

True Mother Kang Hyun Shil

Suffering & Liberation

June 16, 2017

Bible reading: Matthew 26:36-37 King James Version (KJV)

³⁶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

³⁷ And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Good morning everyone,

Today I would like to speak to you about suffering and liberation.

Father went to prison six times. The first time that he was placed in prison was on February 22, 1948 in Pyongyang. He came out of that prison on October 14 1950. He was in prison for 2 years and 8 months. His prisoner number was 596. I think that would be a good number for us to remember. In the Korean pronunciation 596 is very similar to the pronunciation for the phrase "unjust treatment".

Father was 29 years old when he was placed in prison then and during the time that he was there he was visited primarily by Mrs. Ok Se Hyun and Mr. Kim Won Pil. Father was arrested Feb 22, 1948, because Christian ministers submitted eighty petitions to the North Korean government demanding his arrest.

The communist government was just getting started in North Korea at that time and it was of course in line with their policy to oppress religion in general, so Father was arrested by the communist police of Pyongyang. He was placed before a court on April 7, 1948.

The courtroom was filled with Christians and others who were interested in the outcome of this trial, which was held in a very tense atmosphere. But Father stood there very strong with determination to show people that he was right. The court went through the motions of a trial and issued a verdict which was five years of imprisonment. In the end Father was asked whether he had anything else to say.

He demanded that the word "false" be taken out in the formal court written judgment. In this way Father was indirectly insisting that everything that he was teaching was not false but was true, and the judge said that he would accept Father's demand. The charge against him at that time was 'disturbance against social order'

I heard from Mother Ok that the scene of Father standing in that court room was very much like the scene of Jesus standing in the court of Pontius Pilate 2000 years ago. At that time Jesus was asked, "Are you the son of God?" and he was mocked and striped of his clothes and a crown of thorn was placed on his head. They called him 'the King of the Jews' and they mocked him and they struck his head.

In Father's court room as well, Christians filled the courtroom and they chuckled and laughed at him and mocked him; voices of hatred could also be heard throughout the courtroom. Someone asked, "Are you the true Jesus?" and another, "Are you Moon Jesus? Is that what you are saying?" These kinds of things were said in a mocking way. They added, "You are the chief of the heretics. How can the chief of the heretics be Jesus?" They continued to mock him in this way.

Father remained in the Pyongyang prison for three and a half months, and then he was moved to the Hungnam prison on the east coast of Korea on May 20th. This was called the Tongni special labor concentration camp. This prison was located about 12 kms or 7-8 miles south of the city of Hamhung. It had been a fertilizer factory during the Japanese colonial period, and the Japanese had left a large mountain of fertilizer. It was the task of the prisoners to dig that fertilizer out and put it in bags so that it could be shipped out.

This work was so hard that no human being could endure it. The accommodation and food for the prisoners was extremely unsanitary and people there were tasting hell in this life. Many people were placed in that prison but most people would die before they could complete their sentence, and they would be carried out in coffins.

They were fed very poor rice with some corn and some beans. That was all. They were fed a very small amount. A person with a large mouth would be able to eat all the food that he was given in just three mouthfuls. They were fed just the minimum amount that was necessary for them to continue their work. It was not enough for them to stay alive for a long time.

This amount of food was certainly not enough for Father who had a very large build but for the first three weeks that he was there he took half of his food ration and gave it to the person next to him. He recounted that he considered the half that was left to him as the ration that was assigned to him.

From the beginning he planned to do that just for the first three weeks of his stay at Hungnam, and when that period ended he started eating the full ration. Then he told himself, "Ok, from today I have double ration. I am eating two people's ration." Because he told himself that he was able to exert more energy than the people around him.

Mother Ok and Mr. Kim Won Pil would visit Father each month and they would deliver to him a bag full of various ground-up grains, and also every time the season would change they would take to him a new set of clothes that were appropriate for the new season. But Father would receive that ground-up grain and share it with the people who were in the same cell.

That kind of sharing was something that no one else in that environment could do. From day to day there were people dying in the prison. In many cases the person would have food in his mouth and would be in the process of chewing that food when he would die. Then the other prisoners would fight each other to get to that dead person and open his mouth. Whatever rice was still in his mouth, even if it was just one grain of rice, they would try to take it out and put it into their own mouth. That was the kind of hellish situation there!

I heard Father speak about this directly. He said that when meal time came and people would receive their ration, they would be eating but would not even realize that they were eating, because even as each one was eating, they kept watching other people and what they were putting in their mouths. So even though they were feeding themselves, they were envious of the food that was going into other people's mouths.

Their hand would be moving automatically feeding themselves and they were chewing but their eyes and their heads always turned towards other people. That's what happened at meal times. Sometimes a person would only realize later that he had eaten his food, and he would look at his empty bowl, he would stand and like a crazy person he would utter, "Hey who stole my food?"

Father said, recalling the situation, that if the people loved God as much as they loved food there, they would have become central figures in history. And he would maintain that people need to know that God is alive and that He is working.

So in that situation for Father to eat a full ration rather than a half one was a way for him to psychologically be able to exert more energy there.

At night they would receive the ration of one cup of water, so Father would use it to ease his thirst but also he would dip a rag in there so the rag would be wet and at 4 o'clock in the morning he would rise and would use the rag to wash himself.

At night he would sleep next to the toilet. The reason was that if he were to sleep in the center of the cell people would step over him during the night, and as the representative body of God he hated more than anything that people would step over him and would be disrespectful to him.

Father never considered his own situation. He always considered the situation of God above him and the situation of all human beings around him and below him. Father never prayed for himself when he was in prison. He said Heavenly Father already knew his situation and so for him to pray to God and say, "Please save me; please help me!" was impossible. God was already suffering because of Father's situation so if he had prayed that way, it would have driven a nail into God's heart and he did not want to do that.

We also need to learn and come to resemble Father. He did not think of anything other than the accomplishment of God's will. During his ministry in Pyongyang Father wept a great deal, not only during his sermons but also during his prayers. But in prison he did not show any tears to God. He did not want heaven or earth to see him in weakness.

From the first day that he entered prison he prayed for his flock in Pyongyang. Three times a day he would call out their names praying that they would be able to maintain their faith in that difficult situation. If there was no time to do anything else he would sometimes recite the names of the members of his church.

I would like to talk about the work that Father did in prison. I mentioned his prisoner number 596 that sounded very similar to the pronunciation for 'unjust treatment'. The prisoners would leave the prison at 8 o'clock in the morning, go to the fertilizer factory and work eight hours until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Those 8 hours excluded the half hour that took to get to the factory and the half hour that they were given for lunch.

The problem was the amount of work that they were required to accomplish during that time. They were treated as if they were machines that would start moving at 8 o'clock in the morning and would be switched off at 5 o'clock. There were 1,500 prisoners and when they were going to and from the factory they were required to hold hands as pairs.

They were divided into teams of ten; some people would dig the fertilizer out from the mountain, others would put them in the sacks and someone would weigh the sack and someone would tie the sack. They were required to produce 130 sacks per person per day, so a team of ten was required to produce 1,300 sacks per day.

Father later explained that if this were a normal working situation where people were well fed three times a day and worked in a normal way in society, probably the team would be able to produce about 700 bags a day. But they were required to do almost twice that much! Some people were so weak that, as they were going back and forth for the bags, their legs would sometimes collapse beneath them and they would just be sitting there on the pavement.

This was a very wretched situation, and even the healthy person would come down with a lung disease after six months. But Father took it upon himself to volunteer to do the most difficult jobs. Even in the cold of winter he worked so hard that he sweated as if he had just come out of the water.

This was nitrogen fertilizer and they were not given any safety equipment, so they had to handle it with their bare hands. The nitrogen would eat them to their flesh to the extent that sometimes people's bones would be exposed. Father said at that time, "Look the flesh of the people that come from Satan may all fall away, but the bones will remain!"

Ammonia was terrible and the working situation was the worst that could be imagined, but in that situation Father thought of God's will and of the members. He would always look for the most difficult, the most dangerous jobs and volunteer for those. Others would sigh and complain, but Father would say, "No, I am in a workshop; this is a workshop center." He would affirm, "I need to learn about people's hearts in this situation so I can teach them." That is how he endured.

I have already spoken a long time, so I will stop here and I will continue to talk about Father's life in that prison at another time.

Thank you very much.

Comments from the King:

What a beautiful testimony. Of course we talked about that the other day, about Christ being fully God, full man, and that he experiences all the pain that human beings can experience. The Queen was saying the other day that if Christ was not fully man, if he was only God, he would not be able to experience all the emotions that we have. But in any scenario that we are in, no matter how depressed no matter how down or abandoned or belittled or forsaken we feel, Christ understands exactly what we are going through.

An absolutely beautiful testimony, very, very, precious testimony by Mrs. Kang this morning!

Video source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pFJEXazP4E>