

Pastor Saeed Abedini Tells Christian Students What He Learned About God and the Devil in Iran Prison

Pastor Saeed Abedini, an Iranian-American pastor who spent 3 1/2 years imprisoned for his faith and was released in January, visited Liberty University Convocation on Friday to share His testimony of how God providently used his persecution.

"I am very proud of our God and the way that He is faithful," Abedini said, speaking English rather than his native Iranian tongue. "It doesn't matter what is taking stances (against you), what situation you go (through), always your faith in Jesus Christ in the darkest place really works, and brings light in every darkness."

Abedini sat down with David Nasser, Liberty's senior vice president for spiritual development, in an informal Q-and-A, sharing how he converted from Islam to Christianity and then began to evangelize in his home country. Though in Iran it is illegal to stop religious activity, Abedini was repeatedly imprisoned for his soul-winning and asked to renounce his faith. Eventually, Iran's government accused him of being a threat to the state because he had led many thousands to convert to Christianity. It was then, in the summer of 2012, that Abedini was given an eight-year sentence and eventually sent to Evin Prison, considered one of the world's worst prisons.

Though many cited him as a symbol of bravery within the persecuted church, Abedini admitted that he is by nature a fearful man.

“Our Lord is above all these things,” Abedini said. “And when you just come on your knees, you can see He is there.”

While in prison, Abedini led many fellow inmates to Christ, and he said that he promised to love and forgive those who interrogated and tortured him. He shared a story of how he had an opportunity to put that pledge into action when he came across one of his tormentors following his release. To the man’s surprise, Abedini hugged him and told him that he loves and forgives him.

“When we put ourselves in a situation to love people, God is going to open the door,” he said.

He shared that there is power in faith: “You can see Satan step back when you stand firm in your faith.”

After the Q-and-A, students prayed for Abedini and his family, as well as for persecuted Christians across the globe.

Liberty’s Campus Band closed the service by singing the lyrics to Jason Ingram and Kristian Stanfill’s “Always,” based on Psalm 121, as a prayer to the Lord on behalf of all suffering Christians.