

Heroine of the Faith: Corrie ten Boom

"There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still." These are among the final words Betsie ten Boom spoke to her sister, Corrie, as Betsie lay dying in a German death camp, a victim of starvation and torture.

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch Christian who worked in her father's watch repair shop in Haarlem, Holland. When the Germans invaded Holland in 1940, the whole family became involved in the Dutch resistance movement. They constructed a secret hidden chamber, 30 inches deep, in Corrie's bedroom on the top floor of their home above the shop, where they hid Jews and others from the Nazi SS troops. Throughout 1943 and 1944, there were usually at least six people hiding in the ten Boom home. Additional refugees were given temporary accommodation until other places could be found for them to stay.

In February 1944, an informant betrayed the ten Boom family. The entire family was arrested, although the Nazis didn't find the Jews hidden in the secret room. They were rescued later by members of the resistance. Their elderly father died 10 days later in prison. Other members of the family were released, but Corrie and her sister, Betsie, were sent to the notorious Ravensbrück concentration camp. There, they endured unspeakable horrors but held onto their faith. They were even able to conduct Bible studies using a contraband Bible.

Betsie died on Dec. 16, 1944, and due to a clerical error, Corrie was released two weeks later, just one week before all women prisoners her age were executed.

After the war, Corrie set up rehabilitation centers for concentration camp survivors, and also for Dutch people who

had collaborated with the Germans and were unable to get jobs. She spoke everywhere about the need for forgiveness.

In 1947, this forgiveness was put to the test. Corrie had just finished speaking at a meeting in Germany when a man in an overcoat and brown hat came up to her. She recognized him instantly as one of the guards who had abused her and Betsie.

“I was a guard in Ravensbrück, but since then, I’ve become a Christian. I know Christ has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there. Will you forgive me?” And he put out his hand.

This was the most difficult thing Corrie had ever been asked to do, but as she, by choice of will, gave him her hand, the love of Christ flooded her whole being, and she was able to say, “Yes, brother, I forgive you, with all of my heart!”

Sometimes there are books that have such an impact on your life that you can remember them decades later. *The Hiding Place*, Corrie’s autobiography, became a best-seller that was later made into a movie. I still remember its story and message.

Corrie traveled to over 60 nations, preaching the message of Christ’s forgiveness. Thousands became believers through her many books and her speaking.

Among her awards:

- Israel honored her by giving her the title “Righteous Among the Nations.”
- She was knighted by the queen of the Netherlands for her work during the war.

Corrie died in 1983 on her 91st birthday.

*Adapted from **Felicity Dale**’s blog, *Kingdom Women*. Dale is an author and an advocate for women in the church. She trains*

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