

“I have forgiven you and God is longing to forgive you, also.”

This unusual manifestation of love and forgiveness on the part of a humble Korean pastor calls to mind the love of God for our rebellious human race. *“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

In God’s sight, you are just as guilty as the young communist murderer. Repeatedly you spurn God’s love and go your own stubborn way. Yet God, in the person of Jesus Christ, still holds out His nail-scarred hands to you in mercy. The important question is, are you willing to confess that you are a sinner and accept Jesus as your personal Savior? If you will trust Christ, the heavenly Father will adopt you into His family as one of His children. *“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name”* (John 1:12). Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he*

live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25–26).

~ Dr. Gerald J. Johnson

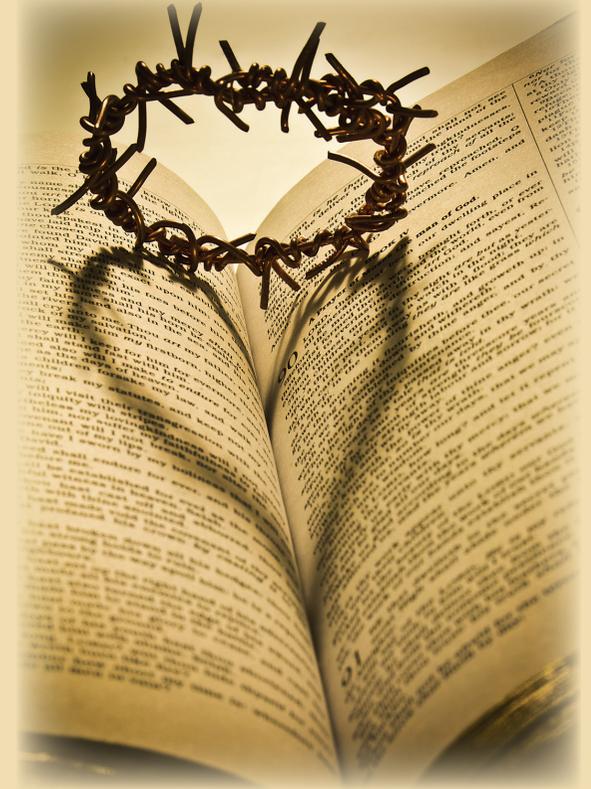
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Love



AS STRONG AS DEATH

Korean Pastor Yang Won Sohn and his sons are dead, but they will be remembered among the great heroes of the faith. When Korea was under the cruel rule of the Japanese, pressure was put on all Korean Christians to compromise with Shinto idolatry. Pastor Sohn refused to compromise. He put Christ first and would not yield to the Japanese authorities. As a result, he was persecuted and spent five years in prison.

Pastor Sohn had six lovely children. He was especially proud of his two eldest sons, Matthew and John. Both sons loved the Lord Jesus and were good witnesses for Him. When World War II was over, Pastor Sohn was set free. He returned to his family and was the pastor of a large leper colony.

However, the joys of freedom did not last long. The communists started a revolution and captured a town near the leper colony where Matthew and John attended school. The communists beat both boys severely, trying to force them to deny Christ. Instead, Matthew and John boldly gave

witness to their Savior and called upon the communists to repent and believe in Christ. One of the communists, filled with rage, first shot the older brother, Matthew, and then turned and shot John.

A funeral was held at the leper colony for the two sons. The service opened by the singing of that beautiful hymn of the resurrection:

*Ten thousand times ten thousand
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steeps of light;
'Tis finished, all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin;
Fling open wide the golden gates,
And let the victors in.*

Pastor Sohn then began to speak: "I am not going to preach a sermon, only give thanks to God. First, I thank God for the birth of martyrs from blood as sinful as mine. Second, I thank God for choosing me among His many disciples to be the keeper of His precious treasures. Third, I thank God for the privilege of allowing me to give

to Him my first and second sons, the most precious among my three sons and three daughters. My sons hoped to go to the United States to study for the ministry, but God has taken them to a better place, to Himself in Heaven. For this, my heart is at peace, and I thank God." Then Pastor Sohn made a statement which sounded not only unnatural but even unreasonable to his hearers. He said, "I thank God that He gave me the love to seek to convert and adopt as my son the enemy that killed my dear sons."

Later, Republic of Korea troops recaptured the town and also caught the communist who killed Matthew and John. The soldiers were ready to kill him on the spot. However, Pastor Sohn pled for the life of the murderer, saying he was willing to adopt him as his own son. On the strength of the pastor's intervention, the young man's life was spared. The communist knelt before Pastor Sohn, trembling with fear. Pastor Sohn said, "Son, have no fear. I have forgiven you." Tears welled up in the eyes of the communist. Then Pastor Sohn spoke tenderly,