

Sometime later the little girl died from tuberculosis, and there was a Buddhist funeral. A few weeks after the girl's death, her parents opened and read the diary she had left behind. To their surprise, they read in their daughter's diary that she had become a Christian! She had received Jesus as her Savior, though she had not told anyone.

Her parents decided that since she had died a Christian and not a Buddhist, they should hold a Christian funeral. The only Christian they knew was Pastor Masuzaki, and they asked him to hold the funeral. At the funeral Pastor Masuzaki preached the Gospel. As a result, both parents accepted Christ as their Savior. This was the beginning of a church in this village.

How marvelous it is that God is able to **shine light in the darkness**. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16). He brings lost souls to Himself through a humble man such as Pastor Masuzaki, who was willing to suffer shame for the sake of Jesus.

How about you? Have you confessed your sins and trusted Jesus as your Savior? *"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and*

with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). Church membership won't save you. Your good works won't save you. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). Your self-righteousness is but filthy rags in God's sight. *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away"* (Isaiah 64:6). You need Jesus! Only Jesus is able to save your soul. He died for you and you need to come to Him for forgiveness of sin and salvation. *"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).

~ Dr. Gerald J. Johnson

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A Shining Light



in the Darkness

Sotohiko Masuzaki was born in Japan into the home of a Buddhist priest in Kanagawa Prefecture. When Masuzaki was a young man, he heard the Gospel for the first time. *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). A missionary told him about Jesus, and he became a believer. He soon suffered persecution because of his new faith. He lost his job and was disinherited by his family.

Masuzaki went to the city of Komatsu, believing that God had called him to preach the Gospel. He made a decision to preach on the street corners of the city for 1000 days whether anyone listened or not. Day after day he preached on the streets of this idolatrous city, but no one listened, no one believed, and no one would attend his church services. Despite his earnest preaching and giving out Scripture portions, there were no visible results.

One day at a nearby lake, a young man by the name of Imaegata fished all day without catching anything. As the sun began to set in the evening sky, he decided to throw out the net one last time. There were no fish, but he noticed a small booklet caught in the net. He opened the booklet and immediately his eyes fell on the words *“Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find”* (John 21:6). At first he thought it was some

kind of fisherman’s manual, so he cast the net on the right side. To his utter amazement, when he pulled up the net it was full of fish!

Upon further examination of the booklet, he discovered it was a Scripture portion. The only Christian Imaegata had ever heard of was Pastor Masuzaki, the street preacher. He sought him out, accepted Christ as his Savior, and became the first member of Masuzaki’s church. What a miraculous demonstration this was of God’s love in saving and calling into the ministry the son of a Buddhist priest and then saving a heathen young man by means of a water-soaked portion of Scripture! **God’s power is unlimited, and He can save any sinner in the world!** *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

Later, Pastor Masuzaki moved to a country village to start another church. He preached and gave everyone in the village Scripture portions, but here, too, not a soul would respond to the Gospel message. Masuzaki prayed and prayed. He loved the people and decided to do anything he could to help the villagers with some of their temporal problems.

One day he noticed that the bridge over the river next to the village had a hole in it and needed repair. Pastor Masuzaki gathered some materials and went to the bridge. He carefully

climbed under the hole and began the repair job. As Pastor Masuzaki was under the hole repairing the bridge, a farmer began crossing the bridge from the opposite side, carrying in each hand a large wooden bucket filled with human excrement. It was common in those days for farmers to use it for fertilizing the rice fields.

The farmer immediately recognized Pastor Masuzaki as the man who day after day preached this “foreign religion” about Jesus, so he decided he would give Masuzaki a “bath.” As the pastor was under the bridge fixing the hole, the farmer took one of his buckets and poured all the contents through the hole right on top of Pastor Masuzaki! What did the pastor do? Covered all over with human excrement, he folded his hands and began to pray for the farmer, just as Christ prayed for His enemies: *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”* (Luke 23:34).

Just as this was taking place, a girl with tuberculosis was walking along the bank of the river and saw what happened. The Christlike spirit of Pastor Masuzaki deeply moved her heart. She could not forget what she had seen and went home and took out the little Gospel of John that Pastor Masuzaki had given to her when he had distributed them to all of the other villagers. She began to read the Gospel over and over again.