

Stories from your Missionary Brother



Description: Reading the VOMK newsletter with a child (left)

With some youth at a Free Methodist Church event (above)

Support Me



I am a Free Methodist affiliate missionary serving persecuted Christians with the non-denominational NGO Voice of the Martyrs Korea (VOMK) in South Korea.

Did you know that you have persecuted brothers and sisters in North Korea and other countries around the world?

It is my privilege and my great joy to be able to spend each day serving and doing life together with persecuted Christians and North Korean defectors.

More importantly, it is my privilege to introduce these family members to you through the stories in these newsletters!

They tell us that they are praying for those of us in the free world. I hope you will pray for them, too.

your Missionary Brother.

Trevor Foley

About Sorrow

"Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad." (Ecclesiastes 7:3 ESV)

As Christians, we may pass through a period which some refer to as "spiritual depression", "the dark night of the soul", "anomie" or some other name. I would like to refer to this period as "sorrow" since the term "sorrow" exists in the Bible and, in our age, "depression" has largely come to refer to a specific mood disorder.

As a Christian, there may be various reasons for being in sorrow, and there may be various forms of sorrow.

I don't know about you, but I am a sinner who needs Jesus. But, because I am a sinner, sometimes I sin. I can end up in a conflicting or painful situation as a result of my sin, realize my sin, and feel sorrow about it. I believe this is the "godly sorrow" that Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 7:10 which leads to repentance.

But we can also experience sorrow as a result of righteous action. Maybe in some instance, while we were trusting God about something or trying to serve God and expected good things to happen. But, unexpectedly, we end up in a painful situation and find ourselves in sorrow as we try to figure out what went wrong and why God permitted it to happen.

We may also experience sorrow because of problems around us. Maybe we have relational conflicts, trauma, or experience some tragedy or illness. Or maybe the issue is not external but internal. Maybe our soul or psyche is just in sorrow for some reason that we cannot understand or express.



Nobody Gave Me Anything

One Sunday, I visited a church. At the end of the service, the pastor gave me and the people I was with a bag of red bean bread shaped like carp. It was too much for us to eat, so I took the bread and decided to share it with other people.

I went to the subway station and saw a woman who was sitting on a mat outside in front of a small tent, holding a sign. I thought it would be good to share the bread with her because, if I gave her money, you never know what she might do with it.

I asked her if she would like some of the bread and she said “Yes”, so I gave her two and blessed her in God’s name. She shook my hand and said, “Your hands are cold! Here, take this, I have a lot” and gave me a hot pack to warm my hands with.

I asked her, “Have you eaten dinner?” She said, “No, this bread is the first thing I have eaten today.” I asked, “What? Why?”

She said, “Nobody gave me anything.”

There are some times where the key to resolving the sorrow is obvious. Maybe we just need to repent, confess, or reconcile. Or, at other times, maybe we just need to take a nap or get some exercise. Sometimes we read our Bible and cry out to God and He fixes the problem for us quickly. But, at times, no matter what we do, no matter how much we cry out to God, the sorrow does not disappear. We may not know what to do when this happens. But I think we can find our answer by learning from our persecuted brothers and sisters.

When Voice of the Martyrs founder Richard Wurmbbrand was in solitary confinement, sometimes he felt such joy in the Holy Spirit that he even danced in his prison cell. But he also experienced great sorrow in his suffering. For example, when he was undergoing brainwashing by the Communists, he had to listen to the words “Christianity is dead. Christianity is dead. Christianity is dead.” repeatedly through a loudspeaker. When he heard that voice, he faced some sorrowful thoughts: “Maybe I am the last believer left. Maybe God is dead. Maybe there is no God.” Nevertheless, he realized that he could love God even in the midst of sorrow because he remembered the story of Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus on the third day even though Jesus was dead and she would not have expected that Jesus could do anything for her.

Another more recent prisoner for the faith is Andrew Brunson, a missionary to Turkey. Brunson expected that he may be imprisoned for the mission work, but figured that God would give him grace in prison to experience joy and other positive emotions. But, when he was imprisoned, he did not feel joy. Instead, he felt that God had abandoned him and even had suicidal thoughts. He wondered why God would have him be in prison instead of on the mission field, where he could more directly and effectively minister to people. But Brunson realized through the process that God was testing him and even had a practical reason for his imprisonment. News of Brunson’s imprisonment spread throughout the world and more people ended up praying for missions in Turkey.

Our sorrow may be as a result of righteousness or unrighteousness, its cause may be internal or external. But, from the stories of our persecuted brothers and sisters, we can learn how to process our sorrow in a way that honors God.

First, we can realize that God may be testing us to see if we will love him and trust him even if we don’t feel like it. He may be calling us to love Him not only when we feel joy, but when our circumstances are bleak and we feel only sorrow. And our persecuted brothers and sisters show us that, by God’s grace, this is possible to do.

Second, we can learn that God has a good reason for our sorrow and for our circumstances. Maybe, like Andrew Brunson, as time passes and the circumstance subsides we may be able to discern what God’s good reason was. Maybe we will never know what that good reason is until God lets us know in heaven. But, for the time being, we can trust God’s character and know that He does have a good reason, because He promised us in His word that He does.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,[a] for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28 ESV)

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Support Me

If you would like to support me, please click the link to the left and make a donation. Even a small donation is helpful in supporting my work as a missionary to persecuted Christians in Korea.

If you do decide to make a donation online, please make sure to include my name in the comment section of the donation. However, if you choose to donate by check, please write “VOM Korea” in the note. Thank you!

