

48 - How Can Christians Bring the Good News to North Korea

by Ben Torrey

Ben Torrey discusses practical strategies for Christians to bring the Gospel to North Korea by living among the people and demonstrating Christ's love through community and service.

Duration: 7:43

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 4:17-21

Topics: "North Korea"

Description

The video discusses the challenges of carrying the Gospel to North Korea and emphasizes the need for practical strategies to share the good news and bring hope to the people there. The speaker references Luke 4:17-21, where Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61, highlighting the mission to preach the Gospel to the poor, release captives, restore sight to the blind, and set free the oppressed. The video suggests that demonstrating love, trust, and commitment through actions is more effective than mere words. It also acknowledges the difficulty of evangelizing in a society where trust is lacking and language has been twisted for political purposes.

Transcript

Good evening once again. This is Ben Torrey raising issues concerning North Korea and our need to prepare for the day that is coming, the day that the North will be open and people from the South and elsewhere will be able to go there with relative freedom. As we think of that day, a very obvious question comes to mind.

How will we as Christians carry the Gospel North? By this I mean, what practical strategies will we use to share the good news, to bring hope and the love of Jesus Christ to our brothers and sisters there? Contemplating the wonderful job ahead of us reminds me of the passage in Luke 4, verses 17-21, where Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And he opened the book and found the place where it is written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

And he began to say to them, Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. Truly it is for us to follow in Christ's footsteps, to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim release to captives, and to set free those who are oppressed. But what does this mean for us in relation to North Korea? Certainly our brothers and sisters in North Korea suffer as captives, are poor and oppressed.

However, it will not be enough simply to bring them political freedom or end overt governmental oppression. Certainly these things must and will, we trust, be done. But there is more.

The situation in North Korea is such that the ordinary person knows little of what it means to be free, to take responsibility for his own actions. He knows little about trusting, helping, or especially loving his neighbor. Growing up over several generations in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion, where every move and thought is prescribed by authority, and where individual initiative is for the most part forbidden, this leads to an inability to trust others, to make decisions for the future, to exercise the daily choices that we all take for granted.

This is indeed a serious captivity and oppression. In addition to this psychological and social reality, we have the twisting of language to bend it to political purposes for some sixty years now. The theological vocabulary that we are so used to will be virtually unintelligible.

The normal forms of preaching and evangelism will seem like just more of the regular state propaganda. North Korea has appropriated much of the language and forms of the Church and made it to serve political ends. So how do you proclaim liberty? How do you comfort? How do you heal in this environment? As we have been considering different questions over the past weeks, it is precisely for this that we want the right answers.

We need to understand our Northern Brethren, their lives, their assumptions, their culture and their language, before we can begin to speak to them in words and ways that they will understand. Certainly one way to understand is to live together with them. It seems to me that simply preaching and teaching the Bible through Bible studies and prayer meetings will not be enough.

In fact, I am very concerned that these traditional methods will actually backfire. It will be too easy for people to misunderstand and misinterpret. It will be easy to make superficial commitments and to attach oneself to preachers and teachers who may appear to provide the greatest benefit, the most money.

It will be easy to have only a surface faith that does not save and set free. So what is the answer? Many people are starting to look at ways to show and demonstrate rather than describe and exhort. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.

A living demonstration of love, trust and commitment must be worth a thousand pictures. We believe that one of the most powerful ways to do this is really very simple. It is for a group of Christians, say ten or so, to go into North Korea, find a place to settle, and be the Church of Jesus Christ in all its fullness, to be His hands and feet, to express His love to the people of that neighborhood.

A group of people filled with the Holy Spirit of God, expressing their love for Him and His love for others through joyful worship, care for one another, and by reaching out to others, will be a living example of what it means to be set free. Their lives and actions will proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. As they live together sharing their goods and their lives with one another, they will show what this really means.

As they care for their new neighbors in love, they will be true extensions of Christ, binding up the wounds, comforting those who mourn. As they share what they have with those around them, they will be giving hope to the poor. To do this requires a deep commitment on the part of those who will go.

They will not think in terms of mission trips, short-term projects, or even of building churches. They will be people who intend to stay and live, to make a new life for themselves in North Korea. They will come to stay and to build.

They will have much that they can teach in practical terms such as skills like carpentry, auto mechanics, computers, and even bookkeeping. Knowing how to run a small business will be a big part of building a life free of poverty. But the basic skills for that, that so many of us take for granted, are unknown to those whose only experience is that of a centrally planned economy.

Along with such practical skills, our little group of Christians will be demonstrating in ways that words can never convey, what it means to trust each other, to encourage and help each other, to take responsibility for one's own actions and choices. They will be in the perfect position to disciple the people around them. Simply by being there, they will give hope.

It will not be necessary for them to build a church or form an organization. They will be the church. As people observe their life and receive their love, some will want to know more.

Some will want to join. They can be brought in and made members of the group, the church that already exists. If, as the number of believers increases, they want to build a church building, then let them do it, but also let them take responsibility for the costs.

Everyone together can work to do the building. It can become a community project that will serve to draw everyone even closer together. It will not require money from elsewhere.

To provide that would only serve to build dependence, not independence. These are some thoughts on how to carry out our Great Commission in the special environment of North Korea. Is God calling you to join such a community? Think about it.

Good night.

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