

A Personal Testimony: On the Suffering Path of the Lord - Part 3

Yeong-choon Oh
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Refugee life on Jeju Island

Every other place in Busan was already full, so we lived in a church. However, no matter how much I thought about it, I did not feel safe in Busan. In the end, we decided to go to Jeju Island. We went out to the pier and boarded a large American ship. We arrived in North Jeju after twenty-three hours of agony, suffering from seasickness, but we could not find a place to stay.

Left no choice, we borrowed a handcart from the village, loaded it with our luggage and walked twenty-four kilometers to the village of Jocheon, which was about eight kilometers from the town of Jeju, and settled there. Eleven of us stayed in a small room for ten months, living on rationed rice. Though Jeju Island is part of Korea, the language is almost completely different from our Korean. At first, I could not understand it at all. Gradually, over a couple of months, I began to understand what others were saying. But our money had begun to run out, so my husband and the older children set me up, with the three younger children, in a corner of a battered-up tent in the town of Jeju and left us there to go to Busan in October 1951, saying that they would send for us once they had found a place to stay.

The war, however, did not end; it continued to rage, and in my heart the feeling that the Lord was actually going to come grew stronger. I prayed even more, going to church at four o'clock in the morning every day without fail to offer prayers. Moreover, when clouds with strange shapes appeared, I stared at the sky waiting to see if the Lord was coming on them. Thus, I waited for his coming.

Rev. Lee Yo-han had also come to South Jeju at that time as a refugee. He was collecting firewood and living on rationed rice. One day, he heard a voice from Heaven, saying, "Go to Jeju-eup on the second day of eleventh month by the lunar calendar." He had not been expecting any such thing and this command bewildered him. He prayed, "Heavenly Father, we have collected enough firewood to last us a long time, so please let us go there in the spring. We will go there after the cold winter has passed. We would need money to live in Jeju-eup." No matter how much he prayed, Heaven would not permit it. Being pressed into going, he prayed again, "How can we go there when we have no money?" The answer came that they should walk. In the end, he and his companion gave away all the firewood they had collected to others and walked for five days, arriving in Jeju-eup in the evening of the fifth day. Heaven told them to leave that place and go where their feet took them.

At the time, all the refugees living in rural areas had flocked to Jeju-eup to wait for a ship to Busan, so it was almost impossible to find a tent to stay in. I occupied one corner of a non-descript, poor tent at the far end of a cluster of dozens of tents put up together. Six families lived in it, and I was their leader. It was my job to report to the block leader about who moved into or left the tent.

On the morning of that very day, a couple that had been living across from me left for Busan, so that spot was vacant. For some reason, the block leader had been busy and was not around, so I had been unable to report the couple's departure. I was going to report it the next day. Heaven had prepared before bringing his beloved ones there. The sun was setting when two men dressed in white came to the door and asked, "Is there a place we can stay here?" I answered hesitantly, "There is one vacant spot here but I need to make a report first."

Rev. Lee and his companion came in and sat down. Since they were already inside, I let them stay. I could not make them go out again. Inside the tent was rather damp; people usually spread rice husks and placed a straw bag over them to make a place to rest, but the couple who had occupied the spot before them had used the straw bag to pack their things, which meant that all they were left with were the rice husks. They must have been tired, because they sat down on the husks. I felt sorry for them and gave them two straw bags I had.



Grace received through Rev. Lee Yo-han – before we met True Father

They cooked rice in a blackened pot and all they had as a side dish was a mackerel for dinner. Since I had been there longer, I had kimchi, and I handed them a plate of it. They said thank you, but did not say anything else. I thought to myself, "They are strange people."

They did not go to church on the Sabbath, and though I felt that they believed in Jesus, I could not question them about it. Moreover, they did not face us. They sat with their backs to us and read the Bible, and we dared not venture to speak to them. A week passed in this manner.

With the feeling that the Lord's coming was imminent, I went to pray early every morning. I was pretending to be the most devout believer.

It was the night of the 25th day of the 10th month by the lunar calendar. The area was windy at all times, but on that night, the wind blew fiercely and the rain fell in torrents. Everyone was afraid and raised a racket, some holding on to the tent or the poles and praying and others worrying aloud. Rev. Lee had been listening to them in silence when he said, "Heaven is going to pass judgment on us tonight." We all thought that we were going to die and prayed even more intensely. During those several hours, dozens of tents were in turmoil.

At about half past eleven at night, with a ripping sound, half of our tent was torn away. Three families moved out at once, going to the homes of their relatives or acquaintances, because they could not endure the rain pouring down on them. This was the judgment. Now only three households remained -- a widow with children, my family, and Rev. Lee. The wind and rain soon subsided.

We stayed up all night, using the torn part of the tent as a blanket. We waited for the day to break and then got up, found that the other tents were all unharmed and that ours had been the only one Heaven had passed judgment on.

In the morning, the weather was fine and windless. On the whole, it was a clear day. Rev. Lee said, "I have finally become the owner." With a light heart, he made us all collect stones, and we straightened the tent together and propped it up with poles. After a half-day's hard work, the tent became livable again, at least for the three remaining households. In an instant, Heaven had judged and disencumbered the tent of the families of two church elders and a church deacon.

Another week passed. On the night of the first day of the 11th month of the lunar calendar, at eleven o'clock at night, everyone had lain down to sleep, when my eight-year-old, Yoon-ju, asked me, "Mommy, why did God create the devil?" I answered, "He didn't create the devil; the devil became the devil all by

himself." The child continued, "If that's the case, won't God lose to the devil? A war has broken out and we have had to come all the way here and suffer...."

I could find no words to answer these questions. Even at the age of eight, Yoon-ju had asked his grandfather, who was a church elder, questions he had been unable to answer for his young grandson. So I chided him. "Why are you asking such questions again? I don't know!" I told him to go to sleep.

In the early hours of the 2nd day of 11th lunar calendar month, Rev. Lee a voice saying, "Open the door." He opened the flap of the tent but there was no one there, and felt that he was being told to speak to me. Therefore, he began to speak to me, saying first that he had prepared extensively with the intention of presenting talks in a large church.

In the early morning, Rev. Lee sat facing me, and his first words were a criticism. He told me that when my young child had asked questions the previous night, I should have told him that I did not know and that he should pray to receive an answer. He criticized me for telling the child to go to sleep instead. Then he poured out statements I had never heard in my church. I was bewildered and at first suspicious. I wondered who the man was that was saying these things, but what he said was so interesting and wonderful that I forgot all about cooking breakfast or eating it. The door of my heart opened, and I underwent the wonderful experience of truth tasting sweeter than honeycombs.

Rev. Lee said, "I don't know who you are that Heaven has guided us from hundreds of kilometers away to come to this place so that I can say these things to just one person."

I resented even the moments of rest. I wished I didn't have to spend time eating or sleeping. Even when I went out to do the washing, I would come running back without checking to see if all the soapy water had drained. Since I could not ask him to say more to me, I stood there and gazed at him like a hungry child who is too shy to ask for food so keeps staring at it. Understanding my heart, Rev. Lee spoke to me whenever he had time.