

Life testimony

Dr. David Lee

God's Hope and Vision: You Will Be A Blessing

Key verse: Genesis 12:2

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing."

Praise and thank God who saved this useless and wretched sinner through the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is a great privilege for me to participate in the campus mission. I thank God who has become my shield and protection for 28 years in the service of the Korean Army. The Lord granted me to have the most valuable treasure in heaven, which is eternal life. I thank God that he led me to serve the pioneering work of Wharang UBF in Korea for 11 years. I pray that God may make me a useful servant of God and a blessing to American campus mission. Amen.

First, I was a fearful man. I was born as the fourth son among 5 sons and 1 daughter in a small town. I was raised under the care of Christian parents. I dreamed to be a policeman who seemed not to do hard labor but just to command people, 'do this and do that.' In 1979, I entered the Korea Military Academy where my dream was to be an Army general. Though I was looked young and bright outwardly, I was corrupted by lust, selfishness, hatred, jealousy, and anger inwardly. But somehow I barely managed my faith by the help of God and other fellow Christians. But my faith was so weak and fragile. After graduation of the Military Academy, I couldn't keep my faith any more but committed many sins of lust. I despaired and suffered much because of the sense of failure, self-conscienceness and guilt. I was haunted by the condemnation and punishment of God. So I wanted to breakthrough the lack of direction and fear in my life. I applied to the officer's English school. But I failed. It was unbelievable! I thought it was God's punishment and He abandoned me. But God granted me, a fearful sinner, His abundant grace and mercy.

Second, I was called to be a shepherd for campus students. At the second try, I was able to enter the English school, there I met a person who invited me to UBF 1:1 Bible study. I began to study the Bible with M. Abraham T. Kim. God's word touched my heart and I deeply realized that I was nothing but a terrible sinner before God. But I

was an old wine skin, very hard to be changed. I was a Christian without any fruits in my life. I was doomed to receive the eternal judgment of God. But by God's mercy I could repent all my sins of pride and lust and God accepted me as his precious child. God gave me one word, Luke 3:8. It says, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.." God also helped me to overcome my inner fear problem though Mark 5:36. It says, "Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." I made a decision of faith to live as a campus shepherd.

When I repented, my life direction and purpose became clear. I accepted that I now lived for the glory of God as of first importance, whatever I do. Then God blessed me to establish a house church with a beautiful woman of faith, M. Mary Lee. And by God's grace I was selected to receive the Army scholarship fund to study in the United States. In 1988, my family joined in the UMKC pioneering ministry. God raised up Shep. Rebekah Martin. In December 1993, I passed the oral test of my Ph.D. study in Computer Science. My study in the U.S. was like a drama. Every semester I faced at least one obstacle such as getting a 'C' grade, lack of TOEFL and GRE scores, or financial problem. But God helped me to overcome all obstacles with earnest prayer. I am indebted for my coworkers' earnest prayers. Among them I want to share two things.

Firstly, God granted me a chance to study consecutively from my Masters degree to my Ph.D. in Computer Science. For that I had to receive an admission from UMKC and also permission from the Korea Army. I was not fully qualified for because of my GPA and spotty financial support. And most importantly, UMKC didn't offer a Ph.D. program until the first semester of 1993. But by faith I sent my petition, and miraculously the permission was granted. So I could stay at least 3 more years for my Ph.D. study. In fact, my permission was granted because the Army's policy was changed to encourage more people to get Ph.D.s. Another reason was that one person scheduled to come and take my place, didn't get admission to the U.S for his Ph.D. study, so that I could be the beneficiary. I praise God who answered our earnest prayers!

Secondly, God granted me a chance to get a sixth month extension to finish my Ph.D. In early August 1993, I petitioned to get a year extension, but was not granted. I received a call to return to Korea in two weeks. It was quite a shock that my wife and I

couldn't sleep at all that night. It was quite a shame for me to return without the degree. But early in the morning I received an international call from Korea, saying that the Army changed the previous decision to give me 6 more months. Praise God who granted mercy and grace! Though it was not a full year, it was truly a sign that God was working mightily. In fact, there was dispute between committee members who at first rejected my petition and later changed to give 6 months. It was because the head of the personnel office strongly insisted to give me a full year. Though I didn't ever know him personally he was posted at that position at the right time. Several months later he resigned from the head post and was dismissed because he was involved in some bribery scandal unrelated to me. But another obstacle was my advisor who was like Pharaoh to me. He didn't agree that I could finish my Ph.D. within 6 months, technically in 4 months. I didn't agree his attitude either. So I myself began to write down my Ph.D. dissertation. I turned it in to my advisor several times but he just ignored it and didn't even look at it. I despaired but never gave up. I continued to modify my thesis and turned it in to my Pharaoh. Finally, he asked me to bring one more copy, which was the 7th or 8th. And he corrected my thesis and said "you passed." Thank God for his mercy and grace!

Third, a servant life to serve campus students. I returned back to Korea and severed the pioneering of Daejeon University for a year and half and then Wharang chapter for 11 years. God answered my prayer to be a professor shepherd. So, though I was in the military, I didn't move here and there but was stationed in one place. In this way, God opened the door for me to serve the campus mission. I thank God who prepared the necessary environment in advance. To be a professor as an Army officer, it was almost impossible. But I prayed earnestly for a professor job in the Military Academy. God graciously granted me to be accepted as a full-time instructor and later an assistant professor in the department of Computer Science. By regulation though, I had to leave the Academy and find another position. The Army insisted that I had to leave my job. At that time, a faculty position was open in the Korea National Defense University. I was the only applicant to apply and was offered a position as an assistant professor in the Computer and Information department. But the Army didn't grant permission for me to go. I again prayed that God may help me to move to the position which God graciously granted me. Though it was delayed about two months, the Army issued formal permission. Praise God who answers our prayer and opens a way for us!

Through serving campus students the last 11 years of my shepherding life, I could

learn two things. Firstly, I learned that without God's grace and mercy I can't do anything at all. Secondly, I learned that to live a servant's life is the most blessed life. Otherwise, I might get old with selfish and pitiful desire without any fruit in life. I really thank God to be called to be a servant of God's flock. But it requires a lot of sacrifice and persecution to preach the gospel and make disciples of Jesus. It seems to a losing business. But it is not! It is a sacrifice and persecution which help us grow spiritually and have hope and vision in God Almighty. God is gracious and merciful always so that we can be joyful and thankful all the time regardless of the situation. Last October, I studied the book of Joshua. I learned that the Jordan River was opened for Israelites to walk on foot when they by faith put their feet into water. When strengthened by the faith of Joshua I made a decision of faith to go out as a missionary to the USA. It is the second time for me to come to USA as a permanent missionary. In fact, I prayed that I may go out as a missionary again in 10 years when I returned to Korea in 1994. And I presented a prayer topic that all our coworkers may go out as missionaries in 10 years. I said "we may not see each others faces in the next 10 years." Somehow God answered my prayer that all except one shepherd family went out as missionaries to Europe, North America, and South America. Thank God for answering our prayers, even joking-like prayers.

Now I am here. Dupage! Thank God for His grace and mercy till now. I thank God for using an unworthy sinner in his great work of God, preaching the gospel and making disciples of Jesus. God established 20 house churches and sent out 26 missionaries. God may use me to be a blessing in American campus mission. Right now I have solve my family's visa problem. Sometimes I am depressed because I can't be sure of the future. But I have to fix my eyes on Jesus who is the Lord and the Savior. My prayer topics are 1) to be a blessing to American campus mission, 2) devote myself to early morning prayer, and 3) solve my visa problem by faith.

One word : Have God's hope and vision – be a blessing.