

A Prisoner in China True Story

by Geoffrey Bull

Geoffrey Bull's story of imprisonment in China serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of prayer, dedication, and the victory of Christ in the face of death.

Duration: 1:23:22

Scripture: Psalm 23:4, Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 26:41, Luke 4:14-21

Topics: "China"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal experience of being imprisoned and how God worked in his life during that time. He describes the conditions of the prison and the materialistic atheism that was prevalent there. Despite the darkness and loneliness, the speaker found solace in his faith in Jesus Christ and the knowledge that God had resurrected him. He encourages the listeners to surrender their lives to Jesus and trust in Him for eternal life.

Transcript

For the three years that I was kept by the Chinese Communists, one of the features of my imprisonment was this, that I was deprived of my Bible. But when I was released, I was handed back a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which they kept for all that time, and how wonderful it was to read again from God's precious Word. And so tonight, we want to hear, first of all, the inspired Word of Scripture.

And I'm going to read to you a portion concerning our Lord Jesus Christ in the fourth chapter of Luke. And we shall begin to read at the fourteenth verse. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.

And there went out of fame of him to all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.

And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaac. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set up liberty for them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book. And he gave it again to the minister, and sat down.

And the eyes of all them in the synagogue were fastened on him. You're going to hear a story tonight. May you see beyond the story to the Savior, to the great emancipator and liberator of the captive.

And may your eyes be fastened on him. Amen. Now it was in the year 1947 that I left the shores of England and went with my fellow worker Mr. Patterson of Scotland away across the seas to the great country of China.

We arrived at the great port of Shanghai there on the east coast. And we spent about a week there. And after the week had gone by and our affairs had been attended to, we went down late one night down to the quayside and there boarded a river steamer crammed with near Chinese people between its decks went up the gangplank and through the dear ferret there down into a little cabin that had been reserved for us.

A very tiny poorly lit little place. We put our baggage in it and we sat down on the bus. For us a most special moment.

For years before our hearts had been turning towards the land of Tibet. We'd been praying. We'd been studying.

We'd been hoping and longing that the call of God born in our bosom by the Holy Spirit might be fulfilled. And that we as young men who would follow Christ might plant the standard of the Lord Jesus in the forbidden fields of the central Asian plateau even in the heart of those darkened people the Tibetans and the Chinese. And so we sat on the little bunk and our hearts were bowed in prayer for after all who were we that we should enter Tibet where others had failed to enter.

And so we prayed and looked to God for indeed our sufficiency is of God who is able to make us able ministers of the New Testament. Without him we could do nothing. And so in that very special moment we cast ourselves upon our God and looked to the far west that he might take us there.

And as on that rather special evening we so bowed a dear brother in Christ who'd come to see us off a Mr. Conrad Bear some of you may know him he began to sing in his very beautiful voice a prayer of dedication to Christ. And this is what he sang King of my life I crown thee now Thine may the glory be Lest I forget thy form crowned brow Lead me to Calvary God was to answer his prayer. For as the years went by I was to find myself in a dark Tibetan cell away in the border country and that refrain was to recur in my memory and bring me to a fresh moment of consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so the time passed and during the succeeding year we crossed the whole land of China away up the Yangtze River away to the far west away to the Tibetan Tablelands. We arrived in a little town of Kanding situated some 8,000 feet above sea level and after some preliminary studies and contacts with some of the Tibetan people we pressed on a further 3 to 400 miles deep into the plateau until we came to a little village called Bo and there we made a kind of base before we actually passed on into the land of Tibet itself into Lhasa controlled territory. From that point my fellow worker made a journey across south east Tibet under the permission of the Lhasa government.

I also gained a permit and I made my journey somewhat later. But whilst there I lived in a little log cabin in that remote spot behind the ranges and for me it was an unusual experience to be alone for so long amongst the heathen people to be without others who could speak my language really and just to be a lone ambassador in that uttermost country for the Lord.

And I remember of an evening time in the little log cabin where I was living the dear Tibetan people would come down perhaps from the grasslands or from the forest or up from the village or from cutting the wood in the woods they'd come down there to the little log cabin in which I was living and sit around the fire and their fire and the fire of the cabin would light up their faces these rugged men and women dressed in their big sheepskin garb their tousled hair and rugged faces and I'd look across the firelight at them men and women for whom Christ died and we'd talk and talk and then I might put on the gramophone and you know they'd ring out one of those old gospel hymns in that tremendous setting way behind the mountain to this people that had never heard the name of Jesus many of

them and how much it would mean to me just to hear some of the old hymns ring out in that place a hymn like this I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold I'd rather have Jesus than riches untold I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land I'd rather be led by his nail-pierced hand and I come back from the solitudes of Tibet and from the solitary confinement of the communist prison and I feel after returning from that arid wilderness from those places where our Lord Jesus Christ is despised where God is not known I feel so much that we should make the consuming passion of our souls the living God and Jesus Christ whom he has seen that for us to live there should be Christ to die gay that we should have ringing in our hearts the aspiration of the psalmist one thing of our desire of the Lord

that will I seek after that I might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire into his temple and so from that point I passed on with a permit from the Lhasa government a wonderful answer to prayer that I too might cross their territory to India and with this permit I managed to cross the upper reaches of the Yangtze known as the golden sand river and penetrate to the high mountain town of Markham Ghatot situated some fourteen thousand feet above sea level I lived there and sought to witness during the following two months or so but the days were tense news would come through the mountains that the communist armies of China were mounting that they were preparing to invade the land and so it was in October 1950 that across the

upper reaches of the Yangtze they poured defeated the Tibetans defending the river and coming up the valleys and over the passes to flood across the grassland they finally took over that little mountain town in which I had been witnessing and hoisted the red flag of People's China to the flag post and all Tibetan troops in the area were compelled to surrender it was in such a setting then that I was made captive in the course of a ministry amongst the Tibetan people just inside the land although hundreds of miles deep into the plateau with great hopes of going to Lhasa and then in a moment somehow everything changed very soon after the takeover I was summoned by the Chinese authorities to appear before one of their officers he told me that I must take all my belongings over into a little

mud house nearby I did what he said but when I came into the little house I found that it was full of soldiers in their yellow uniforms and then one of them said to me he said you can't go outside this building except you go with one of us and I heard the words and they sank down into my heart and then of course I realised what they meant it meant that I was their prisoner and so that evening away on the roof of the world behind the ranges hundreds of miles from the outside world I lay down to sleep amidst the soldiers in that mountain town looking back we can only say how good God is for he shielded from my eyes that there were to be as many as 1150 or more evenings before I'd be free again and we can say truly God holds the key of all unknown and I am glad if other hands should hold the

key or he entrusted it to me I might be sad how wonderful a thing it is to know that the hands that were pierced for us at Calvary hold us for eternity and so I was brought down by armed guards during the

following day until I was brought to a rear headquarter town called Batang now this city of Batang had outside its walls a great big fort and I was now taken by the guards to this big fortress with its battlements its big thick walls and flat roof and the two cannons at its entrance and I was marched in and upstairs and there interviewed by a young Chinese communist commander he seemed a very definite sort of personality he struck me somehow as rather ruthless in his dealing with the situation and he determined in his mind in a very short while that he considered I was a spy the result

was that he called the guard and I was taken downstairs and I was brought to what was a kind of dungeon underneath the fort well we came to the dark door and I was hustled across the threshold and then the door slammed and I heard a little padlock click and I realised I was shut in in that dark dirty little room underneath the central buildings of that great fort away in that Tibetan border country you can understand something of my feelings as I sat there in that cell I found an old door that had been torn off its hinges and thrown across some saddles and there I sat upon it all around were was the darkness and the gloom of the place how lonely it suddenly seemed I could see a little light there were windows but they were covered with woodwork and dirty paper but I saw a little light

because away along the corridor I could see some sunshine coming down between the buildings I could see a guard with his gun outside and so there I sat it was a room without floorboards just the earth just the sandy floor well as I sat and pondered the whole matter it seemed to me as if God had taken everything away I seemed to feel like Joe in a moment for him the tribesman came down from the hills and swept away his oxen and his cattle and his sheep and then the whirlwind came and struck the corners of his house and seven boys and three girls passed into eternity his health gave way his wife became estranged he sat in deepest distress afflicted and alone and I feel I felt something like that as if God had suddenly taken from me my liberty snatched me away as it were in his sovereignty

from the sunshine of the hills so that I must now pass my hours in the darkness of a cell it seemed to me that my work had gone and I was alone unable to talk to any really and there in the cell just kicked behind locked doors like some criminal and all my heart just oh felt the pressure as it seemed of of his mighty hand bearing upon my soul and I began to ask myself do you really love the Lord Jesus now more than your loved ones do you really do you really love the Lord Jesus more than freedom love him more than life my mind went back to a prison scene in the old day when Paul sat in the prison and he wrote one of his letters and this is what he said in that vile Roman dungeon this is what he wrote he wrote I count all things but love for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus

my Lord I felt could I say the same oh how far away I seemed from that standard yes God it seemed had taken everything away but dear friend sometimes God allows everything to be taken from us it's because he wants to become everything to us and so it is that he begins to show us our poverty and the exceeding riches of his grace he begins to make us realize in the lonely place of crisis that we aren't the people that we think we are and as I pondered about it all you know I did the only thing that any one of us can do when God seems to take away the curtain from our heart and puts his finger into the recesses of our soul and shows us our motives and our poverty and our sin I knelt down on the dusty floor very broken and I wet my way afresh to the cross of Jesus for surely there is nowhere

else to go for when the Lord marks iniquity who shall stand when the heavenly father scourges who shall heal but the Lord Jesus so kneeling in the dust there bowed at his feet I blurted out a prayer that I never thought as a Christian I could ever say this was the prayer Father I have sinned and am no more worthy but you know as I prayed there it seemed to me that my heavenly father came running down from his great

high mansion in the heavens and put his everlasting arms around me in his mighty love and drew me so that all was changed as if his great words came ringing again to me bring forth the best robe and put it on him God's bed in a prison cell, yes for it's in such a place that he brings us near to the saviour such a place where he brings us love and having brought us afresh to

Jesus pierced feet pours in the healing waters of his grave and oh I rose from my knees and walked up and down that dusty floor with a fresh sense of his forgiveness with a renewed consciousness of his pardon with his own joy and peace flooding the soul so that as a poet has once said a light shined in the cell turn to gold the iron bars open windows to the stars peace to their sentinels oh how he changes things and my mind went back to a little room some three years or so before a dimly lit little cabin on the river femur and how we'd sat on the bunk and how we'd prayed and then how someone had sung and now in the dark cell my mind recalled the word and walking up and down in the dust of the cell and pulling my old Tibetan gown around me for the cold I began to sing perhaps as I had

never sung in all my life king of my life I crown thee now thine may the glory be lest I forget thy strong crowned brow lead me to Calvary dear people here tonight you may have gone many years with the savior I wonder how far you've gone with him you may feel you know many things God's word says if any man thinketh he knoweth anything he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know some of us may feel that we've become somebody you know God's word says if any man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing he deceiveth himself and some of us may think we can stand stand? oh I come back from communist prison where strong minds begin to go and strong wills begin to bend do you think you can stand? oh God says if any man thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall it may be that in the

light of the love of God at Calvary there should be a reassessment of your spiritual life it may be after all you're not the person that you think you are it may be that you need to come back to Calvary after all annealing a fresh prostrate in the dust pour out your soul to him who loved you and rising with a renewed sense of his grace and pardon crown him Lord and King in every particular in a way perhaps you've never done before but wherever God is to uphold us we can be sure Satan is there to resist us and I found now that an official came along and he said to me he said we've caught various of you foreign people he said we're going to give some of you three years imprisonment some of you ten years he said and some of you we're going to execute now he said you better start thinking

what you've done against the people we're sending you down to Chongqing well at Chongqing there was the people's court that fierce organ by which so many went to their doom following the revolution in China well I went back to my cell and I ponder supposing they do take me out into the hill and shoot me my parents don't even know where I died oh suddenly it seemed impossible it seemed that I was just holding on to my life now let me live for Christ but to die I seem strangely disinterested now in martyrdom to die oh I'd gone to Tibet I suppose the spirit of my dying had been like Peter's I will lay down my life for thy sake but now the word of the Lord Jesus came back in a similar way wilt thou lay down my life for my sake wilt thou oh dear friends I sat on the old door again and I

pondered and I pondered I knelt in the dust again and I wondered to die and all the battle raged two days it seemed interminable in prayer and I wrestled I oughtn't to be afraid but all the turmoil and the dread that filled the heart I was holding on to the life that God had given which Christ would come to redeem you see those of us who are Christians here well like Abraham we've stepped out of Ur of the Chaldees and launched out into a life of faith at the call of God there has been that initial surrender of the soul into the hands of Jesus Christ and we've acknowledged him as Lord and Saviour that is the beginning the initial

surrender but the initial surrender must be implemented in the particular surrender of every day and this is what I found now here suddenly was raised an issue

would Christ be victorious and as I knelt there and thought of him as his love worked the miracle for he had given his life for me you know my hand uncut and I found my life flowing out to the Lord Jesus in this great thing that whether I lived or whether I died I was the Lord my life was made with Christ in God it will be all the way and you know the peace of God which passes all understanding began to fill my heart and the fear of death subsided and the turmoil receded the Lord was triumphant in the prison in the face of death I had been afraid but his calm had come he had proved himself my resurrection and my life you see Jesus never fails and I remembered afterwards a little chorus that we used to sing in the Bible class days I'd been so afraid that they might take me out into the

hills and shoot me but now the victory was over and there came afterwards this little chorus to mind out there amongst the hills my Saviour died pierced by those cruel nails was crucified Lord Jesus thou hast done all this for me hence forward I would live only for thee I believe today what the Saviour longs for in your heart and mine it be that we should kneel in the dust in the very reality of sin that we should unclasp our hand and allow our light to go to him in every particular in the very reality of sin that we should be doers of the Word and not hear only I believe in these early days of solitary confinement that God blessed in this way so that when I now came to face the brainwashing as it is known in the press I might be fortified in my soul strengthened in my inner man by his

Spirit for I was now taken down after the seven weeks in this solitary confinement and filthy cell I was taken down now by armed guard down through those beautiful mountains six weeks very hazardous and arduous journey away down to the city of Chongqing in West China and there my period of solitary confinement was prolonged until one whole year had passed now this first year of solitary confinement was what the Chinese communists call the self-conscious period that's a translation from the Chinese and it means really the voluntary period now I must explain that in a communist country we have a government that is resting on a clear-cut and defined belief and this means that if you're a heretic in that state philosophy then of course your activity if you're not careful can very easily be

interpreted as in the direction of treason in other words if you don't believe what the government says the possibilities are that in a crisis you won't do what the government says thus a person who is a Christian and is militant in evangelism in China if he goes beyond as it were the limits set by the state for church meetings and church activity he can be viewed if he is too successful I believe as undermining the belief in the government in the minds of the people and it's this kind of thing which means that a person is viewed not just as a religious fanatic but as subversive because if you touch that thing on which the government rests if you tell the people that what they're believing in the word of the government is a lie that is diametrically opposed to the word and revelation of

God then of course the time will come when such a government will maintain that your outlook and your activity is prejudicial in the minds of the people to confidence in the regime and thus it is that every person who's taken prisoner he not only has to be punished for what he's done real or imaginary against the state but his mind has to be reconditioned his thought reorientated in order that if he ever is released again he will spontaneously do and say what the government wants him to do and say otherwise there's no hope of release normally speaking for the prisoner otherwise you'll go out and be subversive again and so the government resting on a clear-cut and defined belief in Marxism has this system of indoctrination whereby those who transgress and are viewed as subversive elements

are to have eradicated from their minds all their past beliefs contrary to Marxism and be thoroughly indoctrinated in this new teaching and thus they may later on find a place in the regime or at least in what they call a reform through labour camp and so as a Christian coming into this period of self-conscious thought reform as it's called given a period of solitude to think over things and at the same time during that period brought under severe pressure by the authorities as a Christian you gradually realise that this is not a political issue after all but a spiritual one that there are forces behind the forces and powers behind the powers and so the battle was joined during that period as I read and perused each part of their material I was very severely interrogated sometimes several

times in a day sometimes early into the morning through midnight and after night by night I was threatened very much with death I began to wonder as they took me out into a big room and made me listen there to some to one of these great big mass meetings outside where men are shouted to their doom before the thousands the accusation meetings a feature of the purge days as they made me listen to that and said one day we'll prepare a meeting like that for you if you don't yield and I used to sit in my cell and perhaps one of the officials would come in and say a young man like you would be waiting to die as they told me unless you give in you will in the end unquestionably be shot as I saw they were very convinced that I was involved in espionage it seemed to me that perhaps I should never

be free again as one of them said to me you'll be a very fortunate man if your body ever goes beyond the soil of China and I used to sit on the little bed in the narrow room of eight or nine feet square with the windows pasted over with paper outside to prevent my viewing out and I used to sit there and wonder how the last morning might come wonder how I might face that grey dawn when perhaps in some back courtyard a firing squad would come many must have been praying for me in those critical days for I remember how wondrously God helped me to go through from day to day living in such a crisis and under such tension it seemed like some adventure story of my boyhood days but what a reality it was and there sitting I wondered how the last morning would dawn and what I should do whether I

should pray whether I should preach but at last I decided I'd sing one of the songs of Zion a token of the Christian's triumph in the face of death and as I went through some of the lovely old hymns I came across another little chorus of those Bible class days way back in England and I decided that I would sing as best as I could remember that little refrain some golden daybreak Jesus will come some golden daybreak battle's all done he'll shout the victory shine through the blue some golden daybreak for me for you I'd sat in a cell and listened to the man next door speaking out loud I put my ear to the wall in my solitude and listened and this is what I heard a man crying once I'm going to be executed he cried you can't forget that kind of voice and cry that I just sat in my cell and

heard such a sound oh how it could go through you how it could haunt you but I want to simply testify to you that as a Christian on the brink of the grave deep down in my heart it meant everything to me to know that I had peace with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ I wonder if you have peace with God that when you come to the great beyond and the fringes of eternity when you stand before the portals of death that claim every living soul will you be able to face it with calmness not because of a false kind of fortitude but because you know that through the work of Christ through his sacrifice for sin because you trust in such a savior God is going to welcome and receive you by his dear faith and thus you're at peace with God is it like that with you? you can't trifle with this

it's too sure may God grant that you will kneel in the dust tonight and relax your grip on the life that you have and allow your whole being spirit, soul and body to be placed in the hands of the Lord Jesus for his

salvation for his molding for his life eternal and then when the dark day dawns it will be for you a golden daybreak and an abundant entrance into the presence of the living God thus it was for me in those days of trial that the peace of God meant so much to my heart in the face of death some little words came to my mind at that time and sum up really something of the thoughts of my heart thou art my resurrection Lord my soul begotten through thy word shall rise with glorious body found to greet thee at the trumpet sound and so the months passed by the interrogations abated the

threats subsided but then suddenly at about half past six one morning I was taken out quickly into a jeep and motored away into the countryside out Chongqing everything seemed very drastic I was being taken to a great big grey prison away in the mountains as we came to it I could see the little windows along the upper wall seven bars in each I was taken down and into the prison past a prisoner there being held by the guards in chains and handcuffs into the entrance past a battery of tommy guns being held by numerous soldiers and after a brief interview with the governor taken to a lonely room away in the far corner of this great prison between three and four hundred people were there being punished but more especially being reformed being reconditioned to the new society ere they could

possibly be allowed any measure of freedom again I began to read something of the material that was now set before me I found it was Marxist that is to say it followed that line of philosophy propounded by Karl Marx in the nineteenth century in Germany and the core of that teaching is this they believe that the universe is basically material and that all things of spirit and mind energy and thought are derived and emanate from material alone how diametrically opposed to the Christian faith for we believe in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth we believe that by him and for him they consist we believe that they are for his pleasure and for his glory we believe that God is we believe that God is spoken we believe that God can be known through the Lord Jesus Christ we believe

that things material are but the creation of the almighty and eternal spirit the living God and thus I found that permeating all their booklets there was this fierce pernicious streak of satanic inspiration against the living God thus the spiritual conflict was intense I walked up and down my room and then one day I heard a sound you know when you're in solitude to hear a sound is a very wonderful thing you're deprived of speaking and conversation but to hear the sound say of the wind through the trees to hear the sound of a bird in the branches or to hear even the sound of a man working all these things are most precious but this day I heard a different sound I heard a man singing and you know as I heard him singing I recognized the tune it wasn't Chinese and when the guard had gone away

and ceased to peer through the doorway at me I put my ear to the floorboard and there to my amazement there came up through the floorboards the precious sound of a man singing I heard the word I recognized the tune it was in England he was singing in that place where they wouldn't let you read the word of God where if you bowed in prayer they'd come in and make you lie down where if the name of Jesus was spoken someone would shout out in back for me the dear man was singing in that cell underneath half underneath the ground he was singing onward Christian soldier marching as to war with the cross of Jesus going on before I hadn't heard the name of Jesus in English for about 10 months it was very precious I suppose in that little experience I began to enter in at least in some measure to

the reason as to why it is that through all eternity we shall be so satisfied with that most excellent and wonderful name it means God the Saviour oh is the name of Jesus precious to you or is it so familiar that you speak it without reverence or hear it without immersion the name of Jesus it shall fill all the myriads throughout all heaven for all ages oh that our souls might rise in the wonder of the Christ and be so

occupied with Him so filled with the Saviour that out of the abundance of our heart we shall begin to speak and spread His fame abroad and so the fight was on that was it God and Satan light and darkness Christ and the spirit of Antichrist oh no wonder we should sing there onward Christian soldiers that's the age long conflict there are no other fundamental issues there is

the great divide on which side do we stand and if we stand on Christ's side do we fight under His banner are we going forward it's hard in a communist prison you're not asked to stand it may be you're asked to stand just in your family asked to stand just where you work that's where it is are you standing there and so the months went on again and the coercive period began which is very difficult to describe because not only have you now behind you the softening of the year's solitude but now the other men are brought in other prisoners are brought in it means that you're placed with other so-called counter-revolutionaries you feel you might have something to say to them they might have something to say to you but actually you find that gradually there can be no personal confidence there

can be no personal trust for the simple reason that these men are placed most of these men are put there they've been told that if you'll break a resisting prisoner then your sentence might be reduced most of these men are men who've come over to the communist side in the prison and are now being given an opportunity to break down another prisoner one, to show their sincerity two, to gain merit and so you find here a fearful situation arises there may be hours in the interrogation courtroom but it will be followed by hours in the cell itself under a so-called progressive cell leader where he leads these other men against you and so through harassing and provocation shouting and raving sometimes, yes, why once a man even tried to spit you'll find that there in a cell a man will be subject

to relentless pressure to pressure that just goes on and on month after month, year after year sometimes it calms down and another prisoner becomes the object of attack but it's there all the time really pressing the atmosphere, sheer atheism the pressure, sheer satanic pressure you find that men are against you no friendship, no confidence only conflict and disgust and hate they have what they call the struggle meetings as the indoctrination proceeds day by day morning, noon and night they have the chains and the handcuffs which are always there as ready threats to bring any prisoner into submission mercifully I was spared that but there lay beside me for months in our little cell a man with great chains on his feet another old man with handcuffs on his hands and there in that prison

under the instigation of the authorities we were subject to this incessant indoctrination and pressure there they have always the conclusions at the beginning as it were of the discussions because they had the writings of Marx and they make them virtually infallible they make that a counterfeit for the very word of God which is divinely authoritative and too as you come right through it you find that well you're beginning to weaken you find that you can't remember the word of God oh there were some little lines that came to me which summed up my anguish as I began to find after a year or so I couldn't really remember the Bible as I used to do oh let not my face grow dim dear God or sense of thee depart let not the memory of thine word burn low within my heart and so it mounted and so it

continued they seem to be tearing at your soul cut off from fellowship prayer life disrupted for someone would say are you praying? have you prayed today? call the water here's a man who's prayed today against the regulations to pray and so from every angle the satanic clasp seemed to close around the soul until one became somehow spiritually numb and I wondered whether I could continue anymore oh one year, two years, into the third year I wondered dear people whether I could hold on to God a day or a week or a month longer I had come virtually to the end my feet seemed to be well nigh slit I seemed too tired to

eat it seemed that I might go mad for I saw one man insane there some had said he was nervous at the beginning but he was insane now would I go mad? there seemed to be a knot in

my mind I couldn't unravel it would I become a prostate?

I had not encountered one Christian in that prison would I become like others? and falter? and fail irrevocably? and lose all testimony? or the heartbreak of it all? but at this juncture during that period just following such a crisis in my life God moved prayer began to be answered I found now indeed that God keeps His word and will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able but will with the temptation make a way of escape so that we shall be able to bear it I was suddenly moved from this ferocious place into another kind of prison they meant it for evil for the pressure and punishment in this new prison was not so much to shout and rave at you and ceaselessly interrogate and intimidate but here in this prison they made me sit still one, two, three months there were

periods allotted for recreation or exercise but they were rather short and thus all round the hours of the day you'd be sitting the guard would stand to see that you didn't move your hand perhaps more than a foot from your body to sit still it's hard to sit still and so as the hours and the days passed whilst they meant it for evil God was doing His work my soul quietened and calmed after all the onslaught of materialistic atheism there there seemed now in the quietness and the stillness to rise a resurgence of faith so that if we voiced it in words it was this I believe I knew that Jesus Christ was still my Saviour I knew that the Son of God had loved me and given Himself for me I knew that God had raised Him from the dead the great anchors of the faith still held firm rooted in the Lord

Jesus Christ the rock of ages impregnable incomparable I found that the Lord Jesus Christ in my heart was inviolable to every attack of Satan that though the mind might be bewildered the intellect baffled, the body weakened yet Christ in my heart was greater in me than he who is in the world in other words in the last analysis for the Christian it's not so much my hold of Him but His hold of me and this is the Saviour that you and I trust today oh that we might trust Him more this almighty Son of God the Word made flesh Christ crucified risen from the dead exalted to the throne everlasting to everlasting God my Saviour able to keep us to the uttermost able to uphold us before all foes able to present us faultless before the presence of His Father with exceeding joy able to keep us from

falling some of you will ask how did you get free? well it came December the 11th I was taken up into a courtroom and there before a black table with the solemn faced officials behind it I was deported sentenced to be expelled from People's China it was a strange anticlimax for them they had said we shall never surrender to you now they had to relax their grip God is on the phone Christ has bruised Satan's head He, the Lord Jesus is omnipotent He says all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth and thus when the time came and although we can give no real human reason for it God moved and man must obey and so I was brought down after my sentence by armed guards during the succeeding days down the Yangtze River down across China until at last in the brilliant sunshine of the afternoon

of December the 19th 1953 I stood at the little gap in the barbed wire barrier the barrier that marks the frontier between People's China and Hong Kong and there I moved through as the word to pass was given I walked through the little gap and across the breeze there were no guards with me the prisons were behind me liberty was mine oh God had conquered Christ had won prayer had prevailed I was free and I was standing still now amidst ambitions deadly stripped of all but life I stand battered broken but believing I am still in Jesus' hand but when God does a thing he always exceeds human expectations and now a

man came forward authorised by the British government to receive all European refugees at the border he shook my hand gave me a big smile and a great welcome and he said do you know

this man? and he showed me a little card in his hand I looked at the name it said Raymond Gust he said do you know him? of course I knew him why this man was from my very home assembly on the edge of London in my absence in the interior of China he'd come there to Hong Kong as a missionary he'd pray he'd look to God for my release he'd send his card to the border a faith that works and so when I came out after all that militant atheism against my soul I knew immediately there was the love and fellowship of a Christian home there for me in Hong Kong and so that night we met we held hands and looked at each other in that little home in part of the Hong Kong colony we were speechless God had done so much we could only rejoice together that all the Lord had walked for us in answer to prayer

and so I opened the Bible again after three years almost and after that all that so-called human wisdom in the cells of China all the refreshment of the pure word of God its comfort and consolation its strength and renewing I read these words I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to naught the understanding of the truth you see the wisdom of God in Christ abides forever that when all else has passed away when the human shoutings have been silenced and the human postulations have been laid low when time is no more Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God shall abide forever the word of God forever written in heaven I went out into the hills again walked on the green grass under God's blue sky many hundreds of years ago there was a man in prison called Paul and there no doubt

chained to a Roman soldier and in the squalid conditions prevailing he actually wrote a letter to some of the Christians at that time and this is what he wrote let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God

the Father away behind the ranges in Tibetan borderland country I was seeking to bring to the people there the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world I lived in a little log cabin there and the dear folk would love to come in their big sheep skin gown and their dirty faces and untidy hair and sit around and talk there together if you'd come into our little log cabin you'd have seen a kind of poster on one of the walls a poster with strange writing on it and the Tibetans would come in and look at it and try to spell it out and gradually they'd begin to spell out these words this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief these people were used to seeing lots of sayings over their houses

on their prayer flags on their stones marking their routes through the mountains sayings everywhere empty Buddhist repetition but here as they read this saying they found that it was a faithful one and worthy of acceptance it brought to them the greatest news this world has ever known that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners Christ Jesus came into the world that's the historical fact it cannot be gainsaved he came into the world to save sinners that's the divine meaning of his coming of whom I am chief that is the personal significance of it all why did he come? let us go to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ himself this is what he said about his coming to this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world that I might bear witness unto the truth the Son of Man is

come to seek and to save that which was lost he said and then in another place there is recorded this the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many he said I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly that's why he came he came to bring God's truth God himself come down to man he came to seek the loss you and me in our sins he came to give his life a ransom for us he came to impart his life to us that's why he came one day after I had been made a prisoner I was brought down by armed guards of the communist armies of China away down through the mountains and as I came down through the mountains night by night the guards would pitch the tents and I their prisoner would be put in one of these tents and

they would stand outside to make sure that I didn't escape and so the days went on and we passed a week or two of arduous journey over that magnificent country of the central Asian plateau they were bringing me down to China for trial by the people's court but one day we came into a valley where there was a little Tibetan village and it had been a dusty and hard day on the trails and so we were glad to find a place to stay for the night we came into the little courtyard of the flat roof Tibetan dwelling and then we went up the tree trunk inside which serves as a staircase just a notched trunk of a fir tree and we came upstairs and saw the landlord and the guard showed me a little place in one of the rooms on the floor where I was to pass the night and then as it got dark one of them said

to me he said now you better go downstairs and see about your horse and so I went down to see whether my horse had been given any hay and as I came into that downstairs part of that Tibetan house I found as usual it was given over to stabling and there in the darkness of the interior there were various horses and animals well I walked across the dance straw the stench of the animals came up into my nostril it was a most evil place and you know as I stood there looking into the darkness and searching for my horse my mind went back over the past days and it seemed that I couldn't quite remember what the evening was and then it suddenly came to me it was Christmas Eve I looked around the eastern stable in its poverty and filth and then my mind seemed to go away to that first Christmas Eve

whatever evening it might have been and pictured that other eastern stable where the little babe our Lord Jesus was born to think of Him who rides the heavens now a little babe cradled in a manger not yet learned to walk think of Him who has made all things so that the stars and the moon the sun and the earth are the work of His fingers and there lie His little hand perhaps just curling round His mother's finger God manifest in the flesh the mighty God become our Saviour and there in that dark eastern stable that Christmas Eve for what I thought about it my heart was humble to thankfulness and worship I could only quietly go back up the old tree trunk and lie down on the little space there set in the floor for me you see my Saviour had not where to lay His head I could only think about

Him who came to be my Saviour who humbled Himself who took the form of a man who came and was our servant who was obedient to the death of the cross that He might die there for our sins give His life a ransom for many my mind goes back to a little chorus that I used to know way back in England in my younger days love to the uttermost love to the uttermost love past all measuring His love must be from Him's highest glory to earth's deepest shame this is the love of my Saviour to me oh yes this great historical fact stands out down all the years Christ Jesus came into the world oh what does it mean to you? do you understand what God meant by it all?

He came into the world to save sinners have you realized the personal significance of that great sacrifice? have you said yes Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners but have you added us Paul did of whom I am chief John the Apostle he makes it very clear to us what the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

should mean to each one of us he says He was manifested to take away our sins and in Him is no sin he says the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil Christ Jesus has come into the world does it mean nothing to you personally? that He was born in the manger that He was slain on the tree that God says Christ died for our sins according to the scripture shall it not bow your heart to worship? will you not just kneel and quietly there in God's presence turn from your sin and your forgetfulness of Him and unthankfulness and unbelief and self-centered lies and casting your all upon the Savior thank Him for coming thank Him for dying for you and give Him not the manger in your life not the outside place but give Him the very throne for God has highly exalted Him that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow will you bow your knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord it will be to your salvation it will be to your eternal blessing but more than this God's word tells us it will be to the glory of the Father

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9790.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/geoffrey-bull/a-prisoner-in-china-true-story/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net