

# 949 days in North Korean Prison - Ps Lim Hyun-Soo Testimony



## 1. Prayer of Dedication for NK Mission

- Ps Lim Hyun-Soo was born in South Korea in the 50s and gave his life to the Lord early in his life.  
As a high school student, he was a part of a youth prayer rally of 1000 zealous young people, and pledged himself to NK mission on a spur of the moment. Then he served God with great zeal in Campus Crusade.
- In his 30's he immigrated to Canada, and teamed up with his senior pastor, and planted a Korean church. God opened big doors for them into the NK mission in the 90s, and the church grew to thousands.  
Ps Lim's church was very kind to NK's UN ambassador and his team stationed in the USA. Their salary from NK was tiny. They gratefully received the gift of food and clothing from the church for special NK holidays. This opened the door to NK, and the NK govt gave permission for Ps Lim and his team to visit NK anytime and go anywhere they wanted to help the NK people. This is unthinkable for any foreigner.  
God was answering the prayer he prayed as a teenager.
- Ps Lim saw the terrible famine in the 90s – people dying from starvation every 2<sup>nd</sup> household, families making soup with dry grass from the field and a handful of corn for their daily food, and orphans just skins and bones and dying unattended.  
This led him eventually to go to NK 150 times for the next 20 years with many teams, and he mobilised the body of Christ to give their labour and USD\$50M – to provide food, clothing, and med for 10,000 children, develop farms and fishing industry for food production, provide training and help for the NK teachers, and built 2000 people capacity bathing facilities at the request of the NK govt to stop the spread of diseases in a town, etc.  
They were welcomed with open arms in NK.

## 2. Ambushed in NK

- In Jan 2015, he went to NK with his team to finish another humanitarian project. On the night of his departure, he was asked by the NK govt officials to stay one more day to discuss a very important project. So he sent his team ahead to China and stayed behind in the hotel.  
In the middle of the night, 6-7 specialist NK commandos broke into his hotel room, dragged him out of bed, handcuffed him, put a hood over his head, and drove him 2hrs away to somewhere north.
- During the interrogation and trial, Ps Lim found out that a well-intentioned elder in the USA uploaded his message in social media. It was agreed with the hosting church, his message will be completely offline. But the elder did not get the pre-warning, so he recorded it and even subtitled it in Korean and English before putting it online.  
In this particular message, Ps Lim said, NK needs to get rid of 28,000 statutes of Kim Il-Sung – it is idolatry, and said Kim Jong-Un's death regime must stop.
- Such a thing is a non-event in the west, but in NK insulting the 'Supreme Leader' is blasphemy worthy of execution. The entire state is under the cult of the Supreme leader, who is their god.  
Unfortunately, Ps Lim's message got into the hands of NK intelligence, and NK turned completely against him.

## 3. Sentenced for Life with Hard Labour in NK Prison

- Ps Lim was tried in the televised NK court, and was charged with:
  1. Contempt of supreme dignity
  2. Oversized conspiracy to subvert the state (Dismissed his 20 years of helping NK as an ill-intentioned effort against the NK govt.)

3. Aiding the traitors to the state (His church had 150 NK escapees – one of them talked about the church overseas.)
  4. Begging for foreign help (He met with Canadian govt officials to grant PR for the NK escapees)
  5. Evangelising NK's UN ambassador etc.
- His trial had false witnesses, and the Judge, Prosecutor, and even his Defence lawyer all screamed at him at the horror of his sin.
- They had 20 years of information on him stacked high, watching his every move in NK + internet data mining.
- He was sentenced to death, then it was reduced to a life sentence with hard labour.
- For the first 6 months – no one knew what happened to him. Only 6 months later NK released the news of his charges and imprisonment.

#### **4. God's Voice on the First Night and Repentance**

- PS Lim was put in a tiny solitary cell with a toilet and full of cockroaches.
- 50 prison wardens were rostered to watch him 24/7, 2 wardens at a time. No one was allowed to talk to him.
- There were 2 CCTVs inside his cell, 1 in the toilet – infrared cameras that work in the dark.
- He was the only prisoner in the entire prison of many solitary cells.
- He was on hard labour 8hrs a day every day. Sunday was the only day off.
- He had 3,000 meals alone – old rice and salted cabbage, sometimes miso soup. He had to put water in the rice bowl, so all the stones would sink to the bottom before he could eat. He lost 23kg in 2 months.

#### **Vision of Feather**

- What saved him from despair was God's voice speaking to him on his first night in the prison. He was so angry at NK. He did nothing but good to them for 20 years, and they were repaying him with evil.
- Then he remembered *Heb 12:3 – Consider Jesus who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself...*
- Ps Lim suddenly saw the gross injustice Jesus suffered in his trial - mocked, spat on, struck, his flesh was torn. But Jesus was the sinless Son of God, whereas Ps Lim - was a sinner.
- As he thought about Jesus, a big white feather fell from above upon his shoulders in a vision, and suddenly the crushing pressure and burden of the life sentence lifted from him, and he fell asleep in great peace.

#### **Dream of Bullfrog**

- Then he had a dream. In the dream, he was dropped in front of a huge tiger. It was eating something and dripping saliva. The tiger saw him but did not attack him. Ps Lim saw a cave behind him and he retreated into the cave. It was a long dark tunnel and he walked for a long time. It then turned right and so he walked right for a long time. Then suddenly Jesus' hands came down and took him up to a peaceful land of flowing streams and green meadows. And to his surprise, Ps Lim saw he was a golden frog in Jesus' hands.
  - Suddenly in the dream, he knew what Jesus was saying to him. He was given *Job 23:10 - But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.*
- When he was a young man 40 years ago, he served so zealously in Campus Crusade, and his nickname was Mr froggy cos he looked a little like a frog. He threw himself to Jesus in complete surrender and love. He was zealous to tell everyone he knew about Jesus.
- He was reliving Apostle Peter's encounter with Jesus after he went back to fishing following Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?'
- Jesus was calling to return to his first love of his early days.

## Repentance

- God tremendously blessed his ministry and he eventually became the senior pastor of the church after his pastor retired. They grew to thousands by this time with lots of mission work in NK and other nations.

And he began to think he is something big. And by the time the church grew to around 1500, he was praying little and spent little time with God. He became a religious actor worthy of an Oscar. No one in his church knew he was far from the Lord because he was preaching fine and leading the services very well.

He kept telling himself he would take a 6-month sabbatical in a monastery in the Middle East to wait on the Lord to restore his spiritual life. But years passed, but he just didn't do it.

- Ps Lim now saw that God put him in His own monastery. NK prison and monastery had a lot in common - one set of clothes, little food, no entertainment, no social life, strict rules, and a tiny room to sleep in.

Ps Lim saw the depth of his sin and failure when he fell to the bottom of all bottoms in NK prison. He understood how Moses would have felt cast out of the palace into the desert, how Nebuchadnezzar felt when he became like an animal eating grass in madness.

- He repented so deeply in his cell. When God blessed him, he sinned against the Lord by going far away from Him instead of asking like the psalmist 'How can I show my gratitude to the Lord for all His blessings on my life?'

All his anger and hatred melted away against the people who put him up there. He realised how many suffered to bring the disobedient Jonah to repentance – the gentile sailors, the fish, even the worm.

After his repentance, he felt so clean and light.

## Divine Schedule has started

- That morning he woke up with a vision at 6am. He saw the cogwheels of a clock turning, and he heard God's voice, 'the divine schedule has started'. It was his first day in prison.

He knew God put him in the NK prison so he would return to his first love, and redeem his time.

He decided he would live one day at a time according to *Matt 6:34 - Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.* Anything more was unthinkable in the light of the life sentence he was serving.

## 5. Suffering in the Prison

- Most NK ppl would die in 1-2 years in such a prison. Ps Lim lasted 2 months before collapsing.

He had to dig a hole 1m deep in the frozen ground with a large pick axe each day. The axe would break, and the handle would break cos the ground was so hard.

He had to soften the frozen clay with the pick axe, and mix it with coals for fuel. He had to break up the frozen coal as well.

Sometimes he had to clear the snow – it was backbreaking work, and he asked the Lord to stop the snow.

His hands were full of blisters the first day, then became bloody the next few days. He was sweating but his lower body remained so cold, his toes were turning black from hypothermia.

He was always dirty and had to wash with ice-cold water, sometimes breaking ice to get water to wash.

- He got up at 6am, and went to sleep at 10pm. He worked 2hrs then take 30min breaks – and repeat this cycle 4 times a day.

After 3wks, his bones began to deteriorate, his ligaments were all stretched. To this day, his fingers hurt and they are not fully functional.

- Then he began to suffer diarrhea nonstop for 3 months. He had to run to the toilet 29 times a day one day. And every time he had to ask permission. For the first month, he had terrible pain in his abdomen, rolling with pain at night. Later he was told extreme stress and trauma broke down the body this way.

## 6. Signs of God's Favour

- After 2 months, he collapsed. His body was breaking and he could not lift anything.

He fell on his face and prayed *Ps 86:10 – Show me a sign for good, That those who hate me may see it and be ashamed.*

God answered his prayer. It was 15 Feb. They finally allowed him to be taken to the hospital. The next day, 16 Feb, was his birthday. The doctor told him his life was spared because he was moved to the hospital that night and they saved his toes as well. Any later, they would have been amputated.

- 16 Feb was also Kim Jong Un's birthday. Maybe it was for this reason, someone got him a really good meal by NK standards, rice with 9 sides dishes. Ps Lim so enjoyed this special meal.

He was also allowed to stay in the hospital for the next 2 months. No labour but rest! If he was not a Canadian citizen, they probably would have let him just die in hard labour.

While he was in the hospital, they said Bibles are allowed for foreigners. And the Swedish embassy brought him a Korean English Bible and a worship songbook.

He devoured the Bible while he was recuperating in the hospital, and sang every song in the songbook.

## 7. The Grace of God in NK Prison

### Walking with Jesus

- He read the Bible with new eyes. He saw Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul – were all in and out of jail. God's blessing and grace were to be found in jail.

He also understood truly what the NK people were living with every day of their life, and their suffering.

He had no one, no phone, tv, or internet. Wardens were not allowed to speak to him. Ps Lim only had God. It was a time of cleansing and purifying. But he'd never experienced such joy in his life.

- He had solitary worship service on 134 Sundays by himself. He had no Bible at first. So he wrote down the Bible verses and the worship songs as much as he could remember, so he could minister to the Lord well every Sunday. It was his only day off in a week.

On Sundays, only after 7-8 hrs worship, he felt he truly worshipped God.

He also realised how much he took for granted the corporate worship in the church. Till then, he had no idea what a privilege it was to worship God together with His people.

- When he was given the Bible, he read the Bible 5 times in Korean, once in English, and sang all 600 songs.

His favourite songs were 'Coming home' about the prodigal coming home to God the Father, and the children's song 'God is my friend'.

Walking with Jesus in the hard labour camp was so intimate. Before Ps Lim was just a preacher. Now he knew what it was to truly walk with God.

He was watched all the time by the wardens and CCTV, he had no freedom whatsoever. He needed permission to use the toilet which was in his cell. Only then he realised how he longed to be aware of God's eyes on him all the time. And he truly learned to pray in the prison.

- Ps Lim decided he will comb through the past 40 years of his ministry before the Lord as he worked each day - all he preached and taught and did. And miraculously he prepared 700 separate lessons and committed them to his memory. He can pull them out of his memory and teach them in communist or Muslim countries where it is important to leave no evidence behind.

### Shake Shock Crack Break – That's how you bring the gospel to NK.

- Ps Lim learned how to bring the gospel to NK as he broke the frozen ground with his pick axe. Though the first few strikes, nothing appears to be happening – the shock waves are going into the ground, shaking them. Cracks then begin to appear, and the ground eventually breaks up.

- After some time, the prison wardens began to talk to him. He became their counsellor.

In particular, one high-ranking officer hated Ps Lim and abused him. He was fanatical about the Supreme leader, and he even wept in anger that Ps Lim blasphemed the dear leader and escaped the death sentence. He would say if it were up to him, he would blow him up with a missile from a tank.

This man suddenly changed one day and wanted to be a friend, brought him special juice and cookies from his wife, and he allowed him to wash in the bathtub that only wardens could use.

Ps Lim later realised this NK official had the task of researching all his teaching thoroughly. So he listened to all of Ps Lim's preaching on the internet, went to the church webpage and printed 5 years' worth of his preaching notes, and studied them.

And the word of God was changing him dramatically. And many began to follow his lead.

## 8. Released from Prison

- Ps Lim had no idea, no one had any idea that Ps Lim was going to be released. Nobody could bring him out of NK prison. It was God's doing. *Prov 21:1 - 21 The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.*
- In 2017 Canada sent 2 airplanes used by their PM with the best military surgeons and personnel on them. Otto Warmbier was imprisoned in NK, got food poisoning in prison, and became comatose. He was quickly treated and released just before Ps Lim, but he died soon after he was returned to the USA. This became so controversial, the Canadian govt was bent on saving Ps Lim.
- Ps Lim only knew 15min before he was released. No one knew. In the middle of his hard labour, Ps Lim was hooded and driven to a tense place where 6 Canadian officials sat facing 6 NK officials who looked very upset, and really did not want to let him go.

But Ps Lim has received so much grace from God and prayer from the body of Christ, he had no one he blamed or hated. He had no lasting trauma from the NK prison experience.

He was only sad he could not bring 1400 pages of his diary.

## 9. New Burning Vision

- Strangely 3 months before the release, God stirred Ps Lim with a new vision for mission. While he was working, he would dream of strategies to raise up and send missionaries all over the world.
- Ps Lim is currently calling the Korean Church to prayer, repentance, and preparation.

National prayer movement – open the doors of all churches all over Korea for 24-7 prayer, making the church a house of prayer for all nations again.

Senior citizens movement – utilise this huge manpower for the church in their golden years – 60-80. People live longer and are strong and healthy into their eighties – don't let them retire but rehire for the Lord for the kingdom.

KR unity movement (Christian NK Escapees to lead revival celebration through Christian music & sports events to bring the SK & NK together)

Training Christian NK escapees - 80% conversion rate among NK escapees. They are Ezekiel's valley of dry bones. God's word and spirit will raise up a mighty army for His Kingdom in NK.