

Testimony

by Richard Wurmbbrand

The sermon emphasizes the importance of giving oneself to God, rejoicing in persecution, and focusing on our eternal spirit rather than our physical circumstances.

Duration: 1:09:57

Scripture: Luke 6:22-23

Topics: "Persecution"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of remaining faithful to God even in difficult circumstances, using the example of Jesus' crucifixion. He emphasizes the need for Christians to support and help those who are persecuted for their faith through a Christian mission called Voice of the Martyrs. The preacher shares a story of a man who endured 18 years of imprisonment and then was sent to work in a coal mine in Siberia, yet remained steadfast in his faith and even sang songs of praise. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God's glory can be seen in the faces and joy of those who suffer for their faith.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing, World Challenge, Post Office Box 260, Lindale, Texas 75771 or by calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. The storm and the lame and the sick, those who brought an offering, should I accept this off your hand, says the Lord. As now, you bring in church your offering, money, sometimes you gather here food or medicine for those in need.

In times before, when people came to the temple, they brought a lamb, a ram, some bird which would be sacrificed for the Lord, and there were some believers who brought a sick lamb or a lame lamb which could not be sold, but they had the worst in their flock. And God says, that is no good. So some have understood, and instead of bringing a sick lamb or a lame lamb, they brought the best of the flock.

But the best of the flock is also no good. To give the most of the money you can give is also no good. God expects from us an entirely other sacrifice.

He expects that we should give ourselves. Jesus had said, Whosoever does not deny himself and takes the cross, cannot be my disciple. He can bring many things.

He can bring money. He can give his time. But if he does not give himself, he has not fulfilled the aim.

Jesus is our bread groom, and he wishes no less than ourselves. I am Jewish. My beautiful wife is Jewish, too.

And the Jews have had a very great teacher, Rabbi Akaiba. In the time of terrible Roman persecution, 22,000 of his disciples had been slaughtered. And in the end, Rabbi Akaiba was also tortured terribly with iron combs, which had been heated in the fire.

They lacerated his flesh. And he chanted, Listen, Israel, our Lord is the only God. So they asked him, how in the world can you praise God when you are lacerated to the blood? You die here.

And he said, all my life I have desired to serve God with all my heart, with all my soul, and I have not succeeded. Now that I succeeded, should I give it up because of what happens to my body? I am not the body. I am an eternal spirit, and to this eternal spirit they can do nothing.

And I wish to speak to you about the persecuted church today, where they give their selves. You have heard about what happened under communism. Now in many countries, the communist regime is no more what it has been before.

But every fifth inhabitant of the world is under communism in China. There are totally five billion men. One billion live in China.

Every fifth person is a Chinese. In China, there is still this communist terror. Christians are in jail since years and years, and they are tortured beyond description.

In Vietnam, Christians now get sentenced to death. And after having been executed, the family gets the bill. The family has to pay for the bullet, for the coffin, the salary of the judge, which sentenced them, and the salary of the prosecutors.

They say, we will not spend our good communist money for these Christians. They have to pay themselves. And then there is the terrible persecution under Islam.

It is almost unknown here in America. The biggest African country is Sudan. And in Sudan, Christians today, thousands of them, have been deported to a desert place in the south of the country.

And there they have been left to starve, without food, without water, without shelter. But together with their elderly and with their children, nobody knows how many thousands have died there. We have documentation that they hacked up, they cut off the arms of Christians and used these arms as drumsticks in the Muslim processions.

And now the last news, which we received only a week or two ago, the Muslims went, the fanatic Muslims, went from village to village and crucified all male Christians whom they met there. Such things are happening today. And I wish to bring to you somehow the atmosphere of Christian life under persecution.

I will exemplify it from my life and the life of the Romanian church to which I have belonged. But you will understand that I don't speak about me. I give an example of how those react to persecution, who suffer

the persecution today.

One day, it was the 29th of February, I went to a church. Which pastor had there a car? You had to walk. I walked to the church, and on the way, a car of the secret police of the communists stopped before me.

Four men pushed me into the car. I was arrested, kidnapped from the street. Nobody knew what happened with me.

We were prepared for this. First of all, we knew what Jesus had said, that I send you as lambs among wolves. When you go as lambs among wolves, you know what will happen to you.

We had been before communism under fascism. My wife and I had been in prison under fascism too. So somehow, we were prepared for this.

We expected that such a day would come. And under communism, in the underground church, now, when a pastor is ordained, other pastors put their hands upon him, and the elders say, I ordain you as shepherds of the flock of Christ, and as potential sufferers for Christ under persecution. At the moment of ordination, you are ordained not only to lead a congregation, but also to suffer together with this persecution.

So it did not surprise me that I was arrested. I remember Rabbi Hakeba, they lacerated his flesh, they killed him, and he said, but I wished to serve God from all my heart, with all my soul. So why should I be amazed about what is happening? Because I am Jewish.

I wish to tell you some secrets of the Hebrew language, which you might not have heard, but which are very important for us. In Hebrew, the word to have does not exist. You can't say in Hebrew, even in modern Hebrew, which is spoken in Israel, you can't say, I have money, I have a house, I have a car, I have this, I have that.

They don't have the word to have. To have is a four-letter word, and civilized people shun four-letter words. To have does not exist in the language of the people of God.

One is the possessor of all possessions, and we are only stewards. Therefore, we can say the prayer which Jesus taught us, our Father who art in heaven, who is the ruler of a huge cosmos with millions of galaxies and stars, and we disturb him about a little thing. What do you wish from me? I should have my daily bread, but for the daily bread, must you disturb the ruler of the world? Speak with somebody else.

No, I have something very important. What is the important thing? You should give me my daily bread, but we have bread in the cupboard, and if you have money in your pocket, you can buy bread, but the cupboard, I don't have it. It does not belong to me.

It belongs to you. The bread in the cupboard belongs to you. The money in the pocket also belongs to you, and you can decide today you will fast.

It is his bread. It is his money. To have is wrong.

It does not exist even in the language of the Hebrew people, and so they arrested me 14 years. I have not seen anymore neither my wife, nor my children, nor my mother. I did not know if they are alive.

She was in another jail. She did not know what has happened with me, but they have taken nothing away from me because I had nothing. Everything belongs to God.

And when everything belongs to God, life becomes so beautiful. I have no problems. I never had problems, and when I speak about I, I mean all the Christian prisoners.

We never had problems because for having problems, we were saved. We did not have this mentality of having. The problems belong not to me.

They belong to God. We did not have worries. We did not have this preoccupation In the evening, I would go to some corner in my cell and would say, God, are my wife and my children your creatures or my creatures? Did you create them or did I create them? Is the church which I have passed on mine or is it yours? If my family and my church is yours, you please take care of them.

I am tired. I go to bed. Good night, my God.

I will see you again tomorrow morning. Thank you. It is so splendid not to have.

Nobody can take away from you anything. The moment when we entered in jail, they took away from us even our name. We were not allowed to tell anybody, not even the guards who watched us.

We were not allowed to say our names because they had kidnapped us from the street. They did not wish anybody to know where we are and they feared that a guard, if he knows my name, with a glass of wine, with a friend, he will see who is in jail. They gave us fancy names.

Afterwards, they took away from us even these fancy names and gave to every prisoner a number. You are prisoner 5,936 or 6,228 and so on. Some elderly prisoners, beaten and tortured, had difficulty to remember their number and they were beaten for this.

I had the privilege. I had a number very easy to be remembered. I was prisoner number 1. One God, one faith, one baptism.

I could remember this and I could remember that I was prisoner number 1. They took away from us everything. We had nothing. We had no problems.

We had no worries because we did not have the mentality of having. It is so nice not to have. We had no sins.

All the sins belonged to Christ, not to me. Jesus had said, I have come to take all your sins. Some of us say, no, this sin I keep to myself.

I wish to torture myself about what I have done. But the sins don't belong to you. They belong to him.

Give up having. Another word which does not exist in Hebrew, you can't say in the language of the people of God, I am. You can't say.

This I am does not exist. It does not exist. I, prisoner.

I can say, if I wish to say, as you would say in English, I am a prisoner. You can't say it in Hebrew. You can say, I, prisoner.

There is some connection between being a prisoner and me. But we are not so connected. When you say, I am a prisoner, then at every minute of my life, I am this prisoner.

But this am does not exist in Hebrew. I, prisoner. There is some relation between these two.

But I can break the relation at any moment. Paul, the apostle, was in prison together with other Christians. And he arrives from prison.

We, the Christians, we are seated. Don't tell me, Paul, where you are seated. We know you are seated on the cold concrete of a prison cell.

I know. He says, we are seated in heavenly places. He was not a prisoner.

He was somehow connected with prison life. He was connected also with missionary life and the whole world, which was known until then. But his real life was outside of all this am and have and these worldly preoccupations.

He was seated in heavenly places. And from there, he looked down to what is happening to his body here on earth. I have seen you dancing here and jubilating.

I'm sorry, my legs don't help me anymore. But we sang in prison. We sang just as this beautiful choir here.

Not as beautifully, but we sang. When I came to America, I wondered very much. I found here a special kind of birds.

Larks and nightingales sing every day. Some American Christians, many American Christians, sing once a week in church. If it is good to sing to God, why don't you sing every day? If it is wrong to sing to God, don't sing on Sunday.

We sang there every day. And we sang being accompanied by musical instruments. The communists had been very, very nice to us.

They knew that we liked to praise God with musical instruments. So they gave to every Christian a musical instrument. Would you believe it? Much better than in America.

In America, prisoners don't get musical instruments. We received. Not mandolins, not violins.

It would have been too expensive for the communists. But they put chains at our hands and at our feet. And we discovered that chains are splendid musical instruments.

And we could sing. The day clink clank, clink clank. The day clink clank, clink clank.

The Lord has made clink clank, clink clank. The Lord has made clink clank, clink clank. And then I will tell you what happened with me once.

I was in that cell. They take away from us our Bibles. We never had.

14 years, I've never seen a Bible. Neither any other book. But we remembered in the beginning quite a lot of the Bible.

I knew not everything, but I knew very much by heart. And after, by heart, I read by heart. I lay on my bed, and I remembered a verse from Luke chapter 6. The Sermon on the Mount.

And there Jesus says, at a certain moment, in chapter 6, verse 22, When men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the son of man's sake. That was our situation in prison. Rejected, separated from everybody.

And then Jesus says, Rejoice ye in that day. And I said to myself, well my conscience is clear. I have rejoiced.

But he says, Rejoice ye in that day and to rejoice under persecution is not enough. Rejoice and do something else. Jesus says, If you wish to be saved, believe and be baptized.

To believe and not to be baptized, it's wrong. To be baptized and not to believe is also wrong. When he says and, he means you should fulfill two things.

And here he says, when you are persecuted, Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy. I felt so guilty I had not leaped. So immediately I stood up from my bed and I began to dance around in the prison cell.

I began to dance around and I leaped for joy. Now the doors of prison cells have a peephole through which the guards look in and they saw me dancing in the prison cell. Now all the world dances in a communist prison cell where they beat and torture.

So they had orders to behave very well with those who got mad. Many got mad. They behaved well with these mad men because they saw banging on the door and shouting would disturb the quiet of the prison.

So immediately when he saw me leaping around, he came in, patted me on my shoulder. You will see everything will be all right. I will bring you something very good.

And he came back in a few minutes with a whole loaf of bread which was my portion for eight weeks. Our regular portion was one slice of bread a week. And I had a whole loaf.

Only there was a dainty cheese. Can you imagine? Cheese. And there was something else.

Two pieces of sugar. Much time had passed. I had not seen sugar.

And now I had two pieces of sugar. I surely did not eat them yet. I put them all before me.

I can rejoice looking at these things. And I will first finish the Sermon on the Mount to recapitulate it from memory. Where have I remained? I said, when they persecute you, when they beat you, when they reject you and all this, you should rejoice and sleep for joy.

Here I have remained. I have to go further. Rejoice and sleep for joy because great will be your reward.

To the bread and to the cheese and to the sugar, great was the reward. We danced in prison. Christians who are today in prison, they are conquerors.

They are above the Communists. The Communists could do nothing to them. They do to the body.

But usually people believe, I am this, what you see. And they have a spirit. No! I am an eternal spirit which has a body.

That is my real life. Bodies, I am 84. I have changed already 12 times my whole body.

At 7 years, a child at the age of 7 does not have one molecule of those which he had at birth. At 14, he doesn't have one molecule of what he had at the age of 7. Every 7 years, all the molecules of our body are changed. So I have changed my body 12 times.

Who is this I who has changed the body? I is what is eternal, the spirit. And when this body will pass away, I will get, by his grace, another body. One of glory and one of goodness and one of beauty.

So the Christians, I must say again, it was romantic. It is written in the Bible that we are married to Christ. Married, you know.

And as a girl, she has married him and now she belongs to him and he belongs to her. They are really one flesh and one soul and one spirit. They are one.

And we are together with Christ. Prison life has been an optional night. It has been the bride and the embraces of the bridegroom.

And the Christians came out from there with shining faces and with a smile on their face. It was two days ago. At 700 clubs, they made a program on television with me and with my wife and so on.

And there was a great Christian conference, a Christian lawyers conference from the whole country in that hotel where we stayed. I had nothing to do with this lawyers conference. But on the corridor, one of those lawyers, I had never known him, stopped me and said, Sir, may I ask you some question? Who are you? I have observed you on the corridor.

You smile. And your face looks such a happy man. Who are you? I said, well, I am a man who has been 14 years in communist prisons and I would be an idiot if 14 years in prison for Christ would not have taught me to smile.

He said, come and speak to us, the lawyers, because we don't know the smile. It was joy in communist prisons and we danced as I saw you dancing. I felt, well, I have again the joy which I have seen.

There are some churches in which probably many are rheumatics, or they have sciatica, and they can dance. But you don't have rheumatism and you can dance. And I felt again at home you have the spirit which our brethren and sisters in communist prisons have.

And now, they kidnapped me from the streets. They pushed me into a van of the secret police. And the first thought which passed through my mind is that it was the 29th of February.

Now, the 29th of February is a very important day. You know it is the day of the leap year, one day more of the year. In the Bible it is written 366 times, don't fear.

For every day of the year there is a promise, you don't have to fear. And because it is the extra day of the leap year, it is not 365 times, but 366 times. You should know on 29th of February also, you have a promise of God and you don't have to fear.

And probably when I remember this I must have smiled. So the police officer arrested me, asked me, sir, why do you smile? I said, because it is written 366 times. So they were sure I had gone mad.

Many get shocked when they get arrested. What kind of reply is it? What is written 366 times? Just what I need. What do you need? I need a promise of God.

We don't have to fear. We were prepared, the leaders of the underground church, we were prepared for arrests. We had been arrested in Nazi times.

We knew what communism is, that it persecutes the religion. We expected arrests and imprisonments. Many will be killed.

We waited for this. And there was no fright. I have not observed fright among our brothers and sisters.

Many of us had just the contrary of fright. You will wonder. Everybody shuns pain.

Pain is something terrible to bear. Physical pain. Psychological pain.

And even more difficult it is to bear somebody else's pain. To have a wife, a husband, a child, a parent who is deadly sick and so on. Pain is something terrible.

But we are not taught this by the scriptures. Jesus says when you have built your house, the house of faith, storms will come, he says. He doesn't say storms might come.

He says storms will come. There is no life in which storms don't come. In the form of sickness, in the form of unemployment, in the form of accidents, in the form of, I don't know what, trouble in the family and trouble in the employment and so on and so on.

Storms will come, he says. But if you are founded on the rock, then these storms pass near us and they don't affect us anymore because I am not the body. Paul, the body of Paul was in jail.

And he speaks about himself and says, I am on a nice vacation. I am seated in heavenly places. We are seated in entirely other places than those where are all the human troubles.

We don't have the explanation. Why does this happen? Why does that happen? Now probably not many of you know Hebrew. You don't need Hebrew.

You don't need to know Greek. It's good to know them. But you don't need them to establish something.

Just ask from somebody to see once a Hebrew Bible, to see an old Greek New Testament, look through them, page after page. You must not understand. You will see one thing is missing in the Bible as it was written in the beginning.

There is no question mark. In Hebrew, there exists no question mark. Who should question? Why should I question? He's God.

I was in India and there I was very sick, very sick. I went to a doctor and he examined me and I said, what medicine do I need? Sir, you don't need a medicine. You undress yourself now.

In 10 minutes you will be operated. He was a man who had studied 20 years medicine. He knew what he does.

He knew what he says. I did not ask him any question. If I would have asked him questions, he would have replied in medical terms which I would not have understood undressed.

Please do with me as you like. This I told to a doctor. I should not have the same confidence as the creator of all the doctors and of the medicine and all the science and the creator of the world.

And if he sends something, he sends it he's my father. He sends it for the good. There is something in our English Bible which is falsely written.

In Romans 8, 28 it is written that all things work together for the good. That is not written in the Bible. You read it there.

It's not there. It is not written. You know why in the English Bible it is all things work together for the good? Because it is a translation of the Greek text into the Hebrew text.

They did not have the word absolute. If the authors of the Bible would have been able to write in English, they would have written there, absolutely all things work together for the good. We always think all things work together for the good, except the one which bothers me now.

That is terrible. That does not work for the good. But just that works for the good.

It's nowhere written in the Bible that all things work together for the good. It's written all things work together for the good. Even that which bothers you today most.

We don't have the explanation for these things. How can a doctor explain to one who has no schooling all these things which they know? He can't explain. What kind of a god would he be if he could explain to me he would know as much as me? A professor of mathematics has a little total of four or five.

Can he explain to him his mathematics? He can't explain it. He is big and we are small and we have confidence in him. And therefore this prison life was begun with confidence in him, with quiet.

There was singing in prison. Using even prison chains for singing. There was dancing in prison.

I was not the only one who danced. I am not a Pentecostal, but I did not read in the Bible that you must be a Pentecostal in order to dance. David had danced and was not even a Baptist.

And Miriam had danced even worse. She was not even a Lutheran. She was a soul who loved God.

Who loved God and had confidence in him. And there was dance and therefore my wife and I, we felt very good when we came in this church. Sorry I could not dance.

Otherwise I would have joined you in dancing. Now we were brought before those who questioned us, the implements of torture in their hands. And they asked us to give declarations about others.

There was secret printing. It is not like in America. If you wish to have a Bible, you enter in a shop and you can choose there an authorized version, an unauthorized version, standard version, American Bible, international Bible, living Bible, dead Bible.

We have all kinds of Bibles. We knew only the Bible. We did not know about all these things.

But it could not be. You could enter in no shop to buy it. So Christian books, when booklets and so on, everything had to be printed secretly.

And when they arrest somebody, they begin to torture him. He should betray the secrets because nobody prints alone. First of all, from where do you have printing machines? From where do you have ink? From where do you have book? Who arranges that there should be a van to take away what you have printed? How do you distribute it? There's always a whole net of the underground church which works.

And then they arrest you and beat you in order you should say what are the secrets. But they tortured not me. They tortured not the Christians.

They tortured only the transitory bodies. It was not me. And during the first sessions, the spirit could jubilate and be quiet.

And we knew that we have something great to fulfill. I will interrupt and not speak about myself. It would not be good.

I will tell you about another prisoner. And you will learn about the prisoners in general. There were such Christian prisoners.

Surely not all were at the same spiritual level and so on. But I will tell you about one beautiful example. There was a girl by the name of Anne Marie.

She worked in the underground church. They were underground Sunday schools for children. They were not permitted.

Underground youth meetings and so on. All kinds of underground works. And she was arrested.

And she was a girl of 18 or 20. And her girls were tortured. Can't be described.

My wife has written a book. The pastor's wife. You will find it outside.

I have written several books. Torture for Christ and other books. You will find them outside.

I tell you beforehand. We have not said the truth. Because the truth can't be published.

There were such tortures which you can't print in America. No publisher would take them. And it's hard to bear.

What has happened to men is just nothing in comparison with what happened to girls and young ladies who were arrested and who were in the hands of these brutes. But there was this girl, Anne Marie. She's still alive.

This girl, Anne Marie. She was young. And now when they tortured her, the normal reaction of every normal person when he's thrown under the feet of somebody else, when he's beaten, is the desire to escape.

To escape. And she by telling the secrets of the underground church. That is what they wished.

If she would have said, I give you 10 names and let me free, they would have agreed with her. They would have had other things to torture. But her thought was not how to escape.

She had one dominant thought. How can I bring the communist torturers to Christ? Is it not amazing? You are tortured. You are beaten.

Some of you might be beaten by your husband. When you are beaten by your husband, do you think, well, that is a challenge for me. God had a bad man and he gave him to me.

I should bring him to Christ. God had a bad youngster and he made him to be my son. Because I, through patience and goodness, should bring him to salvation.

Not how I should escape the trouble. But how can I use this trouble for the good of somebody else? And this girl, Anne Marie, she had one thought. How to bring to Christ the torturer? Torturers are men who don't read the Bible.

They don't go to church. They have no Christian surroundings. And if those who are not in their beastly hands don't tell them about Christ, they will not be saved.

They will go to hell. They will live without Christ. Without truth.

Without love. Without forgiveness. Anything.

So that was her dominant desire while they beat her. And she wished to speak to the torturer about Christ. And there were always possibilities to speak to them.

Because torturing is a very difficult task. One of the torturers told us, Why do you shout when I torture you? We replied, Because it produces pain. Pain? You don't know what pain is.

I beat you half an hour. I can't beat you more than that. Because I have to beat so many.

And after this half hour, you go in your cell and you enjoy yourself. But I have to beat eight hours a day. Six days a week.

Thirty days a month. Since ten years, I beat and I beat and I beat. And the only music which I hear is, Puck! Puck! Puck! Puck! Puck! Then in the evening, I'm maddened.

And I go to a pub and get drunk. I go home and beat my wife too and beat my children too. My pain is bigger than yours.

Which in a certain sense was also true. So they could not torture too much. They had to take coffee breaks.

Then a soldier would bring them a cup of coffee. They would smoke a cigarette. If you were a smoker, they would offer you a cigarette too.

They were jolly fellows for a half an hour. And in this half an hour you could speak to them and this girl used this time and she told him, sir, in vain you beat me. You will never beat out from me my love towards God.

Is this you want to know because I'm a Christian. But I will tell you something else. You will never beat out from me my love towards God and my love towards you because I love you from all my heart.

Go away you stupid girl. We are not here as a loving business. You better tell her the secrets of the underground church.

And she replied, sir, I will tell you words which normally no girl says to a man. I don't know why girls and women always expect that men should pay them compliments. They never pay a compliment to a man.

I know. We say beautiful wives. They don't say handsome husband.

All right. But here are special circumstances. I will tell you something which no girl usually says to a man.

When you beat me, I look to your hand. Sir, you have beautiful hands. I imagine how your wife enjoyed it when you caressed her first.

You enjoyed it. She enjoyed it. What is more beautiful than caressing? Why then do you take hands which are made by God for caressing and you use them for beating and torturing? Sir, is caressing not better than beating? It produces you joy.

It produces her joy. Then go back from beating to caressing. And I will tell you one other word which no girl ever said to a man.

I, being your prisoner, I will tell you. Younger than you. Sir, you have very attractive lips.

Your wife must have enjoyed it when you gave her the first kiss. Now how beautiful is a kiss? You are inebriated. She enjoys it.

You enjoy it. And you have given up kissing for swearing and for shouting foul words. Don't you realize it is wrong? It is stupid.

Go back from swearing to kissing and from beating to caressing. It's much more beautiful. For this our hands and our lips have been made.

She, he gave her again a few slaps. Then she said, all right, I see you don't wish to hear from me. So I will tell you just one sentence more and then everything will be finished.

I have a boyfriend. Now every girl praises her boyfriend. But my boyfriend is something entirely else.

Not that he loves me. He is love. He is a fire of love.

He is a fire of love. And since I know him, I am like inebriated. He has taught me to love.

And if somebody caresses me, I love him. And if somebody beats me, I also love him. I can do nothing else than loving his love.

He has given me this new life. He gave her a box here in the temple. She fell on the concrete of the cell, hit herself, and she passed out.

Then after a few minutes, she came to herself. She saw him seated in his armchair. And he said, you stupid girl, who is this your boyfriend? I sit here and think about him.

He is smart, your boyfriend. I never thought about this. To caress is better than to beat.

And to kiss, to kiss, it's so beautiful to kiss. To kiss is better than to swear and to use foul words. Who is this boyfriend who taught you such a thing? Then she told him the name of the boyfriend.

I will not tell you the name of the boyfriend. It is for you to guess who was her boyfriend. And she told him the name of the boyfriend.

And he, the communist torturer, asked her, how can I make him to be my friend too? And she told him, but you can see in five minutes, in the circumstances, you must repent of your sins. You must be born again, but you could explain to him. And she said, and you must be baptized.

He, baptism, what do they know about this? In Romania, 50 years, in the Soviet Union, 75 years, these officers of the communist police, they are brought up in atheism, in God-hate, in communism, since they are toddlers. What does it mean to be baptized? You enter in a water with somebody else, he dips you in the water and says the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, he dips you in the water, and then your friendship, this is my boyfriend, is sealed. So he said to her very simply, then you baptize me.

She replied, I'm sorry, I can't baptize you, which is not true. Normally, baptism is performed by a pastor, but in such exceptional circumstances, everybody can baptize. A girl can also baptize, everybody can baptize.

She did not know. She said, I can't baptize you. Then the most amazing thing has happened.

I have read so much church history, universal church history. I've never read something so beautiful as this, where she said to him, I can't baptize you. He took out his revolver, pointed the revolver at her, and said, you girl, better baptize me or I shoot you.

He did not know, he did not know that he had done exactly what Jesus had said. Jesus says in Matthew 10, that son takes the kingdom of God by violence. I wish to enter the kingdom of God, and I have to shoot, if I have to shoot a couple of people for this, but I wish to enter the kingdom of God.

He dragged her to some pond of water, which was there in prison. He entered in water, she entered, she baptized him, and he proved that it was a real conversion through the fact that he risked his liberty and life, and he freed her. Just in those days, another lady prisoner had to be freed, but she died just before being freed, so he made it on her name, on the name of those who died.

This one, our sister, has been freed, and the other was buried in the name of our sister. This sister of ours is free, she's free even now. There exists such a desire to serve Christ.

We don't give lame lambs or sick lambs, we don't give healthy lambs and costly lambs, we don't bargain, should we give little money to the church, should we give more, much money to the church, should we give little time, should we give much time, we give ourselves, the whole of it, the whole of it. It is written in the Bible, we are married to Christ, I will not tell you where it is written, read the whole Bible and you will find it. I don't like it to give Bible verses because then you look up that verse and don't read the next verse.

Read the whole Bible, you will find it. We are married to Christ, and now the marriage feast has passed, and the bride and the bridegroom are together, and they are just jubilating, she belongs to him, he belongs to her, there's no more I and he, we are one, and the only thing is this love which is in our heart and which is from him, so is the life. I must tell you, surely, not all Christians are on the same level as here, everywhere Christians are on different levels of faith, and so it should be, some are babes, some are grown-ups, but the essence of the Christian life, there have been millions of Christians in prison in the Soviet Union, thousands in my land in Romania, there are, nobody knows how many in China, nobody

entered in jail.

And we, the Christians, we did not shoot one shot, we did nothing, we did not push them away. We were in prison, we prayed, we laughed, we laughed, the communists tortured us too, and a stone came, it was not rolled by any human hand, something came, they killed each other, they put in prison each other, Yeltsin, Gorbachev, and Gorbachev, I don't know whom, they among themselves quarreled, and the church is free, with the flames of the fire of love. With Jesus' light, he can light the fire of love also in your heart, and your family should be a happy family.

You always have to reproach to your wife, she has done this wrong, she has done that wrong, only wives do wrong things, husbands are examples, they never do wrong things. And when you see that she has done something wrong, sing to her, smile to her! I have seen Christians smiling in these circumstances, the conquest of faith, and I must tell you only about one Christian more, I met John Huiding, a great man, he is a Chinese pastor, he died recently, a Chinese pastor, who was 22 years in jail, no, 24 years, the other was 22, he was 24 years in jail, in a Chinese jail in Tibet, who can imagine a Chinese jail You say to somebody, this man has been 14 years in jail, an American doesn't know, a jail, I visited American jails, you have radio, you have television, you have whatever you like, no? If one wishes to live well without paying a thing, you go to prison and you get everything. But jail means something entirely else, and to Romanian and Russian prisons, can't be compared with Chinese prisons, they have been terrible.

And now we were in a circle of Christians around him, and he told us about his prison life, and he told us how, at a certain moment, they kept him with their hands tied behind their back, as they did in Romania too, you should, during weeks, you were kept with your hands tied behind your back, do you know what torture is this, to have your hands tied behind your back? It teaches you, you can't scratch yourself, do you know what torture this is? When I preach, I see so often somebody scratches himself, I wonder if he ever says thanks to God, God I thank you that I can scratch myself, we had no possibility of scratching ourselves, and the nose ran, and you could not wipe away, wipe your face, and there are so many other needs of the human body, and you did just what you liked, they would not untie your hands, and, just one moment, yeah, they gave you food, but as you had no hand free to use a spoon or a fork, they threw, they threw the food on the floor, and you had, like the dogs, you had to leap this food, with this dirty mouth of yours, they shed buckets with refuse, with human refuse, and with human urine, they shed over your head, and you could not wipe it away. This cough is a reminder of prison time, but we in Romania, we have a proverb, we have a proverb, as long as a man coughs, no priest can bury him, he's all right, and they shed buckets with human dirt and with urine over his head, and he could not even a little bit wipe it away, and I asked him also, brother, how could you bear this, and he, like the other, Viktor Velicher, they've never met, but he also did not reply in our human words, he began to sing, and he sang 2 Corinthians chapter 4, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, light affliction, with your hands tied behind your back, light affliction, buckets with refuse and urine shed over your head, light affliction, 20, 24 years in this manner, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, but for a moment. I preached in Dallas, as a man came to me, and I said, pastor, I asked you something I knew beforehand, but you will reply, you will reply from the Bible, I'm not allowed to divorce, I know, but I can't, I can't anymore, 100 Bibles should say if you know divorce, I must divorce, I can't, she nags and she nags and she nags and she talks and she talks and she talks, she never finishes and always chides me, chides me, since years, I bet, I can't anymore.

I asked him, what is your occupation, he said, I work, I'm in a factory, a worker, so you work 8 hours a day, yes, it takes you 2 hours a day to travel to the factory and back and some shopping, yeah, so 10 hours are

gone, 8 hours to sleep, 18 hours are gone, so she can nag you only 6 hours.

You can't be as it's 6 hours, and this our brother, this Chinese brother, how could he endure, have no, no respite from this, and we all have to learn from these brethren, I looked with admiration towards these brethren, men who don't have, therefore nobody can take anything away from you, they are not, Paul, Paul, writes in 2 Corinthians 12, I am nothing, nothing, Billy Graham is considered to be the greatest soul winner in the world, it is said that he has won for Christ 1 million men, honor to him, but even Billy Graham will agree with me that Paul, Apostle Paul was a little bit bigger than Graham, Graham is considered the biggest evangelist in the world, a great title, a great title, but Paul is a little bit bigger than Graham, and his title was I am nothing, to be nothing is the

highest title in Christianity, higher than the Pope of Rome, to be nothing, that was the title, to be nothing, and to have nothing, to be nothing, not to have nagging questions, to whom should I question, what can a babe, what can a babe, a suckling, ask his mother, what can she explain to a suckling, we are small, we are small, if nothing, God has nothing to explain to us, he has shown us his love, sending his only son to die for us, and has given us his Holy Spirit, and gives us his angels, what should he explain to us, just lie down quietly at his breast, and that is it, and I will finish by telling you just one thing, and with this I finish, we were doped with drugs, I have been a drug addict, at a certain moment, I was a drug addict without my will, but during the interrogation, as

they did not get from me what they willed, so they thought they will dope me, and then under the influence of drugs, my mind will not work, and I will be sick, and they doped us with drugs, we knew, in every bowl of soup, it was not a soup, but let us call it soup, in every bowl of soup, there were drugs, we could smell them, but we had no choice, that was the only food, and in every cup of coffee, it was not coffee, it was black, but there were the drugs, we could smell them, and day after day, we were doped, other prisoners and I among them, and because of this doping, at a certain moment, I speak to you about 14 years of prison, it is a long time, there were different periods, that was a period of great doping, because of the doping, because of the hunger, and because of all the other

things which have happened, we, I and the others, we lost more and more our memory, we lost our memory, there was a time we arrived, when it was the doping, the highest, there was a time when I did not remember any book which I've ever read anymore, I did not remember the books, I've read many books in my life, I did not remember the books which I have written, I did not remember, and more and more, I forgot the Bible, more and more, I did not know the whole Bible by heart, but a new portion, you also probably know, I had forgotten these, I tried to pray, I could not anymore, because for prayer, you speak with somebody, you know, you have to concentrate your mind, if president would invite me, I should come to the White House and speak with him, I would think it over, what should I tell

him, it's a half hour which he gives to me, so with God, I must also think when I speak with him, my mind did not work anymore, so I said, I will give up praying, I will just recite the Lord's Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and I began, I folded my hands, and I began, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy, thy.

I could not remember what follows, I had forgotten the Lord's Prayer, for a moment, I was so sad, I said, what kind of a Christian am I, what kind of a pastor, who doesn't know the Lord's Prayer, little children in churches know the Lord's Prayer, how will I ever be a pastor again, if I don't know the Lord's Prayer, but we have a comforter, we have a comforter, and very soon, the comfort came, I had forgotten the prayer,

but I knew what prayer I had forgotten, I had forgotten a prayer which starts with a big assertion, that the one who rules in heaven is my father, and if he's my father, what does it count if I don't know the formula, if my child or grandchild comes to me, does he stand at attention before me and says, highly respected grandfather, please have the kindness to give me a

candy, he puts his hand in the pocket, takes out the candy himself, he doesn't need all these formulas, and I folded my hands and said, God, I have forgotten the prayer, but you surely know it by heart by now, you have heard it so many thousands of times, and for a long time, my prayer and the prayer of others in the same situation, was, Jesus, I love you, then after a time, again, Jesus, I love you, again, Jesus, I love you, but I did not wish to bore him, if you repeat always the same thing, I will tell you here again one secret of the Hebrew Bible, in Ezekiel 6, I believe, it is written that the angels sing to the Lord, holy, holy, holy is the Lord, now that was really not nice, holy, holy, holy is the Lord, my wife would not enjoy it if I would tell her, I love you, I love you, I love

you, it looks like mockery, but if you read the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew Bible has vowels and consonants, and has musical notes, the Hebrew Bible has musical notes, if you look only to the Hebrew Bible, and you will see around every word the notes in which they should sing, in synagogues, the Bible is not read, it is sung, in orthodox churches also, and there in Hebrew, the Hebrew word for holy is kadosh, and there it is not written kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, it is written kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, it is not the same thing, but every time on another tune, I love you, I love you, I really love you, and we try to make it, and we try, and we try to make it with a beautiful smile, as much as we could, I so believe in smiling, dear, dear children of God, smile, the world around you needs your

smile, needs your smile, and we smiled to him, in a long time, there was only one, only this prayer, Jesus, I love you, Jesus, I love you, and then the doping continued, and beatings continued, and whatever you like, and we were very hungry, very hungry, and we became weaker and weaker, I was so weak, and other prisoners, if I had a cup of water near me, I could not stretch out my arm to take it, somebody else had to bring it to my lips, and I could not even say these words continually, Jesus, I love you, and then the only prayer was a quiet beating of the heart, Jesus heard tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, he knew this heart beats for me, he knew this this heart beats for me, I still believe that this is a very high form of prayer, just to sit quiet with a loving heart, and he knows what

happens in this heart, he knows that his hearts love him, and he loves us, that is the bread in the arms of the bread group, I can bring you this good news from the persecuted church, you have brethren and sisters, now there are thousands in prisons or deportation camps, about Sudan, some right here, all these reports, you can't rely on figures, but they say about hundreds of thousands, the figures say hundreds of thousands, it might be tens of thousands, nobody has counted six million Jews have been killed in Germany, it might have been five million, it might have been one million, but there's a difference, millions are killed, so thousands over thousands in Sudan, and in China, and in Iraq, and in Pakistan, and in Egypt, Christians are in jail, and so on, don't think, I personally

disappoint usually my hearers, everybody when they hear now a man who has been 14 years in jail will speak, they think now will come one with a melancholic face, and will sigh, oh how bad it has been, I don't need to give you sadness, you have your own motives of sadness, we can bring you a good message from God, good news, that even in prison, his bride is faithful to the bread group, as he has been faithful to us to the end, we were put before the choice, finish with the church, tell us all the secrets of the church, and you will be free, Jesus also had the choice, if on Golgotha, seeing the crosses there, and the

hammers in the hands of the torturers, he could have said, I give up everything, I'm no Muslim messiah, I'm no nothing, I will be a carpenter somewhere, just leave me alone,

he could have, he did not, he did not, he had come here with a purpose, to the end to bring the bitter cup, and then to resurrect, and to save us, and he has given the same spirit in the hearts of the Christians, I can bring you good news, you can be happy and proud about your brethren and sisters here, now, I work, I told you about this mission, Christian mission to the communists, it's called Voice of the Martyrs, it's a Christian mission to the world of persecution, we try to help them in the measure in which we can, we help them, and, but they help us much more than we can help them, we can help them with a few coins, with a few dollars, with checks of I don't know how much, but they can help us, giving us the sight of faces, on which the glory of God shines, the smile on their faces,

which brings the charm of heaven, it is something entirely else, it's songs, they are united with these choirs, and with all the choirs in the world, and when you dance here in this church, know you are not alone who dance in prison cells, which change as their feet, prisoners dance, they can't dance so graciously as you do here, but they also dance to the glory of God, the only one who deserves all the glory, therefore, please leave questioning God, why, what should he explain to a suckling, do you wish he should explain, if he would explain to you what a galaxy is, would you understand what a galaxy is, we don't know yet what an atom is, we don't know what a molecule is, and we wish to know the secrets of God, why do I have to suffer, why does some beloved have to suffer, how could he

explain to you, first of all, it's not true that you suffer, it's not true that you are a sufferer, that somebody near you is a sufferer, because the word I am a sufferer can't be said in Hebrew, he is a sufferer, she is a sufferer, you can't say that he does not exist, he or she is suffering, are somehow related to each other, but he or she is something entirely else than a sufferer, a child of God, a heir of heaven, and she passes, or he passes here in this life, through certain episodes, difficult episodes, but that's not he, he, she, she's seated in heavenly places, together with Jesus Christ, don't believe only the little bit of reality which we can see with our eyes, there exists an entirely other reality, Paul, which changes his sentences, he writes, we are seated in heavenly

places, not on the concrete of a prison cell.

And we have no friends and relatives of ours lying in a hospital bed, or in pains, that is not true, that is their body, a transitory, a transitory episode of their life, they've been babes, they've been nice girls, they've been nice children, they've been healthy, these are all transitory episodes, but there exists an eternal spirit which can't be touched by the events of this life, that is what we have learned here. Now, my time has passed, I've taken probably more time than I should have taken, I will feel very privileged to be in your church, and in many churches of many kinds, here I am in my element, it's the same spirit which we had there in prisons, may God bless everyone of you, please pray for those in, who are in jail now, we publish every month a newsletter, in which we give the pictures of those who are in jail, their stories, you will be able to pray intelligently for them, if you leave on the table with books outside, your name and zip code and so on, you will get freely this literature, and with this, brother Meshkada in Albania, has been in jail for Christ, 43 years, can you imagine what it means, 43 years, all the squire had not existed yet, and he was already in jail, 43 years, now may I dare to ask you, please lift your hands, all those who have prayed for Meshkada, not one hand, or perhaps one or two hands, but if I don't pray for a brother who is 43 years in jail, for whom in the world do I pray, perhaps he has been crushed by the burden of the cross, you have an excuse, I don't wish to accuse you, you have not known, but you can know, we publish every month these

things, I have written, my wife has written several books, which you will find outside, try to inform yourself, it is written in the Bible, feel, participate, as a chain of others, remember the chains of your brethren, as if you would be in chains together with them, but not only by taking upon yourselves the rattling of their chains, but also their joy and their jubilation in chains, they have a happy story to tell you, the story of enthusiasm and passionate love in jail, in jail it has been romantic, the bride is the embraces of the bridegroom, you all are called to such a life. Amen.

This is the conclusion of the tape.

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