

# Stories from your Missionary Brother



Description: Being ordained as a pastor in the Free Methodist Church (above)

On a Luke 10-style mission trip with NK defectors (left)

## Support Me

### 200 Grams and Counting

*“And he said, ‘Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.” (1 Kings 19:11-13 ESV)*

A few weeks ago, I was eating dinner with some co-workers. In the middle of dinner, a co-worker’s little daughter, who is seven years old, asked me, “How much rice have you eaten so far for dinner?” It was a distinct question, so I gave her a distinct answer. I told her, “About 200 grams.” A co-worker burst out laughing, “Why would you say that? She wouldn’t know how much that is!” But the daughter did not flinch at my answer. She didn’t even ask, “What’s a gram? And how much is 200?”. She had no reason to doubt that what I was saying was untrue—whatever I was saying. It didn’t make sense to her, but she accepted it anyway.

Often times, when God speaks to us through His word in the Bible, He does something which to us does not make a lot of sense—He purposely tells us things that we cannot understand.

If you ask a scholar why Jesus spoke to people in parables, the scholar might tell you that Jesus spoke to people in parables so that they could understand his teaching in a relatable or memorable way. Jesus spoke about seeds and sowing and reaping and fields to people who lived in an agricultural and oral society.

But there is no reason to ask for a scholar’s opinion. Interestingly, Jesus directly told His disciples why He spoke to people in parables.

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*





## Why Doesn't God Bless Me?

Early one morning, I had to take a taxi to go downtown. I was concerned that there would be no taxis on the street that early in the morning, so I prayed.

As I went out to a large street, I saw a taxi crawl up the road and stop at a traffic light. I went over to the taxi and tried to hail it, but the taxi ignored me.

Just as I was about to walk away, the taxi inched over to me, so I hopped in.

As I chatted with the driver, I learned that he is a Christian and he learned that I am a missionary who does work with persecuted Christians.

He told me that he worked at a logistics company for years until they forced him to retire in his fifties. He decided to start his own logistics company in Myanmar in 2019, but then COVID hit the world and a coup hit Myanmar and the business failed. So he came back to South Korea and started driving a taxi.

He told me, "I know that if I have money, I will be happy. Doesn't God want me and my family to be happy and have good relationships? I remember a scripture where God said 'I will abundantly bless you. But why doesn't He bless me? Did I do something wrong? What do you think?'"

I told the man that the Bible says that God sends his sun and rain on both the good and evil. But we can learn from persecuted Christians that God has a reason for suffering because they testify that their prison years were some of the sweetest experiences of God they had.

The man said, "I think you're right. I think that God is disciplining me like a son."

*"Then the disciples came and said to him, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?' And he answered them, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given'" (Matthew 13:10-11 ESV).*

Jesus spoke to people in parables not to make things more understandable, but to make things less understandable. Why would He do that? Wouldn't Jesus want people to understand Him so that more and more people could believe in Him and be saved?

No! Jesus spoke in parables because salvation doesn't happen through understanding. It happens through faith as a gift (cf. Ephesians 2:8). And "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1 ESV). How do you get faith? "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17 ESV).

When faith hears the parable of the Good Samaritan, it doesn't first try to understand who the Samaritan is or even what denarii are. When faith reads the Book of Revelation, it doesn't try to deduce whether the mark of the beast is an RFID microchip. Faith says, "God, I don't understand what you are saying here, but I trust that it is true." Like Mary after hearing that she would give birth to Jesus despite being a virgin, faith says, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38 ESV).

In our lives, the Lord has been kind to us all in giving us each a measure of knowledge, ability, means, influence, and other creaturely blessings. But sometimes for seasons and sometimes for life, He may strip away these gifts that He has given us. He does this not as a punishment to us for sin, but He does it for our growth as we learn to trust and obey Him. This is the story of Job. This is the story of [persecuted Christians](#) who constantly remind us that "though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16 ESV). More than anybody, it is the story of Jesus Christ who "learned obedience through what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8 ESV).

And if even Jesus had to learn this, I'm sure that means each and every one of us has to learn it also. So that means that it is your story and my story, too.

But the Lord is kind to us. His word tells us that "after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10 ESV).

And when we trust that His word is true even when we don't understand it, He is kind to explain it to us and reveal it to us in His own way and timing for His purpose. "For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Matthew 13:12 ESV).

I'm not sure how much I have so far, or what it is. But I think it's about 200 grams.

So, I volunteered the answer to the question the daughter's trust had prevented her from asking. I showed her the palm of my hand, and said, "200 grams of rice is about as much rice as would go into the palm of my hand." She tried to do the same with her palm and asked, "This much?" I told her, "Well, my hands are larger than your hands." So she put both hands together and said "This much?" I said, "Yes, about that much."

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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!

