

The Cross in China

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

The sermon recounts the history and resilience of Christianity in China, highlighting the faith of believers amidst persecution and the growth of the church despite challenges.

Duration: 55:05

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Samuel Lam shares his personal experience of suffering and persecution as a Christian in China. He recounts how he was released from prison in 1978 to find that his wife had passed away and his assets had been confiscated. Despite these hardships, Pastor Lam remained joyful and found solace in the teachings of Jesus. He emphasizes the importance of not judging others and the concept of reaping what you sow. The sermon also highlights the growth of the house church movement in China, with pastors like Madam Yang Xinfei and Pastor Moses Xu reaching out to college students and younger generations.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit and Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith, and powerful sermons for modern preachers, too. This week we have The Cross in China, a Chinese revival story.

In China, the story of the cross once seemed as strange and as far away as the other side of the universe. But today, its message is here, right in our midst. During the Boxer Rebellion, 236 Western missionaries and 23,000 Chinese Christians were killed.

In the following 50 years, more Western missionaries came to China. They established 19 universities, over 6,000 elementary schools and high schools, and more than 900 hospitals. The number of Chinese Christians grew to 700,000.

The Chinese Communist Party believed this success was the result of imperialist cultural invasion. They expelled all Western missionaries, forced Chinese missionaries to renounce their religion, and mandated a secular education for all Chinese. Fifty more years have passed, and today there are approximately 70 million Christians in China, an increase of 100-fold.

Three missionary leaders were born around the time the blood of Christian martyrs was shed in the Boxer Rebellion. Mingdao Wang, Zhang Song, and Wajima Ami. Mingdao Wang was born in Beijing in 1900.

At age 20 he began his work as an evangelist. At 27 he established Spiritual Food Quarterly. In 1955, he was imprisoned for refusing to renounce his faith.

While in prison, weakened by intense interrogation and torture, he was forced to sign a statement renouncing his faith. After his release, Mingdao Wang could not find inner peace. He gave himself up to the authorities and went back to jail with his wife.

This time for life. Twenty years later, in 1977, Mrs. Wang was released. Mingdao Wang would rather die than accept his release.

But two years later the government tricked him into leaving. Mingdao Wang and his wife passed away in 1991 and 1992. Zhang Song was born in 1901.

In 1926 he studied in America and received his Ph.D. in chemistry. And then went on to the Union Theological Seminary of New York. The president of the seminary thought Zhang Song was crazy.

He was locked up for 193 days. In the asylum Zhang Song read the Bible 40 times. Later on his way back to China, Zhang Song threw a golden key into the Pacific Ocean.

It was the symbol of his Ph.D. In the following 17 years Zhang Song, known as Crazy Song, spread the gospel-like wildfire across China and Southeast Asia. In 1944, when he was 43 years old, Zhang Song passed away. Watchman Ni was born in 1902.

From the time he was 28 he wrote a great deal both in Chinese and English. In Shanghai he established a church known as the Local Small Group Church. And soon this form of church spread across the country.

In 1952, he was convicted of counter-revolutionary activities and was imprisoned in Baimaoling Jail. He died suddenly in 1972, just before the end of his prison term. All these men who were born during the Boxer Rebellion later became founders of Chinese Christian churches.

During the late 20th century, no matter how fiercely the storms of persecution raged, Christianity could no longer be uprooted from China as it was in the Tang, Ming and Qing dynasties. Instead the faith flourished and had grown too strong to be suppressed. From Matteo Ricci, Robert Morrison and Hudson Taylor to the Boxer Martyrs of 1900, the seeds planted by the life and blood of thousands of Western missionaries finally had sent down deep roots into this harsh and ancient land.

The People's Government of China The People's Government of Xinjiang Today is the day of victory! The Communist Party of China The Chinese Communist Party members who took control of mainland China in 1949 were diehard atheists. Although the constitution acknowledges freedom of religion, the Communist Party's covert goal is to limit, transform and eventually eliminate religions. From 1949 to 1953, at least several thousand Christians were killed, tens of thousands were imprisoned.

While these horrors were happening, Premier Zhou Enlai invited Wu Yaozong to a number of meetings. They launched the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. It urged Christians to join the government-controlled Three-Self Church, which advocated self-governance, self-support and self-propagation.

Its aim was to put Christians under the complete control of the Communist Party. I was imprisoned because I refused to join the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. I love my country very much.

My students are the best pianists in China. Some even went aboard to perform, and they were well-received everywhere. I didn't break any laws.

But the government wanted to denounce me anyway. The real reason was that I spread the gospel and refused to join the Three-Self Church. I was a good friend of Wu Yaozong, the leader of the Three-Self Movement.

But I was surprised when he asked me to be part of the leadership. I refused, even though I knew my refusal would lead me to prison and labor camp. I considered all the consequences.

Sure enough, on the evening of May 28, 1956, people from the police and public security came to take me away. On September 14, 1955, I was sent to prison for the first time. Sixteen months I spent there.

In 1958, I was sentenced to 20 years. I wasn't released until 1978. The first time I was sent to jail was in 1960.

The main charge was my refusal to join the Three-Self Movement. Why would these evangelists rather be imprisoned than join the government-controlled Three-Self Church? We believe that Jesus is the head of the church, not any person or organization. Politics and religion should be separate.

When you try to integrate them, the church deteriorates and can become a political tool. They also had serious questions about the faith of Wu Yaozong and other leaders of the Three-Self Churches. One day during a dinner conversation, I asked Wu Yaozong what he thought about the miracles performed by Jesus.

He said he had rejected those long ago. Wu Yaozong and Ding Guangxun, they both belonged to a faction which we called the Non-Believers Group. We refused to join them because we felt they didn't have faith.

Within 10 years, almost all the evangelists who refused to join the Three-Self Church were imprisoned or put into labor camps. Madam Yang Xingfei was one of them. She graduated from the Shanghai Music Academy in 1957 and was 27 when arrested.

She spent 20 years in jail. The night she was arrested, her father was very ill. My dad was already in bed.

I went to say goodbye to him. I also asked for my mother. We always prayed before leaving home.

There was one policeman standing guard beside her and another one beside me. My mother prayed to the Lord, begging Him to take care of me. Have mercy on my daughter.

Let her live peacefully and bring her back safe and sound. May the Lord be with her. Then I left home and went to the labor camp.

During this harsh winter of faith, the land was frozen and bleak. But the wheat did not die. Underneath the ice and snow, seeds were struggling to take root, waiting for spring to come.

I was in jail for 21 years and 8 months in Heilongjiang Province, near the former Soviet Union. It was extremely cold there and a lot of people died. But you know, all those years, I never got sick.

Not only did I survive, I wasn't sick a single day. So I know God still has work for me to do. The hardest part was that all the women criminals were locked up in one room.

And it was too noisy to sleep. I also needed to pray every day or I can't sleep. So I waited until they all fell asleep and I crept up out of bed and knelt and prayed to God.

Every night was like this until I left the labor camp. I had to pull the blankets over my head and pray. There was no Bible.

But a hymn stayed with me. You know the one? The old rugged cross. So I'll cherish the old rugged cross till my trophies at last I lay down.

I will cling to the old rugged cross and exchange it someday for a crown. I sang it over and over to keep my spirits up. The path of the cross was paved with humiliation and suffering.

For those who chose to walk this path, every step was taken with blood and tears. I was in jail for 23 years. If they had told me that it would last 23 years, I don't think I would have made it.

When they held a public meeting to criticize and denounce me, they asked, Do you still believe in God? Do you still believe in Jesus? They pulled my hair and my ears. They punched me, knocked me to the ground and kicked me. And they jerked my handcuffs and asked, Do you believe? Do you still believe? The handcuffs had made deep gouges in my flesh, which had started to fester.

They hauled me away like this, back and forth, back and forth. But I prayed to the Lord, I have followed you as far as I can. Surely you're not glorified when they denounce and torture me each day.

I'm your servant and your child. Are you glorified in heaven when I'm suffering like this? In prayer, I entrusted my whole family to the Lord. Then I was ready to kill myself.

But how could I do it with handcuffs on? When the two guards went for lunch, I jumped onto the bed and unscrewed the light bulb. I planned to kill myself with an electric shock. But the electricity wasn't strong enough.

Later people told me it was because I had handcuffs on. The handcuffs diverted the electricity and saved me. While I was in the middle of doing this, people from outside noticed and shouted, Moses Shea wants to kill himself.

The government officials called me out and lectured me. You want to threaten the government? You want to make the government look bad by killing yourself? At night, I confessed to God. I said, Heavenly Father, I have fallen short of your glory.

I have made it through 12 years of labor camp and endured a lot of suffering. Why couldn't I rely on you till the very end? I'm not worthy of your glory. Please forgive me, O Lord.

Then I heard the Lord speak to me. Dear child, my grace is sufficient for you. Dear child, my grace is sufficient for you.

And the third time he spoke so very gently. My grace is sufficient for you. The Lord comforted me and by his grace I survived.

While thousands of Christians severed in prison for the sake of the cross, the storm outside the jails grew even stronger. After 1958, the government closed down many churches in the name of unifying them. Of the 66 churches in Beijing, only 4 remained open.

In Shanghai, 8 of 204 were left open. And in Guangzhou, only one of the original 52 was left. All of a sudden it seems that the Chinese church was weathering.

In 1966, when the Cultural Revolution started, the Chinese Christian church faced extermination. Priests were denounced. Churches were destroyed.

Believers' homes were confiscated. And Bibles were burned. Even the three self-churches did not escape.

Chairman Mao's wife claimed that Chinese Christianity was finished and belonged in the History Museum. Everywhere you went, there were Red Guards. Everywhere you went, there were armed radicals.

Everywhere they interrogated you. Many faithful believers shed tears in secret while they waited and waited for light to come. I remember clearly on June 16, 1966, the largest poster they put out read, Down with the imperialist running dog.

Missionary Zhang Yupei. I said, I cannot change my belief in Jesus. They replied, you stubborn idiot.

Go see your God. All the students came to the meeting, criticized and denounced me. From then on, they locked me in a cow shed.

I remember watching a Christian standing on a platform. They denounced him and called him a ringleader of superstitious people. There was an elderly sister in our area.

And when she got on the platform, she called out, Believe in Jesus. Do not fear death. I was convicted of counter-revolutionary activities because of my faith in Jesus.

I was forced to parade through the streets. They often held public meetings to denounce me. My whole family suffered the same thing, just because they were related to me.

Many churches were shut down. Missionaries were arrested or forced to wear tall dunce caps. Their hands were painted black.

And they were forced to parade through the streets. Church life was completely destroyed. At the same time, an idol landed on God's altar.

When Mao Zedong stood overlooking Tiananmen Square and waved to the fanatic masses below, it seems that he had captured the heart and soul of everyone in China. Mao Zedong! Mao Zedong! Mao Zedong! Dear Chairman Mao, We promise you we will be the successors of the working class revolutionary mission. We will follow you and carry out revolution all our lives.

We will smash the old world and build a new world for the working class. The imperialists and revisionists hoped in vain to transform us and future generations peacefully. But that will never happen.

We will take the great thoughts of Mao Zedong and carry them to the next generation and spread them all over China and the world. But underneath the overpowering waves stirred up by this mighty hurricane, real Christians remained clear-minded and held on to their faith. Chairman Mao's portrait was larger than life.

We were forced to kneel and confess before it. I refused to kneel and stood there, wobbling from one side to the other one. People shouted and the dog kept barking and biting us.

Officials brought out scissors and cut off my hair. I lay on the ground but did not kneel before them. Whether we studied current affairs or the quotations of Chairman Mao, I kept silent.

I refused to sing revolutionary songs, not a single line. I refused to salute long-lived Chairman Mao. I refused to raise my fist to show my loyalty.

I refused to write statements that promised obedience. They interrogated me, most ashamed. Answer this question.

Can Chairman Mao go to heaven? This was a tough question. If I said Chairman Mao couldn't go to heaven, they would beat me to death on the spot. It was a life or death moment.

During that time, I had been praying day and night. I spent all my time in prayer and got very little sleep. So I stood up, handcuffed, and said, The door to heaven is wide open.

Everyone can enter as long as he acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, was crucified on the cross, that his blood can cleanse all our sins, and admits he is a sinner and is willing to receive Jesus as Savior. Then he can enter the gates of heaven. The gate of grace is wide open.

Now is the time for salvation. I am only too anxious to see you all repent and receive Jesus and his grace. The government commissar stepped down from the platform and hit me angrily.

Moses Hsieh, you are preaching again. I said, you all asked me to speak. Could I have refused to answer your question? This elderly man, Mr. Tsai, was put in jail during the Cultural Revolution.

He was accused of opposing Chairman Mao. I didn't put up Chairman Mao posters because at the time, Chinese people worshipped Mao as their God, and I believed Jesus is the only true God. The government held a public meeting.

About 10,000 people were gathered to denounce me. When they asked me to confess, the first words out of my mouth were, For God so loved the world. The first words were, For God so loved the world.

With the death of Chairman Mao in 1976, the nationwide movement to deify him, which had been disastrous for the Chinese nation, finally came to an end. In 1977, house church services conducted in the homes of the faithful started to spring up in cities and throughout the countryside. The mute is no longer listening to the call.

Let's get up and start walking. Every day, people used to gather in this empty square in Shanghai People's Park to pray together. Soon, a number of three self-churches also opened up.

People quickly discovered that Christianity had not died in China. In fact, even during those traumatic times, faith in Christ had been spreading in miraculous ways. Liu Yuan Po was a village teacher from Hunan province, and as a young man traveled to Beijing to attend Chairman Mao's review of Red Guards.

Those of us who went to Beijing were excellent students. After returning home from Beijing, I was appointed Red Guard commander. During that time, we were so ignorant.

All we wanted was to live and die for Chairman Mao. Until the day I die, I'll never forget what happened when an old missionary was denounced. In fact, I was directly involved in organizing the public meeting and scheming how to accuse and punish her.

But when the Red Guards beat her up, she responded kindly, Oh God, forgive these children, for they don't know what they're doing. In 1978, I repented, and my wife and I started a house church in our home. At first, only a few old ladies attended.

Now we have over 3,000 believers. The first training school began at my house. Today, there are between 40 and 50 training schools like this.

We are the children of God, but they say we are the descendants of dragon. Wang Xinsai, who is now a house church leader, was once a Red Guard commander. In order to show his loyalty to Chairman Mao, he persecuted his own mother because of her belief in Jesus.

Because I was an activist in the Cultural Revolution, I put up a big poster to criticize my mother publicly. I didn't want to have anything to do with her, especially politically. It didn't matter that she was my mother.

In spite of what I did, she prayed for me and fasted for 20 days. This made me think, if something were definitely bad for them, a mother would not want her children to have anything to do with it. Why did she pray and fast for 20 days for my salvation? I had to think about that.

She would risk her own life so that her child might come to believe in Jesus, while the same Jesus was denounced, convicted, and labeled as evil by our country. I was wondering, but couldn't figure out why. One day, my second sister came home and asked me if I'd like to read a book.

Yes, I said. In those days, I welcomed any books. Later, she gave me a book that had no cover and no back.

It was worn out all the way to the 7th chapter of Matthew. The moment I started reading it, I felt a great sense of relief. I was moved.

In chapter 7, it said, Do not judge, or you will be judged. Whatever measure you use to give to others, the same measure will be given to you. This is so true, I thought.

When I asked my sister who wrote it and told her it was so well written, she thought I had already accepted Jesus. She said they were Jesus's words. I was furious.

I threw the book out into the yard. That hurt my sister so much, worse than a wound. She rushed outside and picked up the Bible.

Then she told me that a sister in Christ had died during the Cultural Revolution in order to save this Bible. Wang Xinsai's sister brought a Christian to see him. Later, this brother died in jail.

I invited him into my room. When he saw all the books on my desk, he asked me if I had read them all. I said that I had.

Then he said, You must be a seeker of truth. I said yes. He told me that I wouldn't be able to find truth on earth.

Real truth comes from above. He gave me an example. There was an apricot tree laden with ripe yellow fruit that fell to the ground.

A pig came by and ate the apricot. Afterwards, the pig dug at the earth with his snout to try to find more. He didn't know to look up and see that the apricot had come from above.

I thought the story was very philosophical. He didn't mention Jesus at all or anything about the Bible. Later on, I felt an explosive force within me and said, I believe.

After I said that, I felt my face turn red. The blush was hotter than being caught stealing. After becoming a believer, Wang Xinsai was eager to find the Bible he had thrown away, and he did manage to track down the Bible's owner.

I said I'd like to trade my bicycle for your old Bible. I offered my new pigeon brand bicycle, but he said no. In those years, a brand new bicycle cost as much as a car does today.

However, a Bible was an invaluable treasure for a Christian. The church was shut down, and from 1958 on, there were no gatherings. But an elderly sister fasted, prayed, and cried out to the Lord every day.

She cried for the future of the Chinese church. During the Cultural Revolution, they found the Bible in her house and took her away. They beat her and broke one of her feet.

There was only one torn apart Bible that survived the Cultural Revolution within 50 miles of our home. It had the New Testament, but only from Romans chapter 12 to Revelation chapter 11. We wanted to study it, but the owners wouldn't lend it out.

It was their treasure. So we had to go over there to copy it. Every week, we had to make two or three trips.

The first Bible I received was from a sister. Someone from Hong Kong had given it to her. During our meeting, we passed it around so that everyone could touch and feel it for a while.

Everybody held it to their cheeks and kissed it. After being kissed by 30 people, the Bible was soaked with tears, and the red color became faded. During the Cultural Revolution, Chinese Christians risked their lives to preserve a few Bibles.

But toward the end, a lot of hand-copied Bibles became available, and overseas believers began to smuggle Bibles to house churches across the country. It was not until 1985, sponsored by a Western foundation, that Bibles were printed in China in large quantities. But even today, public distribution is not permitted.

People who want to own a Bible must buy one at a three-self church. Mountains cannot stop rivers that flow to the ocean. Today, the Bible has entered millions of Chinese families.

It is a stream in the desert moistening every thirsty soul. By the end of the 1970s, Christians began to be released from jail. I was so anxious to go home.

I wasted no time and took the express train. It was after 11 o'clock at night when the train arrived in Beijing. Our eldest daughter and her husband, our third son and I, the four of us, quickly ate some porridge, then hurried to the train station.

The light was red and dim. You could hardly see anything. Our eyes got very tired.

The four of us were spread out along the platform. We couldn't see each other. We kept looking around the train station until no one was left.

We didn't find him. I'd been gone over 20 years and I was wearing a black cotton padded jacket and pants and a big fur hat and a pair of boots. They couldn't see me.

Alan Yuan took the bus to Baitasa, to the home he had left, but he couldn't find his home. I looked here and there. Where should I go? I started to call my wife's name, Lily Liang.

I didn't know where she had moved. In 1958, we were at Huiancheng, their new address. I had no idea.

My third daughter-in-law answered my call. Lily Liang went to the train station to pick someone up. I replied that it was me.

Remember, I had never met any of these daughters-in-law. My oldest son was only 17 when I left. Mrs. Yuan, along with her children, came back from the train station and was very disappointed.

I saw a light in my room. Was it possible? I hurried up the steps and opened the door. There he was washing his feet.

His head was shaven and he was quite happy. I was speechless. He told me they gave him 60 yuan for traveling.

I still couldn't say a word. He was so thin. I didn't know what to say.

Yet I was full of joy and gratitude. Usually, if it was a life sentence, you could never go home. People who don't believe in Jesus said a strong fate must have helped me return home.

It wasn't my fate. I am God's child. The first thing we did was to thank God.

It was beyond every hope I ever had that he might come home. It turned out that prison was a safe place to be during the Cultural Revolution. Otherwise, he would have been beaten to death.

I was so full of gratitude when I thought of this. After he washed his feet, he didn't eat. He went right to sleep.

I cleaned up and got ready to go to work the next day. Twenty years of imprisonment were over, but Alan Yuan knew that his wife had had a harder life outside prison during those long years. All those twenty years, when I was gone, my wife suffered a lot while she raised our children.

After he left, we had eight people in the family, my mother-in-law and six children. I had no job. Later, when I got a job, I made 80 cents a day, which is 24 yuan, U.S. \$3 a month.

After the three yuan tied, I had 21 yuan left. How could the eight of us live on so little money? All I could do was pray, Lord, yes, this is from you, so I won't say anything about it. I just want to ask you to protect my children and me from dishonoring you.

None of my six children complained. I often told them that their father went to jail not because of any crime, but my children did suffer a lot. One of my sons, he was nicknamed Cornbread Head because that

was the lunch he brought to school every day.

He said, Mother, could you buy me a wheat roll just once to shut it up? I said I couldn't. If I just bought one roll, it was not fair for the other kids, and I couldn't afford to buy six. One day, this family of eight hit rock bottom.

There was absolutely nothing left to eat. It was late, about 11 o'clock, and I prayed, O Lord, we have nothing for tomorrow, no rice, no flour, no money. Lord, if you don't provide, all we have is water.

But early the next morning, someone knocked on the door. I had just finished my prayers, so I opened the door right away. It was an elderly woman in her sixties.

I didn't know her, so I asked her name. She said, Please don't ask my name. The Holy Spirit brought me here.

She said, Here is something for you. It was a package. I opened it.

After she left, it was 50 yuan, which was a lot of money then. So I was able to buy flour, coal, and food. One day, a girl came to the Yuan family with three packages.

She said, The big bag you can send to Uncle Yuan, the middle-sized bag is for you to give to others in need, and the little bag is to be used for your expenses. My child, what is your name? I asked. She said, Please don't ask.

Mother didn't want me to tell you. During those difficult 20 years, it was this great love that came from above and from those around her that sustains this gentle woman and her family in body and heart. It was amazing.

Each time the money came in the mail with a code name, 1078 or 1056. I will write back. I have received the money and hope to meet you soon.

I don't know you, but thank you for your gift of love. Two days later, my letter was returned. The post office noted that there was no such person.

Money was sent every month for over 20 years. Some people, like my neighbors, said, How come you are still joyful after going through so much suffering? They don't understand, but I do. In 1978, Pastor Samuel Lam was released from prison.

When I got out of jail, I found out that my wife had died two years earlier. My father died seven years earlier. When I returned from labor camp, I had nothing left.

They didn't return any of my assets or my house. They came to our home three times to confiscate things. Finally, they kicked us out.

We had to live in a little dark room, about seven square meters. There was no daylight, no fresh air. Perhaps they didn't anticipate that the pressures that they had to face after leaving jail hadn't changed.

They still had to register to join the Three-Self Church. But the government also had an unanticipated situation to deal with. The answers from all these Christians remained the same as before.

I refused to register. That's what I said. Go ahead and arrest me again.

I was 75 in 1999. I am an old man. I'm used to jail.

The first time I was in prison for 16 months. The second time, 20 years. I'm used to it.

When I returned home in October 1979, people came to my house every day. Some came to read the Bible. Some came to pray.

Later we started the house church service and we continue to this day. My faith is more important than everything else. If the laws of the government are against my faith, I will never submit to man.

I submit to God. I was not against the government. The government misunderstood me.

According to the Bible, we submit to the authorities. But in terms of faith, I submit to God, not man. That's all.

They continue holding on to their faith and continue to carry their own cross. Between October 10, 1985 to January 10, 1986, they locked me up for three months. And again between April 24 and July 23, 1992, they put me behind bars for three months, accusing me of spreading the gospel outside of pre-assigned area.

The plainclothes policeman came on Sunday and declared there was no service on that day. They claimed Yuan was sick. In the middle of the gathering, seven public security personnel entered in uniform.

Three of them went upstairs and stood at the stairway. One of them interrupted our preaching and asked, who reported to the police that there had been a suicide? One of the brothers said, no one had reported any suicides. We didn't have any suicides here.

Then we started to sing. The cross, the cross. We were singing as they left.

Shizhijia, Shizhijia. I sang this song. They left.

Shizhijia, Shizhijia. I sang this song. These elderly men who had been deprived of their youth, who were even considered strange in the modern world, showed neither bitterness nor regret.

The first time they asked me if I was going to appeal, I said no. I thought to myself, why appeal to men? All I need is to pray to God. We shouldn't resent anybody because nothing happened that came from man.

God allowed us to suffer this way. Jesus suffered as well, but was not resentful. He prayed for his persecutors.

After I was released, I didn't appeal. The policeman said, we're not going to redress your case because you will keep doing the same thing. Of course I will keep doing the same thing.

I've been put on this earth to witness for the Lord. What else is important? Didn't the Lord tell me from the beginning to give up everything and carry the cross to follow Him? This is the Lord's way. I'm following Him on the same path.

Why should I be upset? Why should I complain? This is my biggest blessing. The court cheated me and changed my situation from non-repentant to repentant. In order to release me.

I protested in two ways. First, I refused to leave the jail. Then after I was released, I chose to live as a life sentence prisoner in a place just outside of the gates.

Not only did he live next to the jail, Epiphra insisted on fasting five days a week. If I keep on fasting like this, they will know I have not repented, that I don't accept their accusations in the first place. If I continue to fast like this until I die, it will mean that I refuse repentance even until death.

After 15 years of fasting, Epiphra came to the end of his 78 years on this earth and rested in the Lord. Some churches in Yinchuan wanted to have some of his ashes, but they were quietly spread on the Yellow River. In his last letter to his relatives, Epiphra wrote, I died as an unrepentant criminal, just like my Lord Jesus.

For many years, I have believed in Jesus and followed him. The Lord Jesus has always listened to my prayers. He has been with me wherever I go.

I will never deny him. I will never deny him. The way of the cross surpasses all human understanding.

The way of the cross is the way of humiliation and glory, the way of suffering and joy. It is the way of sacrifice and victory. In Xiamen, Madam Yan Xingfei leads a house church that consists mainly of college students.

She also preaches in the nearby cities and villages. In Shanghai and Beijing, Pastor Moses Shi devotes his advanced years to reaching out to the increasing number of younger people who have thirsty souls. In Guangzhou, Pastor Samuel Lam and his Damajian House Church stand firm and with grace in all their trials and hardships.

Before I went to jail, we had 400 people. After I came back, we had 900. They confiscated the house in 1990.

After that, we grew to 2,000. The third floor was not big enough, so we had to use closed-circuit TV on the second floor. Finally, we had to use the basement as well.

The more they persecuted, the more blessed we became. Today, the church has moved to Wengui, where every day is like a holiday and groups of Christians gather together in joy. In Beijing, Pastor Alan Yuan's house church is like a lighthouse beaming out the hope of Chinese Christians into the dark night.

Every summer, Alan Yuan, who is now 90, baptizes hundreds of people. God called me to spread the gospel and serve the Lord. In my heart, I accept the vision from above.

Even though we are limited in many ways, the devil will never conquer the church. Battles like this raged in the past. Today, the Lord's work marches forward in China, just like the time of Acts.

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