

Missionary Lydia Hong's Life testimony

Title: A Light for the Gentiles

Key verse: Isaiah 49:6

“...he says: ‘It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

Part I. Life filled with grudges and death

I was born in Seoul in 1977 as the third child of a UBF shepherd family. At that time my parents devoted themselves to pioneering SNU, which is the best university in Korea. Although they had financial problems, my parents served sheep with rich food and spent much time with them. Naturally, they could not spend much time with their own children. I felt sad that I should live a different life. When I was in 4th grade, a sheep lived in my house. One day, she slapped my cheek because I did not listen to her. I was surprised and very upset so I cried. My mother was about to go out and saw this, but she left without saying anything. I was shocked at her attitude and never forgot it.

The year of becoming a sophomore in high school was an unforgettable era in my life. My father was afflicted with stomach cancer, and I could see what it is like to be sick and dead. My father was taken to heaven 4 months later. The sight of a dead body just before being buried had a strong impact on me. I was under the power of helplessness and death. I became an extremely reserved person and often cried alone in my room thinking of death. I thought when I grew older things would be better, but as time passed, it became more serious. My heart became more cold and I became an unfeeling person. I studied the Bible and attended Sunday worship services each week. But for me, it seemed that God only wants sacrifices. With a rebellious heart, I closed my heart and did not listen to him.

After graduating university, I wanted to improve my skills and become a socially recognized person. However, I became frustrated at my incapability, there seemed no future for me. More than that, people were constantly competing and slandering one another. I could not find rest within my mind full of inferiority complex, pride, and complaint. I tried to relieve my stress by eating out and shopping with friends. But more and more, I felt exhausted. I wanted to quit my job but I was gloomy because I had nowhere else to go. I was under of death and cried many times. I hit a rock bottom in my life and only then could I come to God and pray for help.

Part II. God called me as a light for the Gentiles

God heard my prayer and helped me to study the Bible deeply at the UBF center in LA. During this time, I received Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." For the first time, I could feel God's word come inside my heart. Before that, I had not denied God's existence, but I could never testify that God was working in my life. As a result, my head was full of unresolved problems. I had kept grudges against God for the difficulties as a 2nd generation in a shepherd family. But when I received one word of God, everything became clear. In God's sight, I had many things to be grateful for. I could grow in a spiritual environment and God provided everything we needed even without my father. When I came back to Korea, I was somehow changed. Regardless of the circumstances, I had peace and joy in my heart. My footstep became faster and I was highly motivated in everything.

As I received God's word in LA I wanted to go to America and go at once as a nurse or anything. However, God wanted me to be trained more in Korea. Above all, God helped me to learn practical faith through marriage by faith. Until we established a housechurch, I suffered from many humanistic conflicts. Instead of relying on God, I worried and doubted thinking that things would go wrong. At this time, God

gave me Romans 3:24 "...and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." In front of the cross of Jesus, God helped me to repent of my lack of faith and grudges against God for difficulties during my childhood. Also God taught me that marriage is not by my own desire, but by faith in God. God knew me better than I, and sent me the best coworker who is sincere and gentle. Next September, God gave us Chan-Jin who resembles both of us. I thank God who blessed me through a beautiful housechurch.

Also God stopped me from going to America. He wanted me to be prepared as a missionary. In fact, I had lived disregarding God's work. I hadn't done campus fishing, joined testimony sharing meetings or fellowship. Therefore, God gave me the grace to join Young Mary team and "Five Loaves and Two Fish Fellowship." I also tried campus fishing. After a while, I came to serve a sheep via a fellowship coworker. At first, I didn't know what to say and how to teach Bible, but as I studied the Bible with this brother, I could feel new joy and vitality in my mind. God also trained us to rely on God only through financial problems. Shepherd James also had to go through many important tests for the admission. Although he didn't have enough time, when we prayed and did our best, God gave us the victory.

God chose me from my womb. I had never dreamed that I would come to live like this. But God called me and use me regardless of my will or my ability. I pray that may God help me to grow even more certain of this calling. I didn't think I deserve to be called as a missionary. But God called such an undeserved person as myself, and was willing to making me a light for the gentiles. Still because of my English, I hesitate to talk to students. Sometimes I felt frustrated when students gave me wrong email address and did not show up. But we could learn what "five loaves and two fishes spirit" is. We thank God for using our humble ministry and helping us to serve Texas A&M students. I pray that God may help our housechurch to bear this blessing well. May God send us wondering souls living in the darkness. Please pray for each of us to have one to one bible student and write weekly testimonies deeply.

One Word: A light for the gentiles!