“Do you believe in Jesus Christ?” It seems a simple question to answer. But when Dr. Samuel Sih was asked this question during China’s Cultural Revolution, he knew his answer could be a life or death answer. Yet he said to the Red Guard, “I believe.” He was then beaten and his house ransacked.

Two years later, “Running Dogs” came and occupied his house. They accused Samuel of poking out the eyes of a newspaper picture of Chairman Moa. Although he denied this charge, the police came to his house and arrested him.

In jail the other prisoners laughed at him and insulted him. He was the only prisoner who openly professed faith in Jesus Christ. One prisoner told him, “If I were judge, I would have you put to death!” Nearly a year-and-a-half later, it was finally discovered who actually did tamper with the newspaper picture, and Samuel was released. Most people would have gone into hiding to make sure their Christianity wasn’t in the spotlight. But not Samuel Sih. He wrote a letter to Chairman Mao and also to a scientist and biology professor, advocating for freedom of worship. Atheism was the only belief allowed, and all churches were closed. His letters were intercepted and Samuel was sent back to prison.

After a year in prison he was brought before the authorities and asked a familiar question: “Do you believe in Jesus Christ?” He simply answered, “I do.” Samuel says, “They discovered that it was useless to keep me there anymore. I would not deny my faith. And they decided to release me.” He was released without having a “title” placed on him. [1]

Samuel Sih’s personal testimony is a remarkable one. But when you think about it, aren’t all personal testimonies remarkable? Isn’t it remarkable that a sinner can be saved by grace? Yet some of us use the excuse that we don’t have a dramatic conversion story, so we don’t witness. Here are some other common excuses: pride, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of incompetence, fear of ignorance, and fear of ridicule. Most seem to be fear-based. [2]

But we can’t let these fears stop us from telling others what Jesus has done in our lives. And that’s exactly what your personal testimony is: telling the story of how Jesus saved you. Even if you were born into a Christian home, there was still a time when you chose to give your life to Jesus. Maybe it was during a week-of-prayer meeting, at summer camp, or in the privacy of your own home.

Think of witnessing as sharing these three steps: 1) Your life before you knew Jesus, 2) How you came to know Jesus, and 3) Your life after you accepted Jesus as your Savior. As this week’s memory text says, God has chosen us: “ ‘You are My witnesses,’ says the Lord, ‘and My servant whom I have chosen’ ” (Isaiah 43:10). We are chosen. Chosen by God to witness to a world that desperately needs a Savior.

~ nc
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