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HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

Dragon Tales: “Jail Time”

By Laura Newell

I still remember the day the news filtered back to us. Two brothers in Christ from our city had traveled to another province to preach Christ crucified, resurrected, and victorious. Being in an unfamiliar province and city, they stopped to ask directions from a policeman. Because of their distinct accents he realized they were out-of-towners.

“Let me see your identification papers,” he demanded.

Both men quickly produced them, wondering why.

“On whose authority are you in this city?” the policeman asked.

Without hesitation the older brother began to explain, pulling out his Bible. He closed it with a heavy thump, and the look in his eye said it all: *“What a pair of fools!”* With a deep sigh he said, *“You don’t have proper authority to be here. Shut up and come with me.”*

Both men acquiesced, and in twenty minutes they were standing in front of the city jail, wondering what in the world they had done to deserve this kind of welcome. Then they were escorted to a large jail cell filled with dozens of other men. The stench was nearly overwhelming as they settled into their new surroundings.

They introduced themselves, explaining what city they were from and why they had come. Silence greeted them. And then came the questions.

“Were you born in the village outside your city? Only the uneducated villagers even believe there is a God.”

“If there was a God, why would He allow you two to get tossed in here?”

*“You mean you’ve broken no laws? What’s the **real** reason you’re here, huh?”*

“Sure you’re not spies, come to hound us into confessing our crimes?”

And so began the preaching of the gospel to the forty-one men in their holding cell. They began with the fall of man in the Garden of Eden and continued on with the retelling of man's hopelessness in trying to keep the Law of God. They told of how the Jews prayed for a Savior to come, delivering them from the penalty, power, and presence of sin. Brother Zu spoke of the darkness in his own life before he repented and gave himself to Christ, of how he used to beat his wife and sons when they dared to displease him, and how he made a habit of stealing from his employer.

"And why not?" shouted two men in unison. One man offered his view: *"Everyone takes what he can when the opportunity presents itself. You're a fool if you don't. The only rule is that you can't get caught..."* He lowered his head and sheepishly continued, *"...or you end up here like me."*

Brother Ming spoke of the kind of man he was before God's transformation, explaining that he too had broken God's laws. Given to much drink, he had been quarrelsome and angry. No one could please him, not even himself. And then his cousin had come from his hometown, preaching the good news to him.

"There is a God. How do I know? He has changed my life. I'm no longer angry all the time, critical and spiteful. There is a peace of mind I enjoy now that never existed before. You can ask my wife, go ahead. Or my parents. I stole money from them...but now I've admitted my sin to them and paid them back in full."

His partner scanned the faces of the men in front of them. *"Is there any man here who has not broken the laws of God, anyone here who is perfect?"*

Again silence reigned.

"The punishment is very serious because God is holy. He is pure. Purer than you or I can even imagine. And sin must be punished because God is holy. But He is also forgiving and compassionate and is willing to forgive those who have offended him..."

A squatty man with a flattened nose interrupted him: *"I've broken the God's law and I know it. In fact, I will be executed in two days to pay for my crime..."* His voice broke and he looked down.

Brother Ming's eyes twinkled with excitement as he explained the good news. *"God sacrificed His only Son to pay for your crimes! To pay for my crimes! He will forgive you and set you free. The Bible says if we've broken one of God's laws, we are guilty of breaking them all. So, you see, we're all in the same boat. We are living proof of God's forgiveness. And if you will turn from your sin, asking God to forgive you, He will set you free. In fact, Jesus said that He came to earth to set captives like us free. Do you believe He will do that for you?"*

The two brothers learned that the family of Zhou Gaoling, the man to be executed in two days, would pay thirteen cents for the bullet that would pierce his skull, ending his life and satisfying the demands of the law. Zhou, Ming, and Zhou sat up late into the night, discussing God's revelation of truth and finally praying together long after the others had fallen asleep. Heaven rejoiced as a man humbled by his own sin was brought to repentance and saving faith in Jesus Christ.

And during the following thirteen days eight men were transformed from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. How they rejoiced that these two had come with the Good News of Jesus Christ! Who but God knew there were captive men about to be set free in the city jail? And after two weeks the brothers were released with strict instructions to return to their homes and stop talking about such nonsense. Who do you think they obeyed, God or men?

JOHN 12:32

AND I, WHEN I AM LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL PEOPLE
TO MYSELF.”

God's Blessings Through PBC

By Niki Gibo

From learning about God & His Truth to helping in ministry, God has provided His blessings in many ways since I attended PBC in 2008. I would like to share with you two examples that resonate on my heart and mind.

I am always amazed how our Lord provides enough help to run ministries. Whenever we have ministry events such as Vacation Bible School, Awana and the Women's Seminar, our gracious God has always provided enough helpers. It is a joy to witness our church members working together to share Jesus. With everyone in different roles from helping in the kitchen and cleaning to speaking, teaching, decorating or organizing, it has been a blessing to see how these ministries come together and happen.

The second example I would like to share is having an opportunity to be church secretary. In my eyes, there is no job like it. Everyone has been willing to help. Answering my questions, doing various tasks at church, or working with me to brainstorm ideas and providing feedback are just a few of the tasks that I received help with. Through this time, it has been a blessing to receive understanding from the PBC fellowship. This grace shown to me has also helped me to be more understanding of others as well. I am thankful for this great experience that I have to work at PBC.