

# The Secret Door

by Corrie Ten Boom

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*Corrie Ten Boom's sermon highlights her extraordinary faith and actions during the Holocaust, emphasizing the importance of love, sacrifice, and sharing the Gospel.*

**Duration:** 30:24

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 31:6, Psalm 23:1, Matthew 5:44, Matthew 6:33, John 14:2, John 20:21, Romans 8:14

**Topics:** "Persecution"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a boy named Martin who had a life-changing encounter with a lady who saved his life and taught him how to invite Jesus into his heart. This encounter led Martin to have a genuine transformation and a burden for souls. The speaker also shares a dangerous situation where they had to save a baby and how God gave them the strength and courage to do it. They also describe a moment in a concentration camp where they boldly proclaimed Jesus as the victor, despite the risk of being killed. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the power of having Jesus in one's heart and the courage that comes from trusting in Him.

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## Transcript

Very little needs to be said about Kori Tenbu. The experiences of her life are known to millions through the book *The Hiding Place*. But I know that when I read the book, the remarkable events in her life seemed almost too unreal to actually have happened to one person.

I asked myself, how could she endure? How could she show love for her tormentors? How could her faith survive? Then we began to work on this special recording. We just turned the recorder on and let Tante Kori tell us in her own words how God has blessed her and used her and expressed his love through her. We could see then how the fact that she was chosen to serve her Lord through suffering and hardship was actually a fulfillment of her own faith.

And we could see beautiful evidence of how all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose. We know you'll never forget meeting Kori Tenbu. My grandfather was a watchmaker.

We were all watchmakers, my grandfather, my father and I. And in the same house where I have lived 53 years of my life and father has lived more than 80 years, in that same house, in 1844, Minister Witteveen came to grandfather and said, won't you pray for the Jewish people? And grandfather said, that's a new

idea for me. I will invite my friends. And then he invited his friends and once a week they came together and prayed for the peace of Jerusalem and for the happiness of the Jews.

That was so unusual in that time. Now, it is not unusual. Many Christians pray for the Jews and for the peace of Jerusalem.

But in that time it was so new that father knew the year that they started. It was 1844. Hundred years later, in that very same house, grandfather's son, four of grandfather's grandchildren and a great grandson were arrested because they had saved Jewish people.

That was a divine but not to understand answer on prayer for the Jews. My family was a very happy family. We were not rich in money.

We were even now, sometimes, very poor. But we were rich in other things. And that was also because my father was such an unusual man.

These people, I see back, had what we call the science of life. They knew how to live, also in difficult circumstances. My father was an old-fashioned man.

He had a long beard. And he was now used to pray before and after every meal. Our talks at the table, at the meals, were always interesting.

Father didn't like when we giggled. But he liked humor. And the talks at the table were so interesting that we learned much.

And I remember that father always, in his thank-you prayer after the meals, just took a little bit of summary of our talks and brought it to the Lord and thanked Him for what we had learned and praised Him for the riches and asked forgiveness when we had been gossiping. But always he brought the talks during the meals to the Lord and thanked Him. Our house was wide open for people who were in need.

And we had very much conversation, very many visitors. But the visitors did not come for social talking. They were people who were in need or they were people who helped us in helping the needy people.

It was a very, very happy family. We got a very difficult life in our family when the occupation was there. But after some time, we just came into the work of the underground.

We tried to save Jewish people as many as we could. Always there were some in our house and some also underground workers, young boys. Boys were in danger, not so much as the Jews, because Jews, they wanted to kill the Jews.

But the boys, they wanted to bring to Germany for the ammunition factories. So we had hidden places where we could hide the boys and the Jews. In my house, we made a special hiding place that you could not find, because the secret was that they made a second brick wall.

So you could not find that behind that brick wall was still a secret room. And it was really a good room for when I was arrested and the rest of my family. In that secret room, we had four Jews and two underground workers, and they had not found them, and they were saved after three days.

But my sister Noli was married, and they had a hiding place under the table in the kitchen. And there the boys always could go. And once there was a raid, they tried to find the boys, and the boys of my sister saw

them coming.

The whole street was just visited by the German soldiers, and every boy and young man was taken. My sister hid the two boys who were at home under the kitchen table, and they put a little carpet over it, and then a table. Now, then the Germans came in, and they asked the girls, Have you brothers? Yes, they said.

We have brothers. How many? Three. Where are they? And the girl said, Under the table.

Well, now my sister told the girls never to say a lie. But then she was, of course, in a tension, and then she started to laugh. And the man just took up the tablecloth and looked under the table and didn't see anyone.

And then that girl started to laugh and to laugh, and that German soldier got a red face, and he thought, Now that girl just teases me and tells nonsense. So he turned around and ran away and left the house alone. When we were working in the underground, once I heard that in a Jewish orphanage in Amsterdam the babies had to be killed.

I worked with many teenagers, 30 boys and 20 girls, 20 men and 10 women, and I said to the boys, Save the babies of the Jewish orphanage. And these boys stole them. Now, how they did it exactly, I don't know, because I did not want to know the things, because when I could, I could later be tortured, and then when I didn't know anything, I couldn't tell anything.

But I understand that they used German uniforms. You know, sometimes German men came to us, soldiers, and said, We will not go on to work for Adolf Hitler. He is no good.

Can you help us? And I said, I sure can help you. And I hid these soldiers somewhere in a farm for the rest of the war, the duration of the war. Then they were hidden, and I took the uniforms.

So we could often do this, my boys could do things often in uniforms of the Germans. My girls distributed these babies in one day. That was not difficult.

Just imagine, when I have a baby in my hands, I say, Will you save this baby? And when you don't do it, this baby can be killed. Of course you should take the baby. It was a joy.

And one of the boys, one of my teenagers said, I believe we do the most important things, work, the most important work that there is, just saving lives. The name of that boy was Piet Hartog. I said, Piet, I think that we do an important work.

When I think of the babies that we have saved, but there is a work that is more important, and that is saving souls and tell people about Jesus. Then Piet laughed. He said, I am a Christian.

I read my Bible. I pray. I go to church.

But telling people about Jesus, that is good business for my pastor. I said, Piet, every Christian is called to be a soul winner. For Jesus has said, like the Father has sent me, so I send you.

And in your life will come a time that you will see the most important work for you. Half a year later, Piet was arrested and heard that he had only one week to live. The day before he was killed, he wrote us a letter.

All the boys and men in my cell are sentenced to death. And I am so glad that I could tell them about Jesus. Many accepted Jesus, and I know that when they will shoot us tomorrow, they will go to heaven, because they have brought their sins to Jesus, and he has made them children of God.

So we know that the house of the Father with many mansions is our very close future. I was so happy to hear that. Once I was in Australia, and I met a Dutchman.

He said, do you remember that I lived in Harlem, your hometown? And do you remember that you brought me a Jewish baby boy of two weeks old? I said, no. I know that there were about 100, but to whom I send him, I don't know. He said, I will never forget it.

We had a baby and had died. And my wife cried one evening. She said, look, now I have everything for a baby but my heart and hands are empty.

And then there was a knock at the door, and there came a boy. And he said, Corita, Mom asks, will you save a Jewish baby boy? And we said, yes. And you brought us the most beautiful baby boy we have ever seen in our life.

We have adopted him. Later we went to Australia, and he has always been a good son for us. And he turned and said, Martin, come here.

And there came a 14-year-old Jewish boy to me. He said, that's the baby that you have born. I was so moved.

And a beautiful boy it was. And Martin and I became friends. I went with the people that evening to have a Dutch cup of coffee, and Martin was just asking me questions.

And he was just looking at me. The lady saved my life. The next day, Martin came in school, and he said to the teacher, may I say something to the boys and girls? He said, go ahead.

He said, boys and girls, yesterday I have met a lady, and she has saved my life when I was two weeks old. And boys and girls, I think I will be a good boy now, for she has also taught me how to ask Jesus to come into my heart, and Jesus in my heart will make me a good boy. That was for me the evidence that he really meant it.

When Jesus is in your heart, you have a burden for souls. Once there was a woman with a baby in my house, and I didn't know where to bring her. My house was full already.

And there came a minister visiting Father. And Father said to him, will you save a baby? It is in great danger, and the mother is in danger. And the pastor said, what, do you mean that they are Jews? Yes.

He said, no, I dare not do that. And don't tell me that you do such things. You are 84 years old, and when you save Jewish people, do you know that you can come in prison? And that can take your life.

Yes, Father said, I know it. And I know that when they bring me in prison, I am too old for prison life. But when that should happen, then it should be an honor to give my life for God's ancient people, the Jews.

And the minister said, no. I will not help you. You must stop this work.

And then I came in with a baby. And Father took the baby in his arm. I will never forget that.

Father, it is a long beard, such like a patriarch. And he had that baby in his hand, and he was fond of children. And he looked at that little baby with such love.

And he said, is it worthwhile to give my life for this baby? And that minister turned around and left. Yes, Father really has given his life for God's ancient people. And I believe in the blessing of Abraham.

Those who bless Abraham will be blessed, and those who curse Abraham will be cursed. And I believe that I have such a tremendous blessed life as an 80-year-old woman, that I can bring the Gospel almost every day. And I can go on with my work.

And by the book and by the film, I will have more opportunities than ever before. And I believe I have to thank that through the blessing of Abraham. You know, I am very stupid when you awaken me in the middle of the night.

I am a deep sleeper. And very often the Gestapo came in the night. So I said once to these underground workers who were in my house, I went early to bed and they went very late to bed.

Before you go to sleep, try to find out if there are Jews in the house. So they awakened me and said, Where are the six Jews you have in the house? And I tried to be very clever and said, No, I have not six Jews, I have only two Jews. They said, Aunty, Tante, you are so stupid to say that.

Of course you must say we have no Jews. I said, Oh, that's true. Now try it tomorrow again.

And they awakened me again. Then they said, Tante, that's Aunty, Tante, where are the ration cards you have for the Jews? So I thought now they are in the secret closet, so I must say something else. And I said, They are in the big clock in the shop.

They said, Tante, you must not say another place, but you must say we have no ration card for the Jews. So I said, Yes, I see it, I am so stupid. Now be sure that you do this till I am really trained to say good answers when you just get me from my sleep.

And there was a friend of the police and he worked with us together and sometimes he came also and asked me questions. And after, I believe, after the tenth time, they said, Now you have passed your examination and you know what to answer. When later I was questioned by the real Gestapo, I was so trained that it was not difficult to answer.

Once I was ill and when I was dreaming in my feverish dream, I heard the alarm. We had through our whole house alarm buttons. And I thought, How strange this alarm.

That seems that there is really danger. The secret room was in my bedroom. So I saw the Jews who were in the house ran to the secret room.

I said, What's the matter? They said, It's a real alarm. So I understood the Gestapo had found our address. They all disappeared into the secret room.

Then I saw my little bag. And I knew in my bag, my handbag, were ration cards and all kinds of things. So I just opened the secret room again and threw my bag into that hiding place.

And then suddenly the Gestapo, there came a man in and said, You are a Jew. I said, No, I am not. He said, Give me your identification card.

So I gave it. But when I took it from that little bag, there was also money. And he grabbed that money and put it in his back pocket.

And then he saw that my identification card was OK. But he said, Arise, stand up. And you are my prisoner.

And then I came downstairs. But now there was one moment and that was a terrible temptation. I knew that there was a danger that I could be arrested.

And I had a little bag, what I call my prison bag, and I had the most important things in it, the toothbrush and a little aspirin and all the little soap and all things. I had put it before the opening of the secret room that when I take that bag, the opening is not seen because it was closed and was very well made, but it could be that because there was nothing in it, it could be dangerous. And because it could be dangerous, I did not take that bag with me.

And oh, later, when I thought, oh, if only I had had that bag, if only, oh, when I think what was all in that bag, soap and a toothbrush, I had nothing at all. Five weeks I had absolutely nothing. But then I understood, this was a sacrifice.

And I don't know if you understand it, but it was one of my greatest sacrifices, that I did not take that bag. And I'm glad I didn't. Because here I saw that Lord gave me grace to sacrifice for other people.

And then I came downstairs and I found that 35 people were arrested with us. And then, oh, they broke the doors of some rooms because they said, we will find the secret room. And then they couldn't find it.

And they haven't found it. But they took me to the shop. And then he said, where's your secret room? I said, I have not.

I have no secret room. Then he beat me in my face. And he did that so terrible that everything was stars.

And it was a terrible pain, but the pain disappeared very quickly. But I got dizzy. And when he went on beating me, I suddenly shouted, Lord Jesus, cover me.

He said, when you say that name, I'll murder you. But he could not beat me any longer. Then my sister was questioned, Betsy.

And they beat her also. And they beat her so much that she was deaf for the rest of her life. And suddenly she cried, Lord, my savior, where are you? And at that moment they couldn't beat her any longer.

But when she came back in the room, I saw that her face was swollen. I said, did he beat you? And she said, yes. And I am so sorry for the man who did it.

I thought that was beautiful, because it makes you bitter when people make you suffer by cruelty. But she was only sorry for the man who did it. Now, then they brought us to the police station and from the police station to prison.

In the concentration camps, in the first, in the prison I was formed, in solitary confinement, then they brought us to Vught. That was not a very bad concentration camp. I had to work in a factory of Philips.

And I almost had a normal life as a factory worker. But then the D-Day came and they shot almost a thousand of the prisoners and the rest were sent to Germany. And so I came in Ravensbruck, north of Berlin.

That was a terrible concentration camp where 97,000 women died or were killed. Also Betsy, my sister. Now, after some weeks, the younger, strong prisoners of us, we were with about a thousand from Holland, they were found out.

Everyone who was strong enough, they got a medical examination. They wanted to send them to the ammunition factories. So 250 of our younger prisoners were sent there and we were so terribly concerned about them.

We thought ammunition factory will be bombed and they are in great danger of life. But I was very much concerned and we knew at midnight, at 12, they should pass the big gate. And I prayed, Lord, what can I do? And then the Lord told me something to do and I did it.

Now, this was really a very dangerous thing. But I learned that when God tells you to do something, also when it is difficult, He gives you the strength and the courage to do it. Without Him, I should never have dared it.

I went through the window of my barrack and I waited till the searchlight of the guards passed us. The searchlight went the whole night around the concentration camp and everyone who was not in the barrack was shot. So I waited till that searchlight had passed and then I ran to the other side of the street and there I went in the shadow where the searchlight never came and I found a little corner rather close to the gate where I knew that all these 250 fellow prisoners had to pass.

There I stood in that corner. It was dark and they could not see me. But when the first came, when they marched through the gate, I said so loud that they could hear it, but not the guards, Jesus is victor.

They said, Corrie, how can you do that? Go back to your barrack, they will kill you. But they had to march on and I said, underneath are the everlasting arms. And they said, oh Corrie, thank you, but oh, you are in danger.

And they marched on and then I said, the Lord has said, I am your good shepherd. And then I repeated, Jesus is victor. And so everyone who passed me got a little word of encouragement.

When they all had passed, then I waited again that the searchlight had passed and I ran to my window and jumped into my barrack. Betsy said, where were you? I was the whole time praying for you. And I told her what I had done.

And she said, oh, praise the Lord that He gave you the courage to do that. Later, I met a doctor's wife who told me she was one of the 250. And she said, Corrie, the next day we came in an ammunition factory and that night the factory was bombed.

All the civil workers went into a hiding place, how do you call it, bomb shelter, but we were not allowed. So we were sitting in a big room where we had to sleep and the room was closed. We could not run away.

And we heard the bombs falling. And we knew now, any moment can come a bomb to destroy this room. She said, I was sitting in a corner and I just repeated, Corrie ten Boom has said, Jesus is victor.

Yes, Jesus is victor. And then the bomb shelter where the other factory workers were, was bombed and destroyed. All were killed and they were not killed.

After all, 249 came out alive. When I was facing death, I did not know before that one week before they killed all the women of my age in the gas chamber, I should be set free. So I have looked death in the eyes every day.

When I saw the smoke go up, I asked myself, when will be my time to be killed? Now, when you look death in the eyes, you see things very simple. Life is simple and death is simple. I saw, for instance, in my life, the devil is strong, much stronger than I. But there was Jesus, much stronger than the devil, very strong.

And together with Jesus, I was stronger than the devil. It is so simple, but that helps me now too. And that is what you learn through the word of God.

I learned the word of God is one of the greatest, no, it is the greatest possession of a human being. I had my Bible hidden on my back. It was a little Bible, but the whole Old and New Testament, special printed for underground workers, because we knew that we could be arrested.

And by a miracle of God, I could give twice a day a Bible message, or Betsy or I did it, to the prisoners who were around us. And what a joy to have the word of God. In Colossians 1.11 it is written, as you live this new life, we pray that you will be strengthened from God's boundless resources, so that you will find yourself able to pass through any experience and endure it with courage.

This book gives the answer for times of great sorrow and suffering. In this book is written, the suffering of this time is not worthy to be compared with the common glory. In this book is written, God himself will wipe away the tears from the eyes.

The hands of our head are numbered. That means that the most unimportant things of our life are really in the hands of God. Oh Lord Jesus, I praise and thank you for the opportunity you gave to tell a little bit about my experiences, and about your word.

Thank you Lord for your word. And I pray that everyone who has listened now to this message, that you will open their eyes, that they will see how you loved them.

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