugee camps and other places throughout the world.

You can help these faithful leaders offer God’s hope and salvation to the many who are waiting to meet the “Christian Jesus.” Would you consider those who are not in God’s family yet by making a generous year-end contribution?

Thank you for praying for the global ministry of Community Bible Study, and especially for the outreach to the refugees.



Grateful for you,

Keith Sparzak
International Director

