

23 - the Ways God Has Worked

by Ben Torrey

Ben Torrey's sermon explores the remarkable ways God has worked behind the scenes in the story of the Three Seeds Ranch and the establishment of Jesus' Abbey.

Duration: 7:39

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 55:8-9, Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 3:20

Topics: "God's Work"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how God has worked behind the scenes to provide for the Fourth River Project and the Three Seeds Center in North Korea. The speaker shares a story about how his father had a vision of using a piece of land owned by the Ministry of Forests for raising cattle and building a camp or youth center. Despite someone offering more money, the land was eventually given to the speaker's father, showing God's timing and provision. The land is also significant as it is the point where Korea's three watersheds come together, and the speaker's father named the operation the watershed Grange.

Transcript

Good evening, this is Ben Torrey. However, it's not me speaking, but my good friend Changsu Kim. I'm actually in the U.S. this month, participating in some North Korea schools and conferences.

I also hope to take a short vacation. Changsu has been most gracious in filling in for me by reading my words. I truly appreciate his work at Far East Broadcasting and giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts.

I trust that he will do a good job representing me and read what I have written. I have shared with you in the past about how God has provided for the work of the Fourth River Project, preparing for the opening of North Korea, and the Three Seeds Center, where we plan to provide training and education for those whom God calls to go there. Tonight, I would like to explore some of the ways that God has worked over the years, often behind the scenes.

He truly is a glorious God. He provides for his people and his work, often in truly amazing ways. The story of the Three Seeds Ranch is pretty amazing.

When Jesus' Abbey first began back in 1965, we had two dairy cows, a gift to us from a church in the United States. We built a small barn up the hill behind the very first Abbey building. There is a house for one of the Abbey families on that spot now.

Our second barn was larger and in a slightly different location. That building had since been converted into dormitory space for postulants and visitors. Now there are no cattle at the Abbey itself and have not been for well over thirty years.

For a while the Abbey had a daughter house, some miles away, in the village of Kalchan. The cattle were moved there and grazed near the river. At first this seemed like it would work out well, but then the cattle became infected with river flukes, a type of parasite from the water there.

Of course this was a matter of grave concern, but no one knew what to do about it. There were now too many cattle to bring back to the Abbey, and no space in the narrow mountain valley to raise them or build a new barn. About this time my parents were traveling and speaking in the U.S. A close friend of theirs offered to give money to buy more cattle.

My father's response was that it wasn't cattle that were needed, but better land for them. This friend then gave us some of money with the stipulation that it would be to obtain better land. When they returned to Korea that year, my parents began to look for a new location for the cattle.

Jesus Abbey is about twenty miles from the center of the city of Taebaek. At that time there was no city, only the town of Hwangji, a coal mining center. When the city of Taebaek was created, it incorporated Hwangji, several other towns, and an area that included Jesus Abbey and known tree valley, Wenamugol, where the Abbey is situated.

The journey to and from Hwangji went over PJ Pass marking the boundary between the Nakdong River watershed and the Han River watershed. In the town of Hwangji is a pond called Hwangji or Yellow Pond. This pond is the source of the Nakdong River flowing south to Busan and Korea's South Sea.

Crossing over PJ Pass from Hwangji, you leave the Nakdong Basin and enter the Han River Basin. A few miles down the road, you go past the source of the Han River, Geumnyeongso. Approaching the pass from the Hwangji side, you get a wonderful view, on the right, looking off the east with the mountains falling away to the East Sea.

To the left there was tract of land that was set aside for pasturing cattle. This land belonged to the Ministry of Forests but was leased to a private individual to raise livestock. Whenever he passed this piece of land, my father thought what a wonderful site it would be for raising cattle and for building some sort of camp or youth center.

Upon his return from the US with the funds to obtain land for the Abbey's cows, he thought of this land. It did not appear that anyone was doing anything with it, even though the government wanted it used for raising animals. My father started looking into the situation and quickly discovered that the person who was leasing the land from the Ministry was not successful in raising livestock there.

In fact, he had just made the decision to sell his lease. At that point, my father came to him and offered to buy the lease for the amount that he had been given while in the US. The Abbey would have to continue paying the lease fee to the Ministry, but that was not too great a burden.

The main thing was being able to buy the lease. The man agreed on the spot and they closed the transaction. The next day, someone else came to the man and offered him twice as much money, but it was too late.

The Abbey had the land. The timing of all of this was God's provision. Since then, the Abbey has continued to occupy that land and use it for raising livestock.

Over the years, they have raised sheep, goats, beef cattle, and milk cattle. Several years ago, we converted the operation from sheep to Korean Hanwoo beef cattle once again. After taking possession of the land, my father learned that on it is the point where Korea's three watersheds come together.

There is one point where you can stand and pour out water that will eventually flow into the West Sea, the East Sea, or the South Sea, depending on where you pour it. The Abbey named the operation the Watershed Grange. Grange is an old English term for a farm attached to a monastery or abbey.

This aspect of the location has been very meaningful to all of us ever since. We have the sense that as the waters flow from this land to the seas surrounding Korea, the gospel would flow forth from here to all the world. From early on, my father had a dream to build a training center for young people and for missionaries.

Unfortunately, there was no way that the forestry department could allow anything other than raising livestock, so that dream had to be placed on hold while everyone prayed and waited to see what the Lord would do next. As it happened, a new temporary law went into effect several years ago to help alleviate the financial recession in the area brought on by the closing of the most of the coal mines. Under the terms of this law, it became possible to apply for permission to develop forestry department land in order to build the economy of the area.

The Abbey was very interested in gaining permission to build a training center under this new law, but was having great difficulty in getting the basic idea accepted by the Ministry of Forests, the forestry department. Well, the Lord had a special answer to this problem as well. Once again, He arranged times and places for His purposes in a glorious and wondrous manner.

I see that our time is running out now, so you will have to wait until next week to hear about it. Tune in next week, same time, same place, for the next installment of this story of God working behind the scenes. Until then, good night.

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