

Pastor Rick Phillips
Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC
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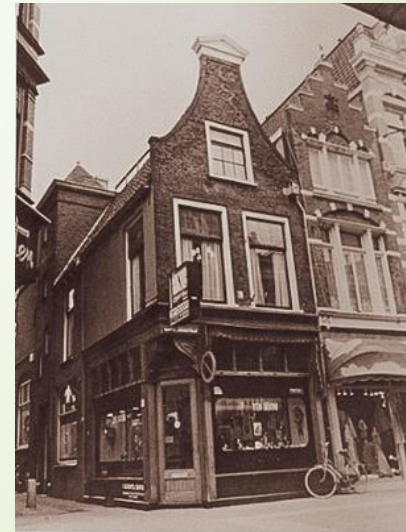
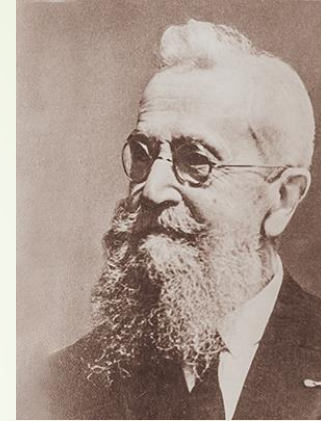
Profiles in Christian Courage

5. Corrie ten Boom



Corrie ten Boom

- Born in 1892 to a Dutch watch-maker
- Fervent Reformed believers, members of the Dutch Reformed Church
- After her mother died, Corrie joined her father in the workplace, becoming the first woman licensed watchmaker in Holland
- She and her family were faithful and fruitful believers, establishing a youth club for teenage girls.



Nazi Occupation of Holland, 1940

- ▶ Despite Holland's neutrality, Germany occupied the Netherlands as part of their conquest of France in 1940.
- ▶ Germany installed a regime that was relatively lenient towards the Dutch people.
- ▶ Anti-Jewish laws were enacted in Oct. 1940, barring them from state jobs. Dutch people – especially Christians – staged protests.
- ▶ In Feb. 1941, the Nazis organized anti-Jewish rallies; after an altercation, 400 Jews were arrested and deported.
- ▶ The Dutch responded with a general strike in Amsterdam that was violently suppressed; Jews were required to be registered.
- ▶ The deportation of Jews from Holland began in July 1942, first to labor camps in Holland but then to Auschwitz.



Dutch Resistance to Jewish Oppression

- When the incarceration of Jews began, Dutch people began organizing networks for hiding Jewish people.
- In 1942 and 1943, 107,000 Jewish people were deported (102,000 of which died).
- Dutch networks aided 2000 in escaping, while 28,000 successfully hid during the occupation.



The “Hiding Place”

- ▶ Starting in May, 1942, the ten Booms began hiding Jewish refugees.
- ▶ The Dutch underground constructed a “hiding place” in their home, with an alert bell.
- ▶ Despite rationed food, the ten Booms shared what little they had with those in hiding.
- ▶ Corrie became a leader in the refuge network, arranging the smuggling of Jews and stealing ration cards. She is credited with saving 800 lives.



Arrest and Imprisonment

- On Feb. 28, 1944, a Dutch informant betrayed the ten Booms. Resistance materials and ration cards were found (but not the hiding place).
 - Message: "All the watches in your cabinet are safe."
- Caspar, Corrie, and Betsie were incarcerated
 - 84 yr old Caspar refused an offer of release: "I will help the first Jewish person I meet." He dies after ten days.
- Corrie and Betsie are held in Vught as prison laborers.
- Moved in 1944 to Ravensbrück camp in Germany under harsh conditions with back-breaking labor.



“Christ Is Victor”

- ▶ Sharing God's Love and Hope
 - ▶ Ravensbruck was almost unbearable – rampant dysentery, flea infested barracks.
 - ▶ Each night Corrie and Betsie led prayer meetings and Bible studies, sharing God's love and inspiring hope.
 - ▶ Only later did Corrie realize that the guards never broke up their meetings because of.... the fleas!
- ▶ Hiding God's Word:
 - ▶ When processed into Ravensbruck, Corrie hid her Bible, a sweater, and a vitamin bottle under her dress. She alone was not searched.
 - ▶ “from morning until lights-out, whenever we were not in ranks for roll call, our Bible was the center of an ever-widening circle of help and hope.”
- ▶ A forbidden prayer meeting:
 - ▶ Meeting an acquaintance in food line, she told Corrie, “I cannot stand it any longer.” Corrie: “You must not despair, Annie. Jesus is Victor, even if you cannot see it. If you are His, you will be given strength to go on. He will make you see things from God's point of view, and then you will be strong.” “But what can I do?” “Surrender yourself to Him.” Praying quietly in line, holding hands, God answered their prayer and gave Annie peace (148-149).



Christ in Ravensbruck

- ▶ Ashamed of her cowardice:
 - ▶ I was not brave. I was often like a timid, fluttering bird, looking for a hiding place. As I pulled my dirty blanket over me I pressed close to Betsie and cried, softly, so she would not hear me, 'Coward and wayward and weak, I change with the changing sky; today so eager and brave, tomorrow not caring to live. But *He* never gives in, and we two will win, Jesus and I'" (142).
- ▶ The Vitamin Bottle:
 - ▶ "And still, every time I tilted the little bottle, a drop appeared at the top of the glass stopper. It just couldn't be! I held it up to the light, trying to see how much was left, but the dark brown glass was too thick to see through."
 - ▶ Betsie: "Don't try too hard to explain it, Corrie. Just accept it as a surprise from a Father who loves you."





Christ in Ravensbruck

- ▶ Forgiving the Betrayer:
 - ▶ Corrie asked Betsie if she thought often of the man who betrayed them: “Oh yes, Corrie! Terribly! I’ve felt for him ever since I knew—and pray for him whenever his name comes into my mind.”
- ▶ Betsie’s Dying Words:
 - ▶ ““...must tell people what we have learned here. We must tell them that there is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still.”
- ▶ “Life in Ravensbruck, took place on two separate levels, mutually impossible. One, the observable, external life, grew every day more horrible. The other, the life we lived with God, grew daily better, truth upon truth, glory upon glory”

Release and After the War

- In Christmas day 1944, Corrie was summoned to receive her release – based on a clerical error! She was sent home by the Germans on a train.
- Opened her home as a ministry for those returning from camps.
- Began telling her story around the world
 - “You can never learn that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have.”
 - Forgiving the Nazi Guard
- Published “The Hiding Place” in 1971.
- Corrie died in 1983

