

Father's Life in His Own Words - Part 59

Sun Myung Moon

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Father (standing) conducting a Divine Principle test at the Heung-in Dong church in Seoul, our headquarters in early 1955, on March 30. Seated on the chair is Rev. Eu Hyo-won.

Trial and Imprisonment in South Korea

Father describes his incarceration in Seodaemun Prison in Seoul in 1955.

Public Trial - July 29, 1955

None of you should forget that I went to prison as a result of opposition from the Christian churches and the nation. You should remember the scene of me appearing before the judge, manacled and in prison garb. I will never forget the ridicule and mockery I endured when I emerged from the courtroom on my way to jail.

As the persecution from this land of 30 million people became stronger, I suffered very much. Since I knew I was loved and would never be abandoned by God, my face when I was taken to prison wasn't sad.

Any opposition or persecution I encountered on the way did not weaken me. Instead, I became stronger. Opposition and persecution are sources of encouragement for me. My indignation stimulated and motivated me. Nothing can frustrate me. I think of my experiences joyfully. I can reap good fortune from them. From such things we can understand God's heart better. We can better understand that God is always with us.

Derision from a woman from Pyongyang

In 1955, while in Seodaemun Prison, I was visited by someone who had been my follower a long time before that. She said, "Mr. Moon, are you still doing this?" That was a harsh blow. At one time she called me Teacher and followed me, but later she left me, saying, "If you're God's beloved son, why would you have to go to prison?" This woman went to another church and became an active opponent of our church. She came to me and said, "Mr. Moon, are you still out of your senses?"

I only told her, "I wouldn't be doing this if I were the kind of man who needed advice from someone like you."

When I was in Pyongyang in the early days, she was zealous, fervently making all kinds of spiritual conditions. I bumped against her in a corridor as I was walking out of the prosecutor's room wearing handcuffs. She had come after hearing the rumors. She said, "Are you still doing this?"

There were rumors that I was going to court from Seodaemun Prison in handcuffs, so she went there as a spectator. Later she gave a testimony about this in some church. There are people like that. They laughed at the Unification Church, and said, "He should come to ruin; now he is sitting there."

I am a man with a strong backbone. I always think, "Before I die, I'm going to see your children come to me in tears of repentance. When you sleep, I'll be running. I'll work several times harder than you." When

I carry that heavier cross, I think instead that I am carrying a shield of victory. Even though I am tired I yell at my legs, "Stand up!" I must go forward, and for that, I am ready to hit, push and pull myself.

So, I told her, "I am not the kind of man who will just fade away in prison. I will leap forward to the world of liberation." I can't forget the impudent look on her face. I recently heard that she died in an unhappy situation and I felt sorry for her. That's how I live. There are many painful feelings deep in my heart.

Whenever difficulties came my way I thought, "I must resolve this before I die." If I were to talk about such events in my history, so many of them make me feel like choking. But I don't want to leave such a tradition for my children to continue. That's why I take a deep breath, shoulder everything myself, and go forward.



A cell block in Seodaemun Prison as it looks today

Life in Seodaemun Prison (July 13 - Oct. 4, 1955)

When I was sent to Seodaemun Prison, as soon as I set foot inside, the warden glared fiercely at me and said mockingly, "So, the founder of the Unification Church, Moon so-and-so, has come."

At the time, I thought to myself, "Let's see whether I can win you over or not."

The warden was a Christian, and he said to me outright, "Aren't you that man Moon? I'll keep you here for a month." I jokingly asked this rude man, "Who do you think you are? You've stolen money." He was taken aback, perhaps because his conscience was pricked. I told him, "So you be quiet." He was such an ill-mannered person; it was as if he'd hammered a nail into my heart.

The confinement director took the new prisoners to register. I could never forget that director. I have forgotten his name, but at that time he laughed at me and repeated things being said about our church and added, "It has finally come to such an end." I was deeply angered by that and told him to be quiet, to stop talking. I thought to myself that by the time I left, I would win over not only the investigators and the guards but even the warden himself.

One day, I will get to meet him again. Just as in olden times when Jesus was jeered at by his jailers after he'd been caught by the Roman soldiers and was about to be brought in front of Pilate's court, I also had to suffer in that way. In that situation, I resolved that no matter what they did to me, I would win the warden over before I left.

One day, I got a chance to return his reprimand. Some things had been sent to me from outside, but I felt as if they'd been tampered with so I yelled at him. He must have thought I wouldn't have realized it, but I had. I cornered him and asked, "Why did you touch that package? Where did you put your hands? What did you touch?" Since then, whenever he encountered me, he was completely cowed.

Influence on the prisoners

When prisoners woke up early in the morning to go to the toilet, I was already up praying. Could anyone have stopped me from doing that, even by hitting me?

I took aside the person who was causing the most trouble of all the prisoners, the person everyone else wished dead, and gently admonished him in a few words. People then said that he used to be a troublemaker, but that he completely changed after Moon came in. When three or four months had passed like that, even though he didn't say it, a rumor spread that everyone in the cell obeyed to the letter whatever Mr. Moon said.

That hadn't come about through anything I'd said. They'd changed because, with a heart that not even the president himself could have harbored on behalf of Korea, I had cared for them, shed tears and prayed for them, centering on Korea's fate at the time, Korea's future fate and the national ideology the Korean people should follow. I had become the owner of heart.

I tried to love the prisoners as their mothers or fathers would have. How pitiable they were! They knew that if I had something to eat, rather than eat it, I would give it to them and that I always found the hardest and the worst sleeping space. Do you know how hungry one becomes at noon after having a meager meal for breakfast?... In that environment, I was also hungry, but I made up long stories that I told to my cell mates to console them. Under those circumstances, in less than a month they'd changed so much that when someone came to visit them and brought them food, they'd set it in front of me and say, "Teacher, please take what you wish." It was remarkable.

The Unification Church is very simple. It's about completely investing your heart for the sake of others. Since that is the root of the heavenly law, if I embraced that root, wherever I go, no one could destroy my heart. When I acted in accordance with that, what flowed out became stronger.

It reached the level where everyone in the cell wanted to greet me in the morning. Rumors spread and my cell mates protested that the Republic of Korea, the prison, and everyone else involved was wicked for imprisoning such a good person.

There was one man there, a Christian minister, who glared fiercely at me at first and said I was a heretic and an enemy. He flew at me, shouting, "So, what is this doctrine you advocate?!" Afterward, he set a time to come to see me, and we became quite close. The members who'd been imprisoned with me also served me persistently. Others, seeing this, said that even though the world abuses and opposes Rev. Moon of the Unification Church, he sticks to his guns; he is a certainly a notable person.

Father's heart for God and his mission

Although I was meant to be moving the providence of salvation in Korea forward with the Unification Church, I instead suffered imprisonment. I remained calm during my prison stay because I knew that difficulties were as inevitable as in the days written of in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. Therefore, while in prison, I never thought about when I would be released.

I thought I would either have to spend ten years in prison, or die there. I felt determined to the point that even if a road over a mountain were blocked, I would dig a tunnel through it and make an expressway. Even if I collapsed, I would fulfill my responsibilities to God. I did not want God to help me.

Although I was in prison, I stretched out my legs and slept deeply. If you can't swallow me up, then a way will open up for me. If one is going to do such things as I do, sometimes one will be in rags and sometimes one will have to accept others pointing their fingers at you. In pioneering this path I have been through a lot. Each time I thought "God experienced even greater hardships than this. I can deal with this small one!" As more difficulties come while you are in a public position, more treasures than you can carry will be given to you.

Even though I was incarcerated, I ate well. I could eat all the food they gave me, regardless of whether it was just barley rice or whatever. Food was not a problem. Wherever I was, my only concern was that if I made a mistake, the path of indemnity might become more difficult. That was what I worried about.

Despite being in prison, I never thought of it as a prison. I thought of it as a temple of love. Love becomes an artistic masterpiece of a high dimension.

Book 7 Chapter 2 in Chambumo Gyeong (from page 760 in the English language edition) contains more of Father's explanation about his incarceration in Seodaemun Prison.