Li De Xian, China, Pastor

August 19. Li De Xian. Pastor Li has been arrested so many times he’s lost count. Arrested and treated brutally for illegal preaching.

He keeps a go-bag ready, not for jet-setting, but for the next arrest. It contains a blanket and a change of clothes.

Don’t settle for safe; do what you’re called to do.

God called Li to a nation who didn’t know Christ, to a legal system at war with Christianity, to a life of danger.

Still, Li treasured God more than he feared anything man could do to him, and he was compelled to preach the Gospel of Jesus in China. More times than he could count, brutal Public Security officers burst in while Li was preaching, and they dragged him out of the house. But he was relentless. He said, “I will preach until I die.”

One quiet Tuesday morning in an unregistered house church, about 400 Christians crowded in to celebrate the God, who had given them a freedom they had never thought possible.

Secretly shuffling in, they found seats on wrinkled newspapers on the floor because the authorities had already confiscated their chairs. The people knew what the authorities would do to them if they were caught, but they loved their Savior, and they loved each other, and they loved gathering in his name.

Pastor Li opened his mouth to preach. Again, angry government employees stormed into the crowded home, shouted accusations, and shoved their way through the people. Officers seized Pastor Li and dragged him outside. They bludgeoned him—as his fellow Christ-followers looked on. Including his wife.

United in their barbarity, they made an example of Pastor Li, smashed his face against the stone and repeatedly kicked him in the stomach and groin. As they hauled him off to prison, Li’s wife Zhao handed him a small black bag.
“What is that?” they demanded.

“It’s a blanket and some clothes. I’ve been expecting you,” said Pastor Li.

At the police station, they shackled Pastor Li’s ankles and his shins, and inserted a metal rod to hold his feet apart wider than his shoulders. Between his legs they put a ring and shackled his wrists to it, so he had to stand, his spine bowed. They left him like that for three days.

They interrogated Pastor Li, but he would not succumb to fear. “I do not fear you,” he said.

They shouted back, “You fear us!”

He endured several more hours of abuse and then was placed in isolation because the officers did not want him to preach the gospel to any of the other prisoners.

Pastor Li eventually returned home, after being given a strong warning not to preach any longer. This was a warning that he had received many times before. But he remained resolute in his call, and he would not stop.

“Christ was the first to suffer; we just follow Him. There are many thorns, but we are just injured a little on our feet. This suffering is very little,” Pastor Li said.

Zhao stood with her husband and said confidently: “God will take care of him; there is no need to worry.”

The next Tuesday morning in that same small, crowded home church, Pastor Li preached the Gospel of Jesus.

“The LORD is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me” (Psalm 118:7 ESV).

Is fear keeping you from trying something you think the Lord may be calling you to do? Don’t settle for safe; do what you’re called to do.
Would You Like to Learn More About This Man?

“Don’t feel sorry for us,” Zhao says of their lifestyle. “At least we are constantly reminded that we are in a spiritual war. We know for whom we are fighting. We know who the enemy is. And we are fighting. Perhaps we should pray for you Christians outside of China. In your leisure, in your affluence, in your freedom, sometimes you no longer realize that you are in spiritual warfare.”

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