

NORTH KOREA STORIES

LIFE AS A NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIAN

SHIN'S STORY

You've probably read about North Korea in the news recently. But I want to tell you a different story.

This is the story you're not seeing in the news: Right now, persecuted believers in North Korea are desperate – willing to risk their lives – for the chance to have their own copy of God's Word.

Shin is a Christian in North Korea whose name I've changed to protect his identity. He's facing mounting persecution every day and wants a Bible of his own so he can remain strong in his faith.

Shin was arrested after government officials heard a rumor that he owned a Bible. He was brought in for interrogation, which quickly escalated into brutality and torture. After a severe beating, Shin was held in solitary confinement where no one could hear his cries for help.

Four long, grueling days passed in confinement with no food or water. Even luxuries like sitting were taken away from him ... it was forbidden despite the severe bruising and deep cuts on his body. Can you imagine being in such pain and agony without the ability to sit down and rest?

But it was the Scriptures he had committed to memory that sustained him. **For Shin and many other North Korean believers, the priceless gift of a Bible is worth dying for.**

I tell you Shin's story because I want you to understand what it's like to be a Christian in North Korea. The news often portrays all of North Korea as our enemy. But it's important to remember that many of our brothers and sisters in Christ live in North Korea – struggling to live out their faith in a hostile environment.

World Help has worked in North Korea for many years, but we have never seen such openness to the Gospel like we are now. The Word of God is spreading throughout one of the harshest spiritual climates in world history. The seeds have been sown. God has watered and cultivated the land.

And now is the time of harvest.

When we look back on this time in history, are we going to remember international worry that's centered on North Korea? Or are we going to remember that we decided to do something for the bruised, broken, and forgotten church?

ONE PAGE OF THE BIBLE MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

SUNG-MIN'S STORY

Sung-Min tried – and failed – to escape North Korea four times. (I've changed his name to protect him.) And during one of his escapes, Sung-Min met a group of Christians who introduced him to the Gospel. Sung-Min was eventually captured, but he carried his newfound faith with him back to a prison cell and labor camp in North Korea.

Life in the labor camps is worse than you and I could ever imagine. Believers are beaten and abused for hours on end. Still, Sung-Min and many just like him are able to withstand torture and remain steadfast in their faith.

One day after his release from prison, Sung-Min discovered a Bible lying on a train seat. The Bible had been smuggled in thanks to a believer just like you! Sung-Min was overjoyed to see a copy of God's Word! But he knew several security officers were watching him. So instead of taking the whole Bible, Sung-Min ripped out a single page from the book of Matthew.

The verses he read and memorized from that page lifted Sung-Min's spirits. Especially when he was thrown back in jail again.

Sung-Min passed the page from Matthew to his sister, who also is now a Christian!

Then he discovered that both his mother and grandmother were secret Christians, too. **His grandmother was even a deaconess in the underground church ... but she had never seen a Bible.** She had heard about people owning one, but she had never held the Scriptures in her own hands.

That's how rare Bibles are in North Korea!

If just a single page can make such an incredible difference for Sung-Min's family, imagine the impact you'll make when you place the entire Bible in a persecuted believer's hands!

North Korean Christians often share Bibles among family and trusted friends. They make hand-written copies of the Gospels to share with underground church members. So one Bible has the power to help bring as many as ten people closer to Jesus!

FROM DOUBTER TO DISCIPLE

TAE WOO'S STORY

Tae-Woo, whose name we've changed for safety, thought his best friend was crazy when he handed him a Bible.

Both of these men were in the North Korean military. They arrested people who owned Bibles! They certainly didn't read the Bible themselves. Besides, Tae-Woo had heard the Bible was just a superstitious Book.

"Why do we need to believe in God?" Tae-Woo asked. "We have our own god – the supreme leader." But his friend insisted that he keep it and read it. He promised it would change his life.

The Holy Spirit was at work. Tae-Woo would pick up the Book after a long day at work. Little by little, the words began to burn in his heart ... until he finally accepted Christ!

Tae-Woo still wanted to escape to South Korea. And thank God, he finally made it.

Today, he is a pastor who helps secretly distribute the Bibles you send to North Korea. He is even working on translating the Bible into a specific North Korean dialect!

Hundreds of people are hearing about Jesus because of his work. And it all started with one Bible.

GOD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

SOO-JIN'S STORY

We don't always know what happens to every Bible once it passes into North Korea. But we do know that God's Word never comes back void! What you're about to read shows the amazing power of Scripture in one woman's life even before she ever held a Bible.

Many people in North Korea suffer daily without hope. But because of generous people who send Bibles and the brave Christians who secretly distribute them, hope is beginning to flood even the most remote parts of the country.

One young woman, whom we'll call Soo-Jin, began to hear whispers about the Bible. She had never seen one and had never met any Christians, but she kept hearing stories about men and women smuggling Scriptures into the country. "What is this Book," Soo-Jin thought, "and why would people risk their lives for it?"

The more she heard, the more Soo-Jin started to believe there must be more to life than just a fight for survival ... and this Book must hold the key.

Soo-Jin fled to China and eventually arrived safely in South Korea. There, she met Christians who introduced her to what she was searching for – the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Even though Soo-Jin never held a Bible until after her escape from North Korea, just the knowledge that people were desperate to get this Book into her country was enough to give her the courage to search for the Truth.

That's the amazing power that God's Word has – even in the most oppressive country on earth!