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Release Women Email - March 2021

Hello Friend

Let the weak say, 'I am strong!'

When we think of many women in the Bible, we may be surprised by how God used them in ways which seem unlikely according to their age or their situation in life. Sarah, an elderly woman well beyond the age of childbearing, gave birth to Isaac and fulfilled God's promise of blessing to Abraham (Genesis 21). A young Jewish servant girl, abducted from her homeland, helped to bring about the healing from leprosy of her master, Naaman, an army commander (2 Kings 5). Rahab, a prostitute, is named in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5). A Samaritan woman, with a troubled domestic history, recognised Jesus as the Messiah and quickly became an evangelist, sharing the gospel with her neighbours (John 4).

Recently we heard from one of our partners, Voice of the Martyrs Korea, about how God is using some women in a surprising way in China. At the end of February, several

plainclothes police raided Chongqing Living Fountain Church, breaking up the small house church gathering and arresting two men, one of whom was preaching that day. The police confiscated a church computer and they forced those attending to leave. Sadly, there is nothing unusual or remarkable about this event. This is a common way to persecute Christians in China, where the prevailing attitude for many years has been to 'educate the young in atheism and let the old Christians die; then the church will cease to exist'.

The difference though, on this occasion, is that Chongqing Living Fountain Church is made up almost entirely of elderly women, not the usual target for attacks. Our partner, who mainly works with North Korean Christians, has noticed the same characteristics as these elderly Chinese women displayed in North Korean women. He describes them as follows: *'Old women are the backbone of the church. They are tough. They're used to getting beat up, neglected, cheated, and left out of just about everything in life. But in this way they learn never to*



give up. They are willing to endure just about anything for Jesus, and so he uses them powerfully to spread the gospel. Up until now, authorities have underestimated them. But the raids at Chongqing and other small, elderly house churches show that the Chinese authorities are beginning to wake up to who is the real strength of the Chinese church.'

Just as God is using these women in China, and others from North Korea, so He can use each of us in His service, whether we are young or old, whatever our situation. Be encouraged then, whatever stage of life you are at, and ask God how He can use you in service to our persecuted sisters and brothers. It may be organising a fundraising event, speaking in church, writing cards of encouragement, or being a faithful prayer warrior. No one is too young, too old, too weak or unworthy.

'For I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' (Phil 4:13, NKJV)

Thank you for being remarkable women of God!

Blessings,

Release Women Team
