



Walter
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By **Walter Zurfluh**

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A Lesson On Forgiveness

After serving 32 years with Eastern European Mission, five years of that ministry among East German refugees, in West Berlin, Germany, and two years with Slavic Gospel Association, I was retired at 66 years of age and Nancy was 59. My wife and I enjoyed perfectly good health and felt that we should continue to serve the Lord for a few more years in mission work. He very clearly led us to Bibles and Literature in French, which published and distributed Christian resources

and books to the French-speaking world. In September of 1992 we began to represent that organization in the western U.S. states and Canada. During the 1990s work teams were sent to our publishing house in Brussels, Belgium and later to northeastern France. These teams, primarily from the United States, were sent to Europe to assist in producing French Sunday school materials, books and Scriptures for the French-speaking world.

On our second ten-day trip Nancy and I joined with a team from Topeka Bible Church in 1995. After a very busy week, we were taken with the group to Haarlem, Netherlands on Saturday to visit the [Corrie ten Boom House](#). You may recall that Corrie, her sister Betsy and her father hid Jewish people from the Nazis during World War II in their three-story house. On the first floor was a clock shop which supported the family who lived upstairs. The famous Hiding Place, where the Jews were hidden, happened to be in Corrie's bedroom. We viewed the furnishings and pictures on the wall as well as the sign in the window which let the Jewish people know if it was safe to enter the house. Over a period of time hundreds of Jews were saved from being arrested and shipped off to some concentration camp in Germany. As we went through the museum, the minds of Nancy and myself went back to our mission center in West Berlin in the late 1950s.



Corrie ten Boom

On that occasion Corrie was invited to our center to share her life's story and testimony with our entire missionary staff. That was about 13 or 14 years after the end of World War II. At that time Corrie was also invited to speak a couple of evenings in a large evangelical mission church in Berlin. We took advantage of the opportunity to pack all of our mission vehicles with East German refugees in order to hear her messages. It was a great opportunity for them who were not acquainted with the gospel, especially the youth from Communist East Germany. Back home they were told that God does not exist, Jesus Christ never lived on earth and that the Bible is filled with fairy tales. The large auditorium was packed out with standing room only. She



Hitler's Ravensbrück
concentration camp for women
"Where birds never sang"

gave powerful Biblical messages to the German people during those evenings, telling about her and her sister's sufferings in the camps. Her sister Betsy and their father perished in the infamous Ravensbrück concentration camp. When she learned of their deaths, it had a profound emotional effect on her. Eventually she was released through a clerical error, but I am certain many prayers went up to heaven in her behalf so that she did not have to suffer any more. During the presentation, there was even more power released because she was fluent in the German language and did not need an interpreter.

In her message one evening, Corrie told of a gripping experience in a recent presentation in southern Germany, which was also told in her book, [Tramp for the Lord](#). This same experience was described in another book authored by an [American Christian author, Eric](#)

[Metaxas](#). Since he wrote an excellent account of that experience, I have taken the liberty of quoting from that book. He writes, "Corrie told people of her story of God's forgiveness of sins and of the great need to forgive them."

"Corrie herself was put to the test in 1947 while speaking in a church in the city of Munich. At the close of that service, a balding man in a gray overcoat stepped forward to greet her. Corrie froze. She knew the man well! He had been one of the most vicious guards at the Ravensbrück concentration camp. He had been one of those who were mocking women prisoners as they showered. 'It came back with a rush', she wrote. 'The huge room with its harsh overhead lights; the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes on the floor, the shame of passing past this man'. Now he was putting out his hand to shake hers and saying, 'A fine message Fraulein (Miss ten Boom). How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea, (On other occasions we had heard her say about this reference: No fishing allowed).

"Corrie said, 'And I who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take his hand, he would not remember me, of course, -- how could he remember me, a prisoner among thousands of women? But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze'". "You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk," the guard said. "I was a guard there. But since that time, I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things that I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Will you forgive me?" Corrie responded, 'As I stood there – I, whose sins had again and again been forgiven, -- And I could not forgive! My sister Betsy had died in that place. Could he erase her slow terrible death simply by asking?'"

“The former guard stood there expectantly waiting for Corrie to take his hand. Corrie wrestled with the most difficult thing she ever had to do. ‘For I had to do it -- I knew that. The message that God forgives was a prior condition--that we forgive those who had injured us.’ Standing before the former SS man, Corrie remembered that forgiveness is an act of the will not an emotion. ‘I can lift my hand; I can do that much. YOU (God) supply the feeling.’ Corrie thrust out her hand and as she did, an incredible thing took place. ‘The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, and sprang into our joined hands. This healing warmth seemed to flood into my whole being, bringing tears into my eyes. I forgive you, brother, I cried, with all my heart!’ For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. “I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then. But even so I realized it was not my love, as I had tried and did not have the power, it was the power of the Holy Spirit.”

At the close of the meeting in that West Berlin church that night I believe that there was not a dry eye among those of us who attended. Corrie ten Boom gave a convincing and spiritually powerful message that evening to her former enemies. Afterward when we took the East German refugees back to their camps, they were strangely quiet. It made me wonder what they were thinking. They were certainly given a very challenging message from the Lord through this Godly Dutch woman. In her meetings in Germany she did not scold the German people, but pleaded with them to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Corrie ten Boom’s complete surrender to the Lord made a deep impression on all of us. At this difficult time in our history regarding the Coronavirus, we need God’s mercy and forgiveness as never before. Let us continue to pray earnestly that God would remove this pestilence very soon and send a Christian revival across our country.

Sincerely in Christ,

Walter Zurfluh

**“If you look at the world,
you’ll be distressed.**

**If you look within,
you’ll be depressed.**

**But if you look at Christ,
... you’ll be at rest.”**

— Corrie ten Boom

*And the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
— Philippians 4:7*



For more information on BLF Ministries and how you can help reach the Francophone world for Jesus Christ, please visit our website: www.BLFMinistries.org

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