

Corrie Ten Boom: A Legacy of Courage

When Corrie ten Boom was arrested for hiding Jews in her home during the Nazi occupation of Holland, she begged God not to allow her to go to a German death camp. But within weeks she was sent to Ravensbrück, where Jews and political prisoners were routinely gassed.

Yet this brave woman accepted this as God's plan and taught millions through her example that suffering is sometimes required to do God's will.

"In the German camp, with all its horror, I found many prisoners who had never heard of Jesus Christ," Corrie said in her book *The Hiding Place*, published in 1971. "If God had not used my sister Betsie and me to bring them to Him, they would never have heard of Him."

Corrie was introduced to a life of sacrifice by watching her Christian parents during her early years in Haarlem, near Amsterdam. After her childhood sweetheart married, she embraced singleness without becoming bitter and became the first woman in Holland to become a licensed watchmaker. When German invaders forced Jews to register with the authorities, she decided that a Christian could not sit back and do nothing when God's chosen people were being targeted for genocide.

When leaders of the underground Dutch resistance agreed to install a "hiding place" for Jews in the ten Boom house, it was constructed in Corrie's bedroom. Six Jews safely avoided detection in the tiny cubicle on February 28, 1944—while Corrie, along with her father, sister and brother—were herded into a police truck.

Known as Prisoner 66730 at Ravensbrück, Corrie survived on

watery soup, slept on lice-infested beds and used drain holes for a toilet. During the ordeal in the camp, she realized that God was preparing her for a special task.

“My sister Betsie said to me, ‘Corrie, your whole life has been a training for the work you are doing here in prison—and for the work you will do afterward,’” she wrote.

Those words were difficult to believe when Betsie died at Ravensbrück. Corrie struggled with hatred toward the Germans even though she knew a Christian cannot harbor malice.

But when she was unexpectedly released on December 28, 1944 (because of a technical error), Corrie eventually forgave the Nazis for their cruelty and made forgiveness a theme in her books and sermons. After her release, all women in the camp who were her age and older were gassed.

For the next 40 years Corrie traveled the world, speaking in churches, at conferences, and to clandestine Bible study groups in countries where Christians suffered persecution. Because she had suffered, too, she could tell them that God is fully able to shine His light anywhere.

She died on her 91st birthday in 1983 after taking the gospel to 60 countries.