Dear Open Door Family,

This week Carol and I had the chance to visit our daughter Rachel in Liberal, KS for a couple of days. It was wonderful to see her; it was very hard to say goodbye. I hate goodbyes. I really prefer to greet people and to spend time with them, rather than to be separated from them.

As I thought about saying goodbye today I realized that there are many Christians in the Muslim world who have had to say goodbye to family and friends because they are followers of Jesus Christ. They long for their family members to know the Truth of the Gospel but in many cases they have been kicked out of their homes and towns. During this time of Ramadan, persecution of Christians goes up significantly in most Muslim countries. Please pray for missionaries serving in closed countries, separated from their families, and in dangerous situations. Pray for Christians who long to be able to worship the Lord Jesus openly, and who long for their families and friends to come to Christ. Perhaps we can pray that they learn to *tremble at Words of God* like the people in Ezra's day did. Let's look at these verses together.

Ezra 9:3-4 *When I heard this,* [that Israel had been unfaithful to God] *I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. [4] Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.*

Ezra discovered that the people in Israel had horribly disobeyed God. He reacted by going into DEEP MOURNING over the sin of the nation. He did not commit the sin but he was appalled by it and mourned the fact that others had turned away from God. I wonder, how many times do I react with a deep sense of mourning over my own sin much less the sins of others? I love the fact that those who came close to Ezra were people who "*trembled at the words of the God of Israel.*" They understood that Obedience Requires Action. It is not enough to say you believe; you need to live out your Faith in everyday life. They were so committed to Obedience that they literally Trembled... in Awe, Fear, and Reverence before God as they thought about the sin which had been committed.

PRAYER: Lord God, help me to be so committed to Obeying You and Your Word that I tremble before Your word. May I mourn over my own sin and the sin of others. Please, Lord God, draw me ever closer to YOU. May I be so focused on You and Your Word that any slight movement towards disobedience on my part is instantly shown for the SIN that it is so that I can immediately draw close to You again.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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