**Elam Ministries**

I. Mark’s experience with Christians in Iran and Turkey

A. Challenged to get out of our comfort zones where we are in control and can manage outcomes

 B. Saying yes to God in multiple contexts

II. Passing out Farsi Bibles in the park

A. It’s easy to do mission and outreach on “formal” mission trips, but harder in the casual, every day contexts in which we find ourselves.

B. It was challenging to start, but once we started it was a reminder that people are people no matter what their cultural background

III. Anahita and Matthew’s Story

A. Matthew

1. Grew up Muslim but didn’t find hope in Islam and tried to commit suicide through prescription pill overdose.

 2. Went to church and found hope in Jesus and gave his life to Christ

3. Started sharing his faith and shared his story with a taxi driver who was planning to commit suicide through taking pills he had in his glove compartment.

4. Planted 5 underground churches in Iran, did Elam training in Turkey and then returned to train church leaders

5. Got married in 2010

6. On Christmas day, he was arrested and placed in solitary confinement for 45 days.

 B. Anahita

1. After Matthew was arrested, she and other Christians were taken to a station where they were interrogated, but she stood up to the interrogater in the name of Christ and he backed down

2. She was placed in solitary confinement for 20 days and experienced 34 days in prison.

3. After release, they moved to Turkey and planted a church there for the Iranians who had fled Iran.

4. God blessed that church and many people were added to their numbers.

5. The American embassy required then to move to the US.

6. They are still discipling and encouraging Iranian Christians through Skype, and they hope to return to Turkey.

 C. Romans 8:28

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is one detail from Sunday’s testimonies that stood out to you as either encouraging or challenging?

2. There were a number of comments made on Sunday about prayer, evangelism, and the power of God’s Word. As you consider your own life, did you feel moved to take some action or make some changes in any of those areas?

3. Matthew and Anahita’s testimony is a powerful example of believers who are willing to make Jesus the most important thing in their lives, no matter what the cost. What would it look like to put Jesus at the very center of your life in this season? What would some concrete expressions of that look like for you?