

## The Friday Sermon

### Friday Prayer Focus

Each Friday just after noon several hundred million Muslims find their way to mosques around the world. In some places, almost the entire male population goes to the mosque and hears a sermon given by a religious leader. Often the sermon is given by the prayer leader (the *imam*), but this is not always the case. Sermons can be on a multitude of topics. Typically the sermon will consist of moral and spiritual guidance for everyday life using references to the Qur'an, the traditions concerning Mohammed and examples from Islamic history. In some countries Muslim preachers use their sermons to speak about how to not let the television and Internet dominate in the lives of children. Some references are sometimes made to international events, the Palestinians and others. Governments often give instructions to religious leaders in order to prevent using the pulpit for radical purposes.

Today, in the big cities of Peshawar and Quetta, Pakistan, as well as hundreds of villages and towns in between those cities thousands of largely illiterate Pashtun men will heard sermons. Their Pashtun cousins will hear similar messages in Afghanistan. Many of them are shepherds and farmers. It is possible that many of them would respond positively to the parables of Jesus if they could hear them. Unfortunately many of them also participate in the drug trade just to earn enough to live.

The 25 million Pashtuns have seen war, the drug trade, and Islamic fundamentalism for decades. They are in the quicksand of evil. Pashtun women generally work hard with daily chores, they faithfully prepare meals and care for their children. They submit themselves to their husbands and are veiled in public. Knowing that they need help with many practical aspects of life, they involve themselves in occult practices hoping to survive and prosper within a world of unknowns. They seek solutions but darkness clings to them. There are very few believers in the Pashtun homeland in Pakistan and Afghanistan.



*In many major mosques the sermon is given from the top of the "minbar." From this elevated location the preacher can usually see the entire assembly. This is a beautifully crafted minbar in Damascus, Syria.*

### ▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for the leaders of mosques who are giving sermons today. May their zeal for God become rooted in real knowledge of God (Romans 10:1-4). May God reveal himself in the lives of Islamic preachers (pray for the men who give sermons in your area as well).*
- ▶ *Pray for the Pashtun people. This people lives in great darkness and pain. Pray for divine intervention so that real salvation can come in Pashtun communities. May the mountain villages where Al Qaeda has sought refuge be transformed by the Messiah. He is the hope of the world. He is the true Savior. He brings real peace (Isaiah 9:6-7).*