




A Momentous Seminary Convocation!

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 Tuesday, May 15, 2018

On May 12, 2018, Tyndale celebrated our Seminary graduates alongside family and friends. This year Rev. Dr. Hyeon Soo Lim was awarded an honorary doctorate for his tireless commitment to the Korean diaspora as well as serving the global Christian movement and community. His efforts led to his recent detainment and eventual release from North Korea, where he was imprisoned for two and a half years.

He shared his experiences, including the difficulties he encountered during his captivity, as well as the hope and vision God revealed to him in his suffering. As he addressed the graduating class, he encouraged them by sharing Job 23:10, saying, "...young leaders. You have endless possibilities. Truly, infinite opportunity, privilege and glory await. Should trouble come your way, do not be dismayed, and seize the opportunity to wait. Then, in due time, you will be used effectively as a refined and shining servant of God. Canada is a nation that is abundantly blessed. You must share this blessing with the rest of the world."

Other highlights of the day included an inspiring valedictorian address by Lyndsay Thompson, who received her Master of Divinity in Clinical Counselling; the first graduate of the MTS Indigenous Studies Program, Marc Levasseur; as well, a posthumous degree was bestowed to Omatola Abade whose family was present to receive this honour in her memory.

See below for a photo gallery of this commemorative occasion along with audio from the valedictorian and honorary doctorate recipient (transcripts for Rev. Dr. Lim's speech is also below).



Seminary Grad Lyndsay Thompson

0:00 / 11:01

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Seminary Grad Hyeon Soo Lim

0:00 / 8:28

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Rev. Dr. Hyeon Soo Lim Transcripts:

Thank you Dr. Nelson for your kind introduction.

However, I am not such a great person as he has just described. Dr. Nelson has a special talent in making ordinary people like me sound interesting. I know that I do not deserve to receive this honour and so I declined a few times. However, many colleagues and friends persuaded me and so here I stand before you all today.

I lack in many ways. I do not even have the academic background to deserve this honour. However, it is because of North Korea that I find myself in this position. I think people have become interested in who I am because I now have the dubious honour of being the longest detained foreigner in a North Korean prison. However, in the same way that I believe that not one sparrow falls to the ground without God's knowledge, I know this is not a coincidence. I never imagined that I would be detained in North Korea. It was so sudden and unexpected, very much like the caging of a bird in mid-flight.

For months while I was under investigation, I endured very extreme verbal abuse which affected me both psychologically and physically, so much so that my small intestine was damaged. For one month, I was in pain and I could not eat. During the winter months, I almost died because of the fumes from the coal gas and could not sleep properly for a month. At one point, the verbal abuse from the guards was so extreme that my body physically deteriorated and I was afflicted with dysentery for three months. Yes because of the Lord's grace, I was able to endure through these near-death moments and I stand here before you today.

For 2 years, 6 months and 9 days, I was isolated and lived in loneliness and struggle. For 919 days, I ate 2757 meals alone, fighting against my own loneliness and anxiety. I spend 130 Sundays alone, worshipping alone, longing for a church community. In the first two months that I was imprisoned, I lost 23 kg, my fingers became unfunctional, my toes were frostbitten, and I was unable to use my arms properly. However, by God's grace, I was admitted into the hospital and was able to rest for two months and recover. This happened three times in the almost three years that I was there.

The Bible verse that helped me endure this time is from Job 23:10 (NRSV) – "10 But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I shall come out like gold." In a vision, the Lord clearly revealed to me my refined state. As time continued to pass by, I also learned that much of the faith is waiting. Waiting on God is waiting and trusting in His timing. Abraham, Joseph, David, Paul—all such people lived lives of waiting on His timing. When God's timing arrived for me to be released, despite the fact that

it seemed an impossible time for anyone to help me, it was that impossible moment when I was released. No one can adequately explain my release. It was only by God's Sovereignty. During the time I was imprisoned, I received many blessings. I was able to commit to memory the content of 700 biblical lectures. It was a most valuable time of training. And during my time in labour, I learned that labour is also prayer.

I received a vision to establish a Total Mission Training Centre to raise up and send out a million missionaries. I received a vision to start a Senior's GTS (Golden, Twilight, Silver) Movement. I also received a vision about the South Korean Control Tower that dreams of the unification of Korea, a vision about Christian Education, a vision about building a place where the citizens can pray. He gave me many visions.

And when God's timing came, I was released. Through the Canadian Government, God sent two planes and a delegation of 14 people. And, just like a dream, I journeyed home to Canada and was reunited with my family and my church. Today, I envy you young leaders. You have endless possibilities. Truly, infinite opportunity, privilege and glory await. Should trouble come your way, do not be dismayed and seize the opportunity to wait. Then, in due time, you will be used effectively as a refined and shining servant of God. Canada is a nation that is abundantly blessed. You must share this blessing with the rest of the world. May God bless every one of you. May the Lord bless you to walk the precious path of your calling in victory by faith.