

Father's Life in His Own Words - Part 38

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While civil war wreaked havoc throughout the peninsula, the North Korean regime continued to expend money and manpower on the imprisonment of "dangerous" religious leaders.

Suffering in Pyongyang Prison and Hungnam Labor Camp

Clothing made with love

The prison cells weren't heated rooms as in a regular house. Morning and night, the cells were colder than outside during the winter, because outside there was sunshine. Prisoners don't need silk or satin clothes. They would fight over who got a sack. Even a straw bag would be fine for them. You can appreciate the real value of clothes in prison.

I was always wearing the most ragged clothes. I gave all my good clothes to others and used a bamboo needle to patch up my worn-out ones. When family members brought me good clothes, I gave them to the most miserable prisoners.

I also made articles of clothing out of tent cloth and gave them to people who never had visitors. They liked them so much. Among the prisoners there were those who were going out in the strong wind in clothes so worn that their bottoms showed. It was to these men that I gave the clothes I made.

I also taught them a pattern for making pants. I folded wrapping cloth and then cut out the pattern to make them. In this way, one could make ten pairs on a Sunday.

I wanted to feed others while I was starving. I wanted to clothe others while I was shivering in the cold. This is because I had to connect them together with lines of love even in that environment. If I did that, when I pulled on those lines, I could catch them all.

The value of a single needle

Did they provide needles in the prison? Absolutely not; you had to provide them yourself. Hearing that somebody in some cell had a needle was the most sensational news. You would negotiate with that man. Seeing a needle, I would wonder if anything could be more valuable than that.

When we needed to, we got pieces of broken glass. Even if we were punished later, we'd throw a hook to knock bits of glass from the roof of the plant. We used them to shave and to make chopsticks. I was teaching others how to do that.

You fold a piece of wire and trim it with a piece of glass. Then, you'd have a beautiful needle. My front tooth was damaged slightly while I was making a needle. How valuable would a needle made with such effort be?



Making rice balls for soldiers during the Korean War; one of these might approximate to a day's food ration at Hungnam labor camp.

Working with modesty

While I was in prison in Hungnam and working in the fertilizer factory, I always kept my trouser legs closed by tying them at the bottom with a strip of cloth, even during the hottest months. I never let my shins show. I still had a sacred path to travel that required me to shed sweat and offer it to God, and I didn't want to show my body to anyone when I was in the process of offering sincerity and dedication to God.

You all know about sulfuric acid. A steam-like mist rises from it. It was so hot that even in the winter months, everyone else would strip down to his underwear to work. But even working in the fertilizer factory, I always wore long trousers. I made sure my underwear was not visible. I have always trained myself to be more modest than a woman protecting her virtue. I was committed to reaching the home I knew of in the original homeland and to establishing the tradition of that homeland. No matter how difficult life in prison might be, I could not let that stand in my way. While in the satanic world, I had to offer my entire body to God and maintain the standard He desired. I had to maintain my chastity. Women are not the only ones who need to keep their chastity. Men do, too.

When I needed something, the spirit world would sometimes instruct other prisoners - for instance, ignorant thieves, robbers or murderers - that in a certain prison cell there was an inmate with number 596, and they should bring a certain thing to that person. When it became winter and the weather grew cold, and I had no clothes to put on, they were instructed to bring me clothes. And when I was really hungry because I had nothing to eat, the spirit world sought out people who had never met me and, telling them my name and my number, compelled them to bring me food. Such things happened, not once or twice but many times.

Prayer while incarcerated

Absolute love. Nothing else. The communists put me in prison and subjected me to all kinds of difficulties, but I didn't stop loving God even for a moment. I kept absolute faith in God. If I have made a promise, that promise is absolute. Then if God gives an order, I understand what he is asking absolutely, no matter if it is difficult or easy. If I am in prison I must behave like a devoted son; if I am a loyal subject to God I must act like one.

Knowing that over time water dropping from the end of a gutter can pierce rock, I thought, "If tears, drops

of my love, could pierce through the rock of resentment in God's heart...." You may not understand the situation of weeping deeply and watching your tears fall.

I never prayed when I was in difficult situations. I wouldn't talk for a week or even a month. The more difficult the situation was, the more I thought about how to mobilize the best of my wisdom and make my most sincere effort to create a way for God to work through me to overcome it. I thought about how to use this kind of motivation in my heart to enable God, through His tears, to be relieved of His pain and grief. How to set off that heart-based explosion to demolish the enemy lines. This is how I thought when I prayed. I didn't think, Woe is me, I have to get out of here.



The devastation of the Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950, resulted from key figures not recognizing the Messiah. Here, the men in the background launch artillery shells.

There were members I never stopped praying for from breakfast time to when I slept during my almost three years in prison. Even if one of them left the fold, I kept praying for him or her. Some of them came to me in spirit and reported to me in tears how they had left. Some would tell me how they had to leave me because their bodies were sick and weak. Seeing that pitiable situation, I inevitably felt compassion for them. I had to pray for these people even after they had left me, until others appeared who could succeed them. For three years, I prayed for members three times a day.

Sometimes, I needed to pray about an issue for twelve hours or even twenty-four hours.

There was a convicted thief in the cell. One morning, I found him stealing. I scolded him and told him that what he was doing was wrong. But after that, I couldn't pray. There is no hell like that on earth. How mortified would you feel when your only candle goes out in the darkest night? That is exactly how I felt then. After a week of hard effort, when your prayer begins to work again, you would not exchange that for everything under heaven.

You must hold fast onto prayer. Prayer is a lifeline! You have to have something that neither God nor Satan can do for you. You have to have that power of life, vitality, which you alone can appreciate and preserve.

Next to the toilet

Thirty-six inmates were in the same cell I was in. It got so hot in the summer, but I chose to stay in the hottest and smelliest corner. What would I think about in that corner? I'd think about the coldest winter. The person who can be the master of winter can manage the summer and vice versa.

Even if you lay right next to where the prisoners defecate, you'd think that you were in better place than Adam and Eve were. Adam and Eve went on the ground directly; at least I had a bowl to use. When you'd sleep next to the manure bucket, you couldn't avoid getting an excrement shower once in a while, especially when people had to rush. Because you were right there, you got covered with the stuff! But what could you do? Nevertheless, I would think, "This is good. Isn't this a good opportunity from which to begin to master the future of humankind?"