

Testimonies From Asia Harvest 01

by Paul Hattaway

This sermon shares testimonies of Christians in Asia who have faced persecution and hardship, yet remain faithful to their Lord and spread the gospel to those around them.

Duration: 36:45

Scripture: Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Audio Books"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares several powerful stories of Christians who demonstrated incredible courage and faith in the face of persecution. One story tells of a family who took responsibility for a man's death and pleaded with the judge to spare the others. Another story recounts the experience of a blind brother who miraculously regained his sight while being humiliated for his faith. The sermon also highlights the inspiring story of two young women who, after coming to faith in Christ, insisted on obeying Jesus' command to go into all the world and share the gospel. Lastly, the preacher shares the heart-wrenching story of Sister Yuan, who was given the choice between staying in prison for her faith or going home to her children. Throughout these stories, the sermon emphasizes the unwavering faith and commitment of these believers, reminding listeners of the importance of standing firm in their own faith.

Transcript

Welcome to testimonies from the AsiaHarvest.org website. This is Episode 1. Asia Harvest is an interdenominational Christian ministry working in various countries throughout Asia to see effective churches planted among unreached people groups. We work alongside Asian church leaders, helping and equipping them to focus on reaching the lost.

Our main focus is China, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan and Northern India. Within these seven countries are approximately 1,000 unreached tribes and ethnic groups. Over the years we have seen and been told some remarkable accounts of how God has supernaturally moved among people groups in Asia.

We would like to share some of these stories with you exactly how they have been told to us. We have made every effort possible to verify these events from different sources and feel confident that the posted testimonies are true. The Experiences of a Chinese Pastor in Prison In 1993, Philip, a house church leader in China, was thrown in prison after he and a number of believers were arrested.

His welcome to prison was a savage beating from the guards. They kicked him viciously with their steel-capped boots, beat him with batons and tortured him with electric cattle prods designed to shock his body with high voltage. Philip was left unconscious with a broken collarbone, arm and ribs.

The prison authorities then threw his bloody and bruised body into a small cell that already contained 28 prisoners. The cell had just one bed and a bucket used by all the prisoners as a toilet. The cell leader was a rough man who had already formed a gang inside the prison.

No one was allowed to sit on or touch his bed. When Brother Philip's almost lifeless body was thrown inside the cell, however, even this hardened criminal had compassion on Philip and lay him down on his bed. At around 2 a.m., according to the testimony of the other prisoners, a supernatural light or glow appeared over Philip's body.

It shone on him for several hours. The other prisoners were absolutely terrified and backed up against the corner of the cell. They cried for the guards to come and let them out.

The guards also saw the supernatural light and were terrified, but they refused to let the prisoners out. By sunrise, Brother Philip was much better and had regained consciousness. At no time did he actually see the light, but all the other prisoners did.

Surprisingly, for the serious injuries he had received the previous night, he was feeling much better and his broken collarbone and ribs seemed to be healed. Not surprisingly, the first question the prisoners asked him was, Who are you? He replied, It doesn't matter who I am, but let me tell you about Jesus Christ. He led all 28 of the prisoners to faith in Christ.

Today, Brother Philip continues his ministry and is responsible for hundreds of house churches across China. He is a godly, humble, and committed Christian who is willing to die for the gospel. He receives no income and often goes hungry.

Believers sometimes give him love gifts, but most rural Christians in China are so poor that their sacrificial gifts are barely enough for Philip to buy a train or bus ticket to the next town. There are thousands of gospel warriors like Philip in China and in the surrounding nations of Asia. We are launching a new project called the Asian Workers Fund, in which we invite you to consider partnering in prayer and finances with workers like Brother Philip, who are being used by God to do mighty works in different locations around Asia.

Chinese judge astounded by Christian's love. During a year of intense persecution for the house churches in China in 1983, an elderly Christian widow named Shen Meiyong, along with her son and daughter-in-law, lived in central Henan province. The old woman often prayed in Jesus' name for sick people, and many recovered.

One day a very sick man was brought to their home. He was already knocking at death's door, but the family couldn't turn down the opportunity to minister God's word to the man and pray for his recovery. The man couldn't sit upright, so he was carried into the house and laid upon a bed.

Just a few minutes later, right in the middle of their prayers, the man died. In China, if someone dies while under your care, you are held responsible. When the dead man's non-Christian family heard what had happened, they lodged a complaint with the police.

The mother, daughter and son-in-law were all arrested and charged with murder. According to the law, someone would need to be put to death to atone for the death of the man. The day finally came for the three Christians to appear in court in Pingdingshan city.

News of the trial had spread far and wide, and hundreds of people packed out the courtroom. Some came eager to see the Christians punished, others came out of curiosity, while many believers came to pray for their brethren. Since their arrest, the three had been held in separate cells and had no opportunity to communicate with each other.

Shen Meiyong appeared first before the judge. Instead of pleading for clemency, she amazed everyone by confidently proclaiming, Judge, I am the one you should hold guilty for the man's death. He came to my house and he died while I was praying for him.

I am fully responsible and deserve to die. Please let my son and his wife go free. They have done nothing wrong.

I am old and have lived a full life. They are young and have much to offer our nation. Please let them go free.

The judge and the entire courtroom were shocked. Usually those who faced the death penalty cried and screamed their innocence. That day, the old Christian widow had calmly and boldly asked for the punishment to fall on her.

In her heart, she wanted the two younger believers to be spared as they had more years left in this world to preach the gospel. She had no fear of death, knowing it was merely a graduation into the presence of her loving Lord who had purchased her with his own blood. The judge called for Shen's son to be brought into the courtroom.

Instead of defending himself, he boldly declared, Judge, I am the one to blame for this man's death. I am the man of the house and should be considered fully responsible for what happened. My mother is just an old lady who couldn't harm anyone and my wife wasn't involved.

Please let them live. I am the one you must punish. Likewise, when the daughter-in-law appeared, she too took responsibility for the man's death and pleaded with the judge to let the other two go free.

An argument started in the courtroom between the three accused Christians as they tried to convince each other to let them take the punishment. The judge didn't know what to do. All three had asked to die without even having a trial.

Nobody had ever heard of such a thing before. News of what happened spread all across Hennon province. It was a tremendous testimony of Christian love and courage.

As a result of all three of them accepting the blame, the judge decided to sentence none of them to death. He said, I don't believe any of you is the true murderer. He sentenced the trio to eight, seven, and six years in prison, respectively.

Undeterred, each of them saw their time in prison as an opportunity to minister for the Lord, and they led dozens of prisoners to faith in Christ. Today, they are reunited as a family and continue to pour their lives out for the Lord, preaching the gospel, encouraging the sick. Going the extra mile in China.

The house churches in Hennon never pray for a change of government, but rather they pray God would save the souls of the lost in China. In fact, many Chinese Christians pray persecution will continue in China because they are afraid if life becomes easy and their faith does not cost as much, the church will get lazy and fall asleep. They pray their attitude will be one that embraces suffering as a gift from the Lord.

With that attitude, they are willing to go the extra mile and there is nothing evil men or the world can do to them. Brother Xue lived in Fengsheng County in southern Hennon province. During the cultural revolution, Christians were often forced to parade in public wearing large dunce hats made of heavy bamboo.

The people came out to mock and abuse the criminals who wore them. When the time came for brother Xue to be paraded in public, the police were unable to find a spare dunce hat for him, so they made him walk without one. This deeply upset him because he wanted to bear the reproach of the Lord.

Each prisoner's crimes were written on their hat. For Christians they often wrote, this person believes in Jesus. This was meant to be a humiliation, but many believers wore the hat as a badge of honor for their Lord.

It was a witness to unbelievers who could clearly see the peace and joy on the faces of the Christians compared to the other criminals. Brother Xue cried out, oh Lord why did you forget me? On the second day a dunce hat was found for brother Xue which made him so happy. His face shone with joy and tears welled up in his eyes as he paraded through the streets.

Now he was considered worthy to fully suffer for the name of the Lord. After the ceremony, brother Xue asked the police if he could keep the dunce hat and take it home when he was released from the prison as a reminder of his crimes. The police found this request very strange, but they consented.

When he returned to his farm, his neighbors were amazed to see Xue tending his cows and sheep while wearing the dunce hat. For him it was a treasured souvenir of when the Lord allowed him to suffer for the name of Jesus. His neighbors thought he had lost his mind and that he was a shameless man.

They despised him, but brother Xue was a man who loved Jesus with all of his heart. The government was infuriated when they saw brother Xue embracing what was meant to be his humiliation. They realized they could do nothing to make him change his ways or renounce his Lord.

The world can do nothing to a Christian who has no fear of man. Brother Xue wholeheartedly served the Lord for the rest of his life until he went to be with Jesus last year, leaving a testimony of courage and faith to many believers. In 1966 in Nanzhao County, Hennon Province, in a small town called Yunyang, one brother also had the experience of wearing a dunce hat and being paraded through the streets for the gospel.

This brother was blind and couldn't see a thing. Everyone knew he had been totally blind for many years. The people came out and beat him on the back and on the front, smearing dirt and rotten things on him and riled against him.

Two guards were placed on either side of him in order to lead him forward. Suddenly this brother began to shout, Please don't guide me anymore. I can see.

I can see. God had miraculously opened his eyes right in the midst of his persecution. This brother is still alive today in Nanzhao and can still see.

The Obedience of Sister Sheng From 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 9. The reason I wrote to you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. When God spoke to Sister Sheng, a house church leader from Hernan, he told her to do something that made no earthly sense at all. He told her to go and preach the gospel on the steps outside the local police station.

Such an action may lead to arrest even in western nations, and in communist China it is a sure way to invite severe punishment. But the more Sister Sheng prayed about it, the more clearly the inner voice of God continued to tell her to do it. Finally she saw no option but to obey God.

Standing on the top steps outside the police station, she boldly proclaimed the gospel to astonished onlookers. Within a few minutes several officers dragged her inside and placed her under arrest. To the human eye her obedience looked foolish, but God can see things that we can't.

Sister Sheng was sentenced without a trial and sent to the local women's prison, where she was placed alongside thousands of spiritually lost souls. She boldly and lovingly proclaimed the gospel to her fellow prisoners. The light of the gospel spread like wildfire.

Within just three months 800 women believed in Jesus. The entire atmosphere of the prison changed and new sounds of praise and worship were heard echoing down the prison hallways and in the courtyard. The prison director was greatly impressed at the change in the atmosphere and was able to trace it to the preaching of Sister Sheng.

He brought her into his office and said, you have made my job easy. There is no more fighting between the prisoners and the women have become gentle and obedient. We need more people like you working here.

From today we have decided to let you go free. We want to give you a full-time job here in the prison and we will pay you 3,000 yuan per month, about 375 U.S. dollars, a fortune in rural Hernan. He continued, we will also give you a car and your own driver and will find you comfortable housing.

Sister Sheng briefly considered the offer and then replied, 20 years ago I became a disciple of Jesus Christ and He has been wonderful to me. I don't believe your offer of a car, driver and salary is in line with what Jesus wants to do with my life and I belong to Him. All I want to do is preach the good news.

Despite her rejection of his offer, the director released her from prison that day and she continued her ministry for the Lord. It always pays to do what the Lord tells us to do. Don't argue, don't fight it and don't try to work out all the details with your mind.

Just do it. That is one mark of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Sister Yuan of Shanghai.

From Luke chapter 14 verse 26, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Sister Yuan came from one of the wealthiest families in Shanghai. In 1967 she was arrested and sent to prison.

At the time she was a widow with two young children, a son aged 11 and a daughter aged nine. After Sister Yuan has been a year in prison, her mother, who had been taking care of the children, died. The authorities decided to have compassion on her so she could go home and take care of her children.

They told her that all she had to do was produce a written confession of her crimes and they would free her. They said, this past year your conduct has been excellent, so now we plan to reward you. The officials arranged for her small children to be brought to the prison gates for a visit.

Yuan was ordered to pack her bags as if she was going home. As soon as she caught a glimpse of her precious children, her heart was torn and tears of love welled up in her eyes. Then the guards asked her, what do you want, your Jesus or your children? If you want Jesus, you will remain in this prison.

If you want your children, you can go home. Surely your God would want you to be kind to your own flesh and blood. Sister Yuan's son and daughter called out, Mommy, we miss you, please come home.

A prison guard gave Sister Yuan a pencil and a piece of paper and asked her to write down her confession. She wrote in large characters, Jesus can never be replaced. Even my own children cannot replace Jesus.

She chose to stay in prison. The warden shouted, listen you kids, your mother has rejected you, she doesn't love you. She remained in prison for 23 more years.

When she was finally released, her son was 34 years old and worked in a government job in Tibet. Sister Yuan had not seen him even once in all those years. He had been taken by the state and raised in atheistic schools, so he had no belief in God and had been told his own mother had forsaken him.

Many Christians had visited him and shared the gospel with him, but he always responded by saying, your Jesus took my mother away from me, why should I believe in him? Upon her release, Sister Yuan went to Tibet to find her son. He rejected her, screaming that he had no mother and pushed her from his home. She has never seen him again.

Sometimes it is not easy being a disciple. When God Would Not Let His Name Be Defamed A remarkable testimony occurred when new house church believers traveled to a Hainanese village in Lingao County in the northern part of Hainan Island in November 1995. The church planting team arrived in one village to preach.

The local people said there was no way they would believe in the Christian God because they already worshipped the most powerful spirits. The locals gave a stern warning to the evangelists. They said that the village shaman, or witch doctor, had six years previously received a vision that Christianity was the one true religion.

This man was so convinced that he immediately burned all his spirit charms and other paraphernalia, even though he had not yet heard the gospel and was not a believer. As soon as he did this, the people said, the shaman started to have visions where he saw many demons flying at him to eat his internal organs and completely destroy him. He was so scared that he tore his clothes off, ran around naked, and went insane.

He also lost the ability to speak. The shaman would pick up stones and throw them into the air, throwing the stones at the demons that were tormenting him. He lived in a hut with a thatch roof and walls, so soon his rock throwing and other antics had completely knocked away the roof of his home.

His life had become pitiful. He was exposed to the elements, naked, unable to speak, and completely tormented by demons. The shaman was only kept alive by the kindness of the local people.

Every night they would place some rice and other food outside his door for him to eat. The villagers said that the shaman's experiences were proof that their local spirits were more powerful than the Christian God, so they told the evangelists not to waste their time, for they would never believe in the Christian God. They said if the Christian God was truly able to heal and deliver this man, then they would all know that Jesus is the true and only God.

The evangelists were new believers. When they heard this story they didn't know what to do, so they returned home. Over the coming weeks the church started to pray and fast for this village and for the shaman, asking God to glorify his name among the villagers, because his name was being defamed.

The evangelists were taught how to cast out demons. They then returned to the village and cast the demons out of the man. Immediately he regained his speech.

They clothed him and helped him rebuild the roof of his home. After hearing the gospel, the ex-shaman became a Christian. When they saw the tremendous change in the man's life, almost the entire village became Christians.

The new believers then took the gospel to the neighboring village and the vast majority of that village also believed. As a testimony to God's power over the forces of darkness, the Christians began to meet for worship and Bible study in the home of the ex-shaman. He was not the church leader himself, but his powerful life-changing experience was the catalyst for many to come into the kingdom of God and for the name of Jesus Christ to be rightfully honored among the people in that area.

We Just Prayed One of the most remarkable stories of how God is using humble, simple-hearted Christians to build his kingdom on Hainan Island was related by Carl Lawrence in his book, *The Coming Influence of China*. Lawrence recounts how, in the mid-1990s, two young women came to faith in Christ in another Chinese province after hearing the gospel via shortwave radio broadcasts. The two new believers received Bibles and immediately wanted to serve God with all of their hearts.

A Hong Kong-based pastor met with the two and tried to teach them that they should remain where they were and minister to their neighbors. The girls protested, No, the Bible you gave us says Jesus told us to go into all the world. We want to go.

Finally, the pastor, feeling ashamed at his own comparative lack of zeal, relented and told the girls there was a need for workers on Hainan Island. The duo had never heard of Hainan Island before but were certain God wanted them to preach the gospel there. Two years later, the girls returned to the Chinese mainland where the pastor met with them.

He had not heard any news since their departure. The Hong Kong pastor used the meeting to introduce the girls to several visiting Western Church leaders. After introductions, the girls were asked how their work had been and whether or not they had been able to start any churches.

Lawrence explains, The women put their heads down and answered, O pastor, we have only been there two years, yea, two years, not many, not very many. Their voices were apologetic, we have only been there a short time. The people were not very friendly, no, not very friendly.

Sometimes they became very vicious, yes, sometimes they told us they were going to drown us in the ocean. Several men threatened us, oh my, and because we were so young, even some of the ladies did not like us. Yes, some even called us terrible names, so not many churches, no, not many.

Finally, after being asked again by the frustrated pastor, the girls apologized that they had been only able to start 30 churches since their arrival on Hainan Island. The pastor and his Western friends were taken aback by the news. They asked how many people attended their new churches.

After again going through a process of apologies and self-effacing comments, they answered, 220. The listeners presumed that meant the girls had won a total of 220 converts in their 30 churches, but 220 was the number of members in the smallest of their churches. How many people do you have in the largest of your churches? The pastor demanded to know.

Oh, not many, less than 5,000, only 4,900. Yes, less than 5,000. We have just started.

The Western visitors were so touched by the humility and zeal of the two young ladies that they began to weep. One of the visitors told the pastor to ask the two ladies how they managed to achieve such great results. What did we do? Why nothing.

Yes, we did nothing, nothing. The amazed onlookers protested. You did nothing? You have 30 churches, the smallest with 220 people, the largest with almost 5,000 new Christians, and you did nothing? The two evangelists simply said, we just prayed.

After we prayed, the Holy Spirit would tell us exactly what to do. We would keep praying and He would tell us what to do. We would do it.

Then we would pray again and He would tell us what to do again. Note, when we first read this story of the two faithful girls, we were not sure of the story's accuracy, as it almost sounded too good to be true. We sent the story to a friend who is an expert on the church in Heinen Island.

Somewhat surprisingly, our informant responded that indeed the story is true. These two young women had done great exploits and planted many churches in the face of great opposition and struggle. They primarily worked in Southern Heinen Island, including several counties around Sanya City.

However, our friend also added that because of a lack of follow-up and discipleship, that much of the fruit had been lost to cults, and that by 1999, perhaps only 5,000 of the converts remained true believers. for more information. God bless you.

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