

(In this writing the speaker calls Brother Nee "Uncle Nee". This is just a respectful way to call someone in Chinese. He is not Watchman Nee's nephew.)

Watchman Nee in prison (by: name has been omitted)

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am from Shanghai, China. My name is _____. I turned 68 (2003) this year. I used to be a high school teacher. I was accused of anti-revolutionism in 1960 because I was against "three red flags" and sentenced 7 years. I was jailed in the largest prison in the far east -- Ti Lan Chau Prison in Shanghai.

Brother Nee was arrested in 1952. After that it seemed that this person disappeared from the earth. Nobody knows what happened to him. Praise the Lord. The Lord had mercy on a lowly person like me. He loved me and kept me so that I'd have the chance to tell you all what I know about Watchman Nee in prison.

I was with Brother Nee 9 years in total (1963-1972). We were separated for about 2 years in between. Praise the Lord that He eventually brought us back together until 3 days before He was taken by the Lord. There are a lot of testimonies in all these years. Brother Nee is also a human being. Today I'd like to testify this on the human aspect about him.

In 1963, because of some adjustments, I was moved to the same floor, same group and sleep in the same cell with Brother Nee. From then on our relationship would not be break apart.

Ti Lan Chau Prison was very big. There were 10 buildings in total. Every building had 5 floors. In every floor there were 90 cells. If you had 3 people per cell, each building would contain more than 1000 inmates. In such a huge prison, among tens of thousands of people, to meet a particular person was not easy. I met Brother Nee in cell number 3 and this was the Lord's sovereignty.

In our cell, there was Uncle Nee, myself, and a 20-year-old guy. He had mental problem and thus could not speak clearly. He could only say "O - O - O...". He was also an anti-revolutionist.

Dear saints, I want to tell you: When I got into this cell, I was not friendly to Brother Nee at all. I didn't like him. I was hostile to him. I despised him. I did not want to talk to him. Why? Because back then he was the group leader. In the prison, there were group leaders over inmates. To me all group leaders were flattering the guards. They were the informants for the government. They moved ahead by taking advantage of others to reduce their own sentences while increasing the sentences of others. On top of that, I wondered why was I in the prison? I didn't steal, I didn't rob, I didn't kill... All I did was

just saying something and you wouldn't let me go. So I was afraid of him. I did not want to talk to him. There were 3 inmates in our cell; one had mental problem and couldn't talk, Nee was the other one, and I was the last one. He was writing everyday. If he was not reporting me then who was he reporting? How would I ever want to talk to him? 24 hours a day I didn't say a word with him. He was writing right by the door. Why the door? Our cell was about 1.5-1.6 meters wide. If I stretched my arms I could touch the walls. It was about 2 meters long. Walls on 3 sides without window. An iron door at the front. There was some light near the door. When Brother Nee was writing anything he sat by the iron door. The meal and water were placed right in front of the door. You don't need to open the door. All we needed to do was to stick out our hand and we could bring them in. He sat by the door so he passed all the stuff to us. I didn't want to talk to him and never thanked him. He did that himself. Our relationship was really bad. Later something happened by the Lord's arrangement. My only family was my wife. She graduated from the Maritime College in Shanghai and was teaching chemistry in high school. We had one girl. Inmates' families could visit us once a month and send us some stuff. My wife loved me a lot. She visited me every month. I thought she was still teaching out there but actually something happened to her.

One day, the school principle asked her: "Mrs. _____, I heard you husband is a anti-revolutionist and is currently in prison?" She said: "Yes." He said: "You have to divorce him." My wife said: "Why?" He said: "It's the government's policy. Anti-revolutionists' families cannot be people's teachers. Your husband is a anti-revolutionist. His thinking has problem. If you contacted him, how can you teach students? So you must divorce him." My wife said: "When I married him, he was not an anti-revolutionist. He was a boxer. He represented Shanghai for international competition. He became an anti-revolutionist after we married. If I divorce him now and marry someone else, there is no guarantee that the other man would also become an anti-revolutionist in the future. Then should I divorce him and marry again? Plus we already had a girl and I am young. If I got married again I'll have more children. That will not be good for kids. Moreover, _____ was sentenced 7 years. I can wait for him and then continue building socialism. We can still be husband and wife." What she said made perfect sense. The principle couldn't argue with her. But would they give up? Impossible. Soon after, the principle asked her again: "Have you decided on that issue?" She answered: "There is no chance." The principle said: "Then there is no chance from us too. This is the policy. Give us your work permit. You get out of this school if you don't divorce." Back then the situation was entirely different. There was no job once she left the school. She could not do anything by herself. My wife cried her way home. Her future was blank. What can I do? What can I do for a living? What can I do for my daughter? When she got back home she cried holding our daughter and nobody was there to comfort her.

Later when she visited me, she told me everything. I was angry after hearing it. How does that make any sense? I was already accused as an anti-revolutionist without reasons and they wouldn't even let my wife and my daughter go. My wife said: "Today I sold my watch and then came. I don't know what to do in the future." Dear saints, I

didn't do any bad things, I was not a Nationalist, nor a spy, nor a land-lord. What kind of anti-revolutionist was I? I didn't post a piece of anti-revolution flyer. How am I "anti-"? I didn't understand. But what could I do? My wife cried a lot, but I didn't shed a tear. I grew up under Communist regime and Communists taught me no tears in front of enemy. Today I will not shed a tear. I was not your enemy; I supported you. I was only 12 years old when Communists took over. I even celebrated for the People's Army. But you pushed me to the enemy's side. 5 minute visiting time was soon over. My wife left with the kid. I stood there looking at her and didn't know what to do. I am not sure if she'd divorce me. Suddenly she turned back and shouted: "You take care of yourself!" This shout is still in my ears now and it was heartbreaking. I could not do anything. I can't just run out and fight with them. I can only let them torture us.

I was pushed back to my cell by the prison guard. I shed some tears. In our cell there was no desk nor chair nor bed. I was weeping against the wall. Then I found out someone was holding my hand. I knew it was got to be that annoying Uncle Nee. I was angry. He was the most despised person to me. What was he doing holding my hand? I wouldn't even talk to him. I didn't need his sympathy. I was going to shake off his hand. I was a boxer and I was young. He was old and had heart disease. All I needed to do was to shake in order to throw against the door. But, dear saints, it was strange. It was a miracle. I could not lift up my hand. Uncle Nee was not strong, and I tried at least 3 times and just couldn't lift up my hand. And then I heard Uncle Nee said: " _____, just cry. It's better crying out loud and you'll feel better." This really moved me. Because the policy in the prison is that you cannot cry out loud. Because all inmates were depressed. If you cry he'd cry and the entire prison would be crying. That's bad for re-education. I thought Uncle Nee would say to me: " _____, don't cry. It's wrong to cry. You need to follow the re-education." He was the group leader and should be at the government's side. I really wouldn't think that he'd tell me to cry out. Because of this I started to change my view toward him. Then I started to wail. I didn't care about anything and i was loud. I didn't care even if the prison guard came and beat me and shoot me. My family has been to this point. I don't care if I die. It's strange that the prison guard didn't even come. Later I was entirely exhausted. Uncle Nee gave me towel to clean up and gave me water. From then on I started to talk to him. I told him what happened to me. And i didn't expected how frank he was that he also told me what happened to him and his family. From this day on, we had more and more conversation. He told me he was very busy. He was a Christian. He also told me that his wife loved him very much. His wife had serious high blood pressure. (140+ /200) over. She might go anytime. It's all the Lord's support and His mercy. He wished his sentence will be fulfilled soon so he could get out and still see his wife. If his sentence was longer and his wife left early, he will never see his wife in this age. His wife is just like wife in loving their husbands. He also told me many other things. He said a Christian will not oppose a county leader, because country leaders were all set by the Lord. He was preaching gospel to me. Then I thought, I know I was innocent; now looks like he's innocent too. He was not against the government but you said he's anti-revolutionist. Isn't he

obviously innocent? So I asked him: Do you still believe the Lord? He said: "You don't believe, I believe; you don't see, I see." This is his quote. I still remember.

24 years ago, I brother visited me and I told him this miracle. I said, I don't understand. Why couldn't I lift up my hand? I was strong, but he just held me like that and I couldn't shake him off. This brother said: You will never be able to lift it up. The Lord will not let you lift it up. Then I understood. I was just a lowly person. The Lord found me. The Lord chose me. I will never be able to life up my hand.

Now our relationship improved and we talked a lot. The other mental guy became happy too, standing there laughing. He actually said a lot, but I understood not a word, the most 50%. But Uncle Nee understood everything and he translated for me. So we three poorly lived together.

However, peaceful time didn't last long. One day, the prison guard called Uncle Nee out. It lasted for a long time, even passed lunch. Now we have good relationship so i wrapped up his lunch with a sheet. I wouldn't care in the past and would have just thrown it away. When he came back, he was a bit upset sitting on the floor. I asked him: "What happened?" He said: "They wanted me to give up my belief." I said: "Did you agree?" "No i didn't." He then said: "They wanted me to give up my belief. If I agreed, they'll let me go home." I said: "And you didn't agree?" He said: "I didn't. There were 2 other people. One of them was named Lang. The other one was named Chang. Lang was the president of a major hospital in Shanghai. Chang was a mayor of a province. They both are the prominent ones in Catholic Church." I asked him: "How about those 2?" He said: "They both gave up. You'll know soon." Soon the speakers in the prison turned on. The warden announced: Now we have 2 inmates, through the government's re-education, have changed their thought and will openly give up their past believes and anti-revolution stand. Now they will speak." Lang and Chang then spoke. They firstly blamed themselves and then blamed the Catholic Church, saying Catholic Church is the intelligence agency

under imperialism and is anti-revolution. They were deceived, but through the government's re-education they'll openly give up superstition and leave this anti-revolution group and thoroughly repent. They were both crying. After they finished, the warden announced, now under the approval, these 2 get released early. They can go home today. Dear saints, when we heard this, the entire prison was shocked, including me. Uncle Nee was right in front of me, and I was staring at him. You just told me a few days ago that your wife was nice to you and you love each other. Plus your wife was not healthy at all and you miss her so much. Today the People's Government is releasing you. All you needed to do was to say a word that you give up. Just open your mouth and you are going home and you wouldn't do that! What kind of person are you? You believe the Lord to such an extend! I do not understand you....

Freedom is (precious). But today People's Government is giving Uncle Nee freedom and he doesn't want it. For the Lord Uncle Nee gave up life, love, and even freedom. He loved the Lord and believed the Lord so much. I was really impressed. What the communists did was eroding the soul and really effected Uncle Nee. Since you don't give

up, I'll release 2 on your face. But Uncle Nee was not touched. It did not erode his soul. But my soul was eroded. I knew this person was not dumb or mental. There was a reason that he believe the Lord so much. It's got to be a good thing to believe in Jesus, so I wanted to believe Jesus too, just like Uncle Nee. From then on I felt I had to believe in the Lord. Everybody should believe in the Lord. For redemption you need the Lord. For salvation you need the Lord.

Some saints asked me, which book did you read from Uncle Nee to turn to the Lord. I said I never read his article to believe the Lord. I didn't believe because I read his article. When I knew him I didn't believe yet. I read his person then I believed the Lord. An Chinese idiom says, education by word is less effective than education by action. I saw his action and was effected and believed. Uncle Nee was a human being. I believed because of my subjective knowing to this person. And this matter deeply influenced me.

So I was saved in such a way through Uncle Nee. Uncle Nee in the prison never stood up high and lifted his hand and shouted: Friends, you all have to believe! And then thousands believed. Neither did Uncle Nee fight and fight to the end with communists and became a hero in the prison. This is lie. It was not like that. I simply never gave up his belief. We have to tell the truth and I am telling you the truth in Christ. My conscience is moved by the Holy Spirit and testifying to me.

The second time we met was in Bai-Mao Ling Labor Camp in province of Ann Huey. There we stayed together for another 5 years. When we met we were both impressed.... He was already very weak, old, and could barely walk. Where we lived is about 60-70 meters away from the cafeteria. And we lived at the lower side. Cafeteria was on the upper side near the road. To get food from cafeteria you have to climb over 2 hills and go across the road. To Uncle Nee that was impossible to do. So everyday I'd get 3 meals back to him. One day, the prison guard called me to the office and asked why get food for Watchman Nee everyday. I said: "He's old and weak. No way he can climb over 2 hills. It is right to help him and get food for him." However, the guard turned serious and said: "Nonsense. He pretends being sick. Tell him to get food himself. You will not do that again." It was clear that they were just giving Uncle Nee trouble, so I didn't even listen to them.

Few days later I was getting food from the cafeteria. The clerk in the kitchen told me: the guard notified, nobody was allowed to get food for Watchman Nee. He had to come by himself. So I could only go back to my room and told Uncle Nee everything. I knew he was a knowledgeable person. So I told him to do something. I sat right by him and wait for his ideas. After a long time, he finally said: "I would just let it be." I was very surprised. Let it be. Obey to the Lord's arrangement. I was worried and angry. How could he just say that? "Don't you want to eat?" I didn't want to argue with him so I just shared with my my food. At that moment, praise the Lord, the Lord gave a good idea to a dumb person like me: I used to get only 5 grams (Chines measurement) of food. Now I can tell the clerk that I labored a lot today and need one more gram. Cafeteria would suspect that. And I can share with Uncle Nee 2 grams. He's old so that'll be enough for

him. I get 4 grams. It was less than usual, but I could survive. Everyday we shared food like this and finally passed through the difficulty.

One day in 1971, the guard let me bring a letter to Uncle Nee. The letter wrote, his wife Untie Nee fell from the chair and broke 2 ribs. She's currently in emergency room. I told Uncle Nee don't worry and at the same time requested visiting family in Shanghai. I was planning to go with him. Actually, Uncle Nee and myself have both fulfilled our sentence. But in 1966, there was Cultural Revolution in China. None of the prisoners could be released. But the policy said we can visit family once a year and half a month each time. I thought, such a major thing happened at home and we should be allowed to go.

In the beginning the guard told Uncle Nee that they'll think about it. And then they said you have serious heart disease and could not even walk. How can you go to Shanghai? Uncle Nee told them that I could go with him. So the guard said we'll think about it. We waited for 2 weeks. When we asked the guard again, the guard just gave us serious face and said: "What can you do anyway? You are not a doctor. Plus your wife is doing find now. We know that. We considered your request and we don't approve it." Uncle Nee didn't argue a word. Neither did he let me to argue with them. We just went back to our room together. He prayed silently. Some saw his lips were moving and asked me: "Nee is praying, right?" I said: "No. He's just doing Chi [un tipo de ejercicio]." Guard asked me also and I said the same thing. But I knew, Uncle Nee didn't stop praying for a day.

Finally on one day, I came back from work and saw Uncle Nee with tears all over his face. Untie Nee passed away. Uncle Nee was very sad. I told him don't be sad and try to request again for the funeral. I thought this time it's got to be approved. But i couldn't believe that after waiting for a long time it was still not approved. The guard said: "She's dead anyway so what can you do to go back?" Dear saints, who has suffered more like this? Uncle Nee's heart was broke. But he wanted the Lord and was firm in the Lord. He bore the whole thing.

...

Uncle Nee loved the Lord for his whole life and suffered a great deal. After a few days he was out of the agony. His life was back to normal and persisted to pray everyday. After 9 months, he was moved to Bai Yun Mountain. That was a countryside of the east of the province. A patient of heart disease like him said farewell to us, sitting along on a tractor. 3 days later, we heard the news that he passed away.

Other than physical suffering, Uncle Nee suffered more psychologically. He suffered all these and gained nothing in his life. But he gained the Lord. Through him we see the Lord. He is a vessel, but there is treasure in this vessel.

Today in here we can shout out freely: "Lord, I love you." In China you can also shout "Lord, I love you." But back then under the ruling of extreme left, you can't just do that. Uncle Nee loved the Lord in his whole life, but for 20 years he was under limitation. People wouldn't let him say "Lord I love you." Imagine, if for 20 years you don't get to

say "Dear mother, I love you." nor "Dear daughter, I love you." nor "Wife, I love you."
Can you bear that? However, Uncle Nee bore all that. Because of this, let us shout 3
times: "Lord, I love you." "Lord, I love you." "Lord, I love you."

Words from the ministry:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

Philippians 4:4

God has not asked us to rejoice in our environment, in things going our way, or in any kind of happiness. God tells us to "rejoice in the Lord." The world may oppose us, misunderstand us, reject us, and trap us, but no one can cover the heavens from us. The Lord never changes. The world could put Paul into prison and lock him up, but it could not keep the Lord within Paul away from him. Therefore, Paul and Silas were able to sing and praise God within the prison cell. We should be clear about one thing: do not rejoice in the environment; rather, rejoice in our Lord. When friends and relatives are away and the heart is aching and weeping, we can be comforted and rejoice if we look to the Lord who loves us and whom we love. He is enough to satisfy our heart. But Christians are very forgetful! We may hear about this today but forget about it tomorrow! This is why Paul followed by saying, "Again I will say, rejoice." God's intention is that we rejoice. Therefore, whatever happens, we must rejoice.