

Unfavorable Odds

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Episode 27: God's Double Agent

Guest: Bob Fu
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Bob: —meantime millions and millions of prisoners are waiting to hear the gospel.

Kim: But would it be legal for them to hear that gospel?

Bob: No! They're not even allowed to have a copy of the Bible.

Kim: From the FamilyLife podcast network, this is *Unfavorable Odds*. I'm Kim Anthony.

Unfavorable Odds is about finding hope and help in those seasons of life when things get pretty tough. Jesus has promised us that whenever we walk through those dark valleys, He's always with us. We will never have to go it alone. So on each episode of this podcast, we'll be talking with people who have learned *how*, during those dark times, to draw their strength from Jesus.

Bob Fu was born to peasant parents in Communist China. He began his journey out of poverty when he was chosen to be the one in his family to receive an education. Now this opportunity meant that he would eventually be able to get a good paying job so that he could send money home to his family. Their very survival depended on it.

While receiving his education, Bob became a devoted follower of Christ who shared his faith with others. Now it didn't take him too long to find out that this was illegal. His actions led to him being under surveillance and reprimanded by the Chinese government. Fast forward to today, Bob and his family are now living in the U.S. He runs a non-profit called China Aid where he advocates for the underground church in China and those who risk their lives to help them. Bob Fu has written a book called *God's Double Agent: The True Story of a Chinese Christian's Fight for Freedom*.

I had the most interesting conversation with him. It was about how he went from wanting to be a Communist leader in China to becoming an enemy of the nation when he had an illegal underground church and Christian theology training center. And we also talked about why it took a U.S. president to intervene in order to get him and his family to the United States.

I'd like to jump into your personal story and what your childhood was like growing up in Communist China.

Bob: I was born in 1960's. My mother was a beggar and she was holding my sister and my brother, basically walking days, nights, months, and years, begging for food because there's no food to eat. There's cannibalism even happening. People eat people. Then I saw the tremendous damage under the class struggle. This is the nature of Communism and Marxism. It's always brings one group against another group, but I was fortunate to have a very loving and compassionate parents.

Kim: Now your mother was very ill even while she was begging. Is that correct? And then her illness got worse and worse.

Bob: That's right, Kim. In fact, she got infected with lung disease because of years of begging experience and she sometime had to eat dirt—

Kim: Oh my goodness.

Bob: —and everything on the ground and the roots of the tree, the skins of the tree, the leaves, anything. She talked with me about her experience all the time. So with two little children with her, anything she begged she would feed her two children first—my brother and my sister. Of course, all of her family cannot afford medical, right?

Kim: Yes.

Bob: There's no really medical care under this Communism. One day when I went back from school and heard my mother was really dying. I could hear from the rhythm of her coughing. I could really measure how serious. My sister and I just ran to the local barefoot doctor's home begging him to come out rescue our mother, but the doctor just shut the door in front of our face and basically said "I do not have time." We were kneeling down in front of the house and offering my elder sister who's two years older than me to be like a free labor for the doctor's family in exchange for the rescue effort.

The door never opened so we were so scared and disappointed. I walked back; could not see my mother. My sister ran to another—for a few miles, she ran to another village to find another doctor. I went back home, hiding behind our wheat barn and kneeling, really, there for the first time although I was not a Christian yet.

I just remember my mother always told me if you are in the most desperate situation like her when she was begging seeing her two children crying because of starvation, just lift up your eyes and begging and crying out to this heavenly grandpa and said he will always come and help. So that was my first prayer, maybe even before I know the Lord and He already knows me.

Kim: So what happened after you prayed to your heavenly grandpa?

Bob: Then my sister got the doctor from the neighboring village and showed up and really rescued our mom from that near death. That really gave me practical strength and

sees “Hmm, maybe this heavenly pa does care.” I did not have any knowledge, knew nothing about God or the scripture/the Bible and I think that experience let me, maybe planted a small seed in my heart. But I was still determined; I felt this society needs to be changed.

I want to become a Communist Party leader to change the party, to help China, to move to want more freedom and more humanized protection, so I found in order to make a more meaningful change in the Chinese society the best way is to become a Communist Party leader.

Kim: Let’s talk about Tiananmen Square and what happened there. Would you give a little bit of history behind that and why you chose to get involved?

Bob: Yes. As just a mention to my high school years, I was behaving very well in political correct sense in the Communist Party and I really being recognized as a rising political star in the university. But then when the Beijing students started the demonstration in Tiananmen Square—Initially the demonstration was for anti-corruption and for more like injustice/social injustice issue because it was triggered by the sudden death of the former Communist Party chief. They want justice for him so there so many then gradually became a student’s moment and millions and millions of Chinese students and then many citizens joined.

I could not sit still in my university. I said I just remembered one night I went to the school’s biggest auditorium when all the students were still studying hard and preparing their homework. I turned off the light. I basically switch off and telling the students “How can you still sit still in this classroom when our fellow students in Beijing and Tiananmen Square are doing protests for our freedom/for our justice and how can you have a conscious to continue to do this?” So then I said, “Let’s go!” I just organized the first city wide protest demonstration.

Then I later on led a group of our students to Tiananmen Square to see and experience and support in person those students in Tiananmen Square. Many suffered during the hunger strike, right? That’s before the massacre.

So I was out of Tiananmen Square three days before the massacre because my then girlfriend Heidi—and yes, later on she became my wife and now mother of three—was so sick in this Tiananmen Square camping. The communist party purposely not allow the students to have clean water. We’re drinking the dirty water and she was hospitalized. Then three days later the Communist Party, basically the hardliner, are sending the military tanks with machine guns and thousands of citizens died during that massacre.

Kim: Those who were killed in Tiananmen Square, they were classified as counter revolutionaries/enemies to the nation.

Bob: Yes.

Kim: When did you learn that you, too, were being classified as a counter revolutionary by the Chinese government?

Bob: I think the first instance was right after the massacre. I was like many other my fellow student leaders. So we were forced to surrender to the police, and we have to literally lift up your two hands in the air to go to the police station to surrender ourselves. Then each one of us was assigned with a special interrogation team and we were forced to cancel all classes and waiting in the dark room and writing confession papers days and night and treated, totally treated like a criminal.

I mean it's not a prison experience but it's close. I felt "Wow! This is the true nature of this Communist Party dictatorship." Anyone that they think are not in total loyalty to his ruthless rule would be regarded as the enemy of the state/would be regarded as the counter revolutionary.

Kim: You got to a very low point. Tell me about the plans you were making that included the president of your school.

Bob: That was really the tipping point certainly and I'm glad that in God's really amazing grace not only rescuing the school's university president Mr. Zou Ming but my own life, right? I was so desperate and full of despair even with disillusionment I felt there is no hope for me as a countryside boy. If I'm in prison as a political prisoner/if I'm fired from school—kicked back to my village, I will bring so much embarrassment and shame to my family, my villagers, my whole country, my people. I would rather die and die a good death.

So I was really seriously contemplating suicide. Maybe just kill my enemy who turned overnight from my dear friend to my enemy. I even went to his home and tried to do some scouting—

Kim: And what were your plans?

Bob: I was seriously thinking to make a bomb, but English Literature was my major not Chemistry and/or Physics.

Kim: Thankful, right?

Bob: There was no internet at the time so you can't search any formula to do anything. But it's deep in my heart, the hatred, but really the amazing grace of the Lord rescued me.

Kim: How did you move from that place of desperation into a personal relationship with Christ?

Bob: It was nothing but a miracle. Secret missionary/English teachers they had been praying for each one of the students in the English department where I was studying for several years. I think at least five some years, five/six years, and I became the first fruit/spiritual fruit, first Chinese student Christian in that whole college.

After I got a copy of Chinese pastor's biography through the hands of the American missionaries who were teaching English to us, I started also examining my own heart. Not only I was resentful to the heart of other people's darkness but also to myself. I was resentful. I was hateful. It made me really total desperation situation. I felt "How can I change others without myself being changed? How can I blame others when my heart was filled with hatred/with resent?" So that's why I think that book turned my life and I became a follower of Christ. I became a Christian at that time.

Later on God used me as that little useful vessel instrument and caused revival in that college. I mean 20 something years later, one of the graduates from that school flew from China directly to Texas to meet with me, and told me this story that said about the continuing revival—to the point there was a church that was planted next to the university. The past 20 years after our graduation over 10,000 students were baptized. Many were even sent as missionaries to overseas.

Kim: So Bob, how does that make you feel to have been the beginning of all of that?

Bob: Nothing but amazing gratitude and a smile to God, right? Says well you used that little weak vessel called Bob Fu who did not even got the first copy of the Bible until a year later after my conversation. It's just His timing, His hands, and His grace enable all this happen.

Kim: Now, I want to fast track back to where you and Heidi started a training course for Christian students. Now you knew at this time that this would be against the law in China.

Bob: Yes.

Kim: At one point, even when you were back in school, the communists who were watching you brought up the scripture Romans 13 which talks about being subject to governing authorities. So you as a man of integrity/a godly man of conviction, how did you look at Romans 13 and then look at what you were about to do with this school and come to the conclusion that it was okay to move forward with the Christian training?

Bob: That was like in 1994/around 1994 or 95. We were already well connected with the Chinese house church moment with many leaders. We were being nurtured, being trained, really being led. Many of them had suffered imprisonment. The pastor who had baptized me suffered more than 16 years, nearly 17 years imprisonment. The pastor who married Heidi and I spent over 22 years in prison. Even after he was released, after

he served the 22 years, he still lost his freedom for another 10 years. That's kind of the leading testimony like the cloud witness, right, as the Hebrew said—inspired us, encouraged us.

When we were invited to the house churches to do some training during the summer, we found so many. The revival/the church are so hungry/thirsty. One church group has about 500 churches. They only have like two and a half teachers.

Kim: Oh, for that many people.

Bob: Five hundred churches you only have two and a half Sunday School teachers. There is a desperate need for basic biblical ABC—the Bible survey theological education. So I said “Well although I was not graduating any theological school at least I know how to read. I have a lot of books. I got a lot of translated western evangelical literatures.”

So I read and tried to teach those young leaders. Each one of them leads hundreds/thousands in their congregation. They're missionaries. You meet with them; you feel you're leaving heaven. Many were tortured by electric shock batons and most of them even were women. That's how China raised the army of women. They called it itinerant evangelists.

Kim: Were women?

Bob: Yes, the majority of them. That's the beauty of God. God raised up a female army of God to evangelize all over China. We just feel the Lord called us to establish a training center and then we got that and there's one provision by the Lord providentially.

Several American missionary friends who came including my mentor Dr. Jonathan Chao sent from a church from North Carolina/Raleigh Durham area called Kings Park International Church. The pastors came to our aid. Some supply teachers/some supply curriculums and so we just opened underground Bible school. The most humorous thing: the students table and the chairs were all from the Communist Party school where I was a English teacher as my daytime profession. So that's why the book is called *God's Double Agent*. [Laughter]

Kim: So you were teaching in the Communist school during the day and then at night you were teaching Christian theology to these students.

Bob: That's right. Yes, yes.

Kim: That's amazing and at one point you were discovered.

Bob: That's right. Later on, of course, in 1986 the government obviously had a secret investigation and found Heidi and I were the black hands behind the school, so we were arrested.

Kim: Well, Bob, I'd like for you to walk me through how your underground theology training center was discovered and what transpired after you realized that you had lost your cover.

Bob: We leased this factory along with their dorms. They have a big yard so the students can do exercise, but no student is allowed to get out the campus during the training time.

Kim: For how long was that?

Bob: That was almost a year.

Kim: So wait, they were in the building for a year?

Bob: Yes. It's really like re-education— [Laughter]

Kim: Oh my goodness.

Bob: —through Bible study. It's almost like a monastery style. I mean just think about when you go to Europe, we have the monasteries. So they stay there really that time, no internet of course. But because we know the Communist Party would hunt that, so we have one coworker to register a company. Specifically the company was reported to the government agency as a high-tech training company. We think training about the Bible is pretty high-tech.

We even borrowed the desk top computer called 386, right. Then I got the chairs and tables from the Communist Party's school with the Communist Party's logo. You know the big red star on the chair because the Communist Party tried to get rid of this old chairs. They replaced with new. I said, "I have somewhere to use it" and with like almost nothing, I spent not much and got it.

But the problem came after we commissioned all the students. At the end of the year was the Communist Party leaders are tired of the business registration, tax collections, they are always expecting year end blessings/year end bribes from every company. Even smallest company can maybe give them some smaller gifts, but big company give them cash, lots of money.

Kim: And that's the norm?

Bob: Yes, that's the norm. They are expecting that but we kind of forgot. If we knew, we could have bribed them. So during the year, very providentially, the factory was not

inspected or visited—maybe because we kept quiet. Also the door was always locked. So we're not registered as a big company, as a training, so they're not expecting too much activities. Although we have lots of foreigners. I mean American, big theologians, pastors. Like during the late night we smuggle them in, and they usually train/stay there for one week or two weeks at a time. They're also treated that way. They couldn't go out. They have no phone to use.

At the end of the year, I think the business management bureau, the license bureau, the tax collectors, they're all out and after waiting the blessing—this quote unquote blessing—with our success, certainly they started their mission to find out. Even if you're not an underground Christian leadership training school, they would try to find excuse to charge you/to make you pay something extra.

So let alone one day a group of government officials did knock the door but thankfully all of our students were already out. Only a few staff were still staying there. So they have to let the government official in.

Then during their visitation of different dorms, one of the students forgot to take away one copy of the Modern Chinese Church History written by my American mentor Dr. Jonathan Chao—which is not friendly to the Communist Party of course according to his church historians accounting was happening during the cultural revolution . It's a big thick book but was hidden or buried under the mattress. I guess one student did not bring with him. So that was discovered. That triggered the storm.

Kim: Okay.

Bob: Then they started secretly investigation and then basically the public security officer were alerted. There's more than state security agencies involved because they are the equivalent of CIA because it's involved with foreigners now. Initially the Communist Party official classified as a foreign political motivated intelligence gathering station.

Well they arrested me in the Communist Party school first. I mean they had a big squad went there and searching every corner of our little bedroom and basically knocked on everything, turned our bed upside down digging everything and tried to find something political. They did find two audio cassettes, right, [Laughter] audio cassettes—

Kim: I remember those.

Bob: —and a Taiwanese missionary donated two audio cassette duplicators. So I guess the investigator did not realize it was a duplicator and so they treat that as like "Oh that is a spy device." Maybe I was rumored established political party in the suburb of Beijing try to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party.

Kim: Wow!

Bob: Even on the way in the police car I overheard they were so happy this security chief they were glad. They said, “Oh we caught a big fish.” They thought I was a big fish. [Laughter]

I didn’t know Heidi was also arrested until maybe a week later in one of the interrogation sessions. The interrogator—I mean God used the interrogator—told me sarcastically they said, “Oh your wife is much more stubborn than you.” One, I had a moment to realize Heidi was also arrested. Then secondly, I was so happy and grateful to hear that message. That means Heidi did not betray anyone.

Kim: Now did they arrest you at the facility or in your home?

Bob: In the university, The Beijing Communist Party college—was at my home because we live in the campus where I was teaching.

Kim: So what happened next?—after the interrogation.

Bob: The interrogation: the first three days and nights is no sleep basically. The sleep deprivation is the first form of torture for those political prisoners and religious prisoners. Basically, they have two teams of the interrogators took turn day and night—tried to force me to share how I became a Christian to how many people in our university fellowship and church; how many foreign contacts, and who is Jonathan Chao and what did he do; and how many American pastors had been in communication with me, and how much money they have supplied to our church and training center, and who founded the training center and on and on.

They want names. They want their contact information. It was a very trying time. You were totally exhausted and seated on a little stool. I quite a few times I collapsed and fell asleep. Then they slap me. They kind of kicked me. They yell at me. They curse me and sometimes they change to different tone by promising “Oh, if you confess just tell us everything, then maybe we can release your wife.” Because Heidi was my hostage, right?

Then said “Oh, you have a good future. You are faculty professor teaching in the Communist Party School. The Party has done very good things to you.” Or they say “This is not a serious case. We just want to know a little bit.” All kinds of interrogation methodologies adopted.

Kim: Did you share anything at all?

Bob: Well I was pretty stubborn in the beginning. Then they just want to know who is Jonathan Chao? I said, “Okay, you want to know about Jonathan Chao, just give me some paper. I have to write.” So I write like seven/eight pages of Jonathan Chao is a missionary. He’s reformed theology. He’s—how many books he translated. What a

great missionary. His vision for evangelization of China/Christianization of Chinese culture, the kingdomization of Chinese church. They were so upset after I spent— [Laughter]

Kim: Yes, I'm sure they were.

Bob: They said, "We're not asking you to write a commemoration of how good Jonathan Chao is." It's like "just tell us some bad things like how he tried to convert China for antigovernment or his counter revolutionary activities." I said "Well I have traveled with him all over China, have not any single moment seen anything that he's not friendly to the Chinese people. I mean he's a great guy. He's a hero."

Then of course they tried to strike your conscience by quoting Romans 13 about obeying the authorities, right, and said "We are the authority. We are the authority above, and your Bible tell you to submit totally to the authorities and pillars. Are you lying to us? You know you're not a good Christian, right? A Christian should not lie."

So several times really I had some struggle because they already confiscated a lot of records and some names. I can't deny I know them because once I acknowledged I know them they start asking "Well you know their name; do you know their family? Do you know where they live? Do you know"—that was a very challenging time. Three days very tortuous experience—I think they think I have no hope for them, so they kicked me into a prison cell.

Kim: What was it like when you first walked into that prison cell?

Bob: I was a little nervous, honestly, so not walking as a spiritual hero. Number one, I was asked to do fingerprint and they confiscated my eye glass. At that time I was very near sighted. After I came to the U.S. I decided to spend some money, did the Lasik surgery in case if a Communist Party take me back to China decide only to face that kind of torture so have prisoner escort me to do a fingerprint on the aisle, very long. I could not figure out the direction. I was very heavy nearsighted and almost see nothing. They just used their feet, take me all the way to that room and then into the prison cell.

Everybody is staring at you and prisoners were some sitting on the concrete bed, some were on the ground because there's so many crowded. I think a 20+ square meter room. I think at least 21 or sometimes more than 20 prisoners crowded. Like each prisoner only the privileged prisoner could have a space on the bed. Everybody else sleep on the wet floor.

So I was privileged. In that sense I was arranged with a little space. If you use the toilet room—the toilet room was right on the corner. It's visible with the glass/piece of glass window so you can see through. So you went up to use the toilet room, then your space is occupied, and you have to stand there for the whole night. The reason I say I was

privileged is nobody there really to talk to me. They just stare at me and then they even gave me a little space on the concrete bed.

So each night two prisoners were arranged on duty to watch other prisoners so that they won't commit suicide, right. I think the second or third night it was my turn on duty. The other prisoner did not talk to me. I felt very nervous and want an answer. So I whispered to him and said, "Come on, what happened?" He said "Shh, we before you were let in, the prison guards had a meeting and basically warned everyone and said "Don't talk to this dangerous guy and he will poison you. He has poison message."

Kim: Ooh.

Bob: You see the Communist Party even understand the gospel message is very poisonous to them, of course—to the perished it is poison, right. It is eternal life to those who are saved. So they kind of purposely sanctioned me and warned every prisoner.

Kim: So they were afraid of you.

Bob: That's right. [Laughter] They were afraid of me, afraid of the Lord, afraid of the message.

Kim: It's almost like Daniel and the lion's den. He kept you safe from those prisoners.

Bob: Yes. Then later on the more they knew me/about me and the more everyone wanted to be on night duty with me because I could share some Bible story/gospel and they, every one of them shared their heart. I mean from the bottom of their heart, their most private story, even including how many times they prostitute and how many times they are not faithful to their wife. They told me their story. I started to teach them gospel hymns. That's the most fun time. They are so eager to learn the Christian songs.

The most favorite one was giving thanks to the Lord like [singing Give Thanks in Chinese] I mean it's a favorite song, right? And very easy to learn so not really spending much more time everybody mastered the song. So every morning we started as a prison choir until I was reported, and the prison guards took me to the office and warn me "No, this is the holy ground of the Communist Party. You can't spread superstitious messages here." But I think the Lord gave us some creativity instead of singing the songs in words we just hum it. Ready, set, go. [Hums song]

Kim: You are so defiant. I love it.

Bob: Because that's easier to learn so the—my neighboring prison cells, the whole column became the choir of a Christian faith.

Kim: Really?!

Bob: Yes.

Kim: So isn't it true you weren't supposed to even speak a word while you were sitting there those eight hours a day.

Bob: No. That's right. It's true. You're not allowed to talk about your case. You can't communicate because there is big brother to enforce that. I saw the brutality inside the prison. They are either beaten by the fellow prisoner. Every day is bleeding/blotted; or after several rounds of interrogation when these prisoners were taken out, and most of the time they crawled back with one leg or arm broken. You could tell how desperate and most of the prisoners came back and basically vowing to kill all the police after they were released. So there's not a real transformation or education process. It's only torture. It would not help correct any people's mind, right?

Kim: Right; right. Bob, when you were singing Give Thanks in Chinese my heart just filled with emotion, with joy, with unbelief that you while you were being persecuted for your faith could sit there in this tortuous situation and truly give thanks to God. And not only that, but you led your whole cell and the floor to give thanks as well. I'm just—there's so many things about your story that just blows my mind because it shows just how in control God is.

Bob: Amen.

Kim: It is no mistake that you were in that cell. It is no mistake that God had you share your faith with those men. It was a divine appointment.

Bob: It is. It's a divine appointment with a mission in prison. So that's maybe my prison ministry fellowship started. You couldn't help but have some mercy on these prisoners and also prison guards. They are so empty. They're not hiding their empty heart. They're using their fists. They're like torturing others to get a little bit momentary pleasure to fill their empty heart. I mean that's Communism ideology. No matter how much money/salary they receive, cannot fill that vacuum. You can tell, yes.

Kim: Were you concerned about Heidi while you were in jail?

Bob: Man, that was the toughest thing, thinking "What would they do to Heidi?" I remember one day one prisoner got some candy smuggled in, so he shared one piece of candy. I just hold that in my palm. There was an anniversary. We passed our anniversary so I just think about her thinking "How can I get this candy—was near melted already. I hold that right. It was like really expecting some miraculous messenger who would come by our cell door and I could say "Can you look for my wife somewhere." It was a long shot right. It did not happen, right. Nobody—we couldn't. Yes, that's the hardest maybe.

Kim: It is, yes. When were you and Heidi reunited?

Bob: It was the same day two months later. The same day they released me I saw Heidi was also coming. That was like the reunion, right?

Kim: Yes.

Bob: Happy reunion. But we were put in a police car and sent to the Communist Party school to our dorm.

Kim: So how did you and Heidi end up coming to the U.S.?

Bob: Well it was also a miracle. Number one, we did not have passports. After we were released from prison, from prison we were put under house arrest and there were two state security guards that followed us. We had to report everything, our phone calls, anything.

Then the first overseas letter I received was from Wheaton College actually. My professor heard my story and he thought by providing opportunity for me and Heidi to get out, so I got an invitation to visit Wheaton College. But that letter after going through almost a month of examination by different leaders of security agents the Com Party school and finally got to me and then I said we need to apply for passport. They said “No, we can’t let you go.” Basically the Communist Party has shut down the way for us to travel, right, for normally. Then Heidi was pregnant. Yes.

Kim: That’s exciting news.

Bob: Yes, that’s exciting news without permission without a quota.

Kim: So tell me about the one child laws in China.

Bob: That’s called the Family Planning Policy. The Communist Party basically said one child per family. That’s the quota/the policy. So we have hundreds of thousands full time planning commission planning offices set up from central government to local village. There are these family planning officials only job is to monitor all the girls and women’s wombs. Yes, from high school. All the school girls have to report every month to do an examination, to the school doctor, to check whether they are pregnant.

Kim: Oh my goodness.

Bob: If they are found illegally pregnant, then forced abortion. Almost every Chinese woman had some experience in one way or another in our generation. If you are found pregnant and the pregnant women escaped into hiding, then the whole family—not only your own husband if the wife escaped but your parents, your parents in law, your grandparents. It’s called five generation—your neighbors—have to sign a covenant. Everybody is responsible for this pregnant woman. If she got married without

permission, got pregnant and escaped, then you go to prison. Your house would be demolished.

Kim: The whole family?

Bob: Yes, the whole family and neighboring families, yes. Family planning official they have unlimited unchecked power. They can confiscate everything/anything, and they can beat you up. They can make my brother—wrap him up in a bag and put him in dark room and beat him up.

Then the women suffer because once you were caught then women would be forcefully put on a hospital bed and then they would induce the poison drugs and kill the baby. Then you have to pay. You have to pay. Some very unpleasant horrible photos showing women after the baby was aborted, the baby was out, and they put the baby's tissue on the mother's side in order to force her to pay for the procedure.

Kim: Oh my goodness.

Bob: Christians, Christian women.

Kim: That's tortuous.

Bob: Yes, you talk about trauma. This is a generations trauma to women. Chinese government announced in the past 30 years under the Family Planning System they had *successfully*—they said the Chinese Premier's words announced this as accomplishment for their contribution to world climate change—you know kind of thing in Copenhagen/in Denmark some years ago. He said "We have *successfully* prevented over 300 million children from being born. That is a contribution to the climate stability.

So it up to the authority of the Family Planning Office of my school to prioritize like "Oh this couple, I like them. Keep them on quota," so you can get pregnant. So I applied without success, so we couldn't get any quota.

Kim: So you would have to get permission *first* before you got pregnant?

Bob: Yes, and the Party school supplied you birth control, but it was just a horrible practice. They kind of basically kill anyone mercilessly. There are piles of babies' tissues/fetuses just thrown into a bucket.

Kim: And even if the woman was almost to full term—

Bob: Eight months to ten months term, yes. This is maybe the number one crime against humanity the Communist Party has committed.

Kim: So you and Heidi find yourself—Heidi’s pregnant and she does not have permission to be pregnant. What happened?

Bob: I have to find a Christian doctor in the hospital to at least do some consultation. Remember this is going to be our first baby. We don’t have any experience. So one day we sneak out of the school/the dorm and went to that hospital.

So the first question is do you have the yellow card? I said, “Sorry we don’t.” We’re introduced by another Christian friend and she was immediately like scared to death and the doctor, a Christian doctor, she said “Sorry, no. I can’t do anything. Actually, you have to leave. If I’m found even providing anything/advice,” she will lose her job. She could be arrested. So we left the hospital empty and that’s one of the two reasons prompted our escape from Beijing and hiding in the countryside.

First, we also learned during that time we would be rearrested because of disobeying their order about reporting everything. That kind of prompted/triggered our escape. It was a little adventure. That was the beginning chapter of my book. It was so I have to climb the window of the toilet room the big tall building and I kind of passed out after jumping in the darkness and fell on the ground.

Kim: So you jumped out of the window into the bushes.

Bob: Yes, I lost my glasses and then I kind of lost consciousness for a while and then woke up and crawling in the darkness in the bushes and finally located my eyeglasses and ran. Heidi, of course, she was pregnant, she can’t jump. There’s only one exit door in the whole big building. I mean the government purposely shut down two other doors/two other exits.

Kim: Just for you two?

Bob: Yes. She did some makeup and disguised herself. So we just ran away from Beijing. It was really a miracle that we were hidden—now I can tell you—were hidden by a policeman, by Christian policeman—not in our home town, in some other cities.

Kim: Okay.

Bob: So through the time used some barefoot doctor/the village doctor to check Heidi and I was seriously thinking to start up a McDonald franchise. [Laughter]

Kim: Okay, wait a minute.

Bob: I don’t have any income and no career. I was like a fugitive. How could we do anything? My dream career is to manage a restaurant, so I said “Okay, maybe call McDonalds.” We called McDonald headquarters in Asia in Hong Kong did a serious consultation inquiry. Unfortunately after hearing the name of the city—it’s like medium

city—they say “Oh you have to wait another 20 years before a McDonald’s is allowed to be licensed there.” They got so many other major cities request to deal with.

Kim: That is interesting that you thought you could start a McDonald’s when you’re really a fugitive running from the Communist Party. But that did not hold you back. So how did you end up leaving China and coming to the U.S.?

Bob: Well it was really, again, God’s providence because during that certain time McDonald’s doors were shut, and we were searching other doors. Then Heidi remind me/said “Oh, there was an Australian missionary some time ago introduce you to a travel agent.”—a Chinese guy who has a travel agency company in Beijing.

Then I got through—not the Christian brother who is actually a pretty high rank official in that state-owned company. So he’s staff. He’s supporting it. Pick up my phone call and I just said—I mean I didn’t tell him all my arrest or situation—just telling him to get a passport my parents to go overseas. We want to have a vacation to Thailand. Guess what? A few weeks later we were issued a passport—of course with some technical changes—separately. Heidi was a single. I was single. It was by a third-party company, guaranteed I’m politically correct and faithful and with red stamp, yes.

Kim: And you have no idea who did that? I mean you knew that it came through this travel agency, but you never discussed your situation with anyone—

Bob: No, not at all.

Kim: —yet these passports show up

Bob: Yes and were just said show up at the airport and I was—actually the most humorous story was before we assemble to a tourist delegation team to Thailand and Hong Kong. I was appointed as the tour guide. [Laughter] Because they think I was the only one listed teaching English to think I could do a better job than their agent. I was appointed with a flag guiding everybody, process their boarding pass, and process their custom clearance and everything. [Laughter]

Kim: And you and Heidi are literally trying to be very discreet, not bring attention to yourself, yet you have to hold up this flag and be in charge of everyone.

Bob: Yes. I still have some of the old photos.

Kim: Ah, lovely. Well you ended up in Hong Kong—

Bob: That’s right.

Kim: —and Heidi was very pregnant. She was about due.

Bob: Yes. We were waiting initially to be accepted by the U.S. as refugees. That's our expectation because I know we have so many American friends—lots of missionary, lot of Christians we know over the years. Some were working in the State Department, so they work very hard to try and get us admitted. But during that time it was strange. The U.S. diplomats, most of them, did not have any knowledge about Christian persecution. They didn't even know what is a house church.

So when we went to the U.S. Consulate, tried to apply, we were rejected and rejected again and again and again. At the end of the day, we were told "Don't expect the United States will accept you as refugees." So our child was born in Hong Kong as a little refugee and then I guess the Lord has not let go. So like literally we were put on the last United Airline flight from Hong Kong three days before Hong Kong was turned over to China. The last working day was a Friday, I remember, of the old Hong Kong government. The U.S. finally admitted us and put us on the airplane.

Kim: Absolutely miraculous and you have to say what happened. You did an interview, just by chance, for American television. That played a big part of your—

Bob: Peter Jennings, yes, the ABC news—

Kim: Please share that.

Bob: That was providentially because lots of U.S. media was assigning their crews to cover the Hong Kong hand over to Communist China. I think somebody alerted me or something that I might have an interesting story for them, so they contacted me, and we met in Hong Kong McDonald's. Not that I managed that. [Laughter]

Kim: Yes, not your McDonald's

Bob: It's not my McDonald's. [Laughter] But it was wonderful exposure. I think that also helped. I know quite a few people issued an ultimatum to then President Bill Clinton, basically, urging him you have to accept the Fu family into the United States. Otherwise they will hold him accountable if we were handed over to China and I'll be in Chinese prison.

Kim: Well I am very thankful that you and Heidi and little Daniel made it to the U.S. I have to ask you this: do you fear for your family's life now?

Bob: Not really. I think number one, we know our life is in the hands of the Lord. He would not reduce a second without His permission, right?—without His sovereignty. Number two, as much Chinese Communist Party's threatening activities operating inside the U.S. soil, we feel lots of prayers, a lot of people paying attention.

Also, we live in the state of Texas. That's very unique too. We move here, the first thing was the F.B.I. chief visited me after first week after we moved here because they

already received alert—received Chinese government hired white Americans in our neighboring city tried to destroy/disrupt our communication with China. So I knew their names, but I shouldn't release for the confidentiality. So we just exercise as much precaution as possible, but we shouldn't pre-consume too much worry before the time has come, right?

Kim: Yes. Well I will definitely continue to keep you and your family in prayer, and I have one final question for you. Here in the U.S. we don't really understand what it's like to be persecuted for our faith. We've had it easy. But we are living in times right now where it seems that the persecution of Christians in the U.S. is right around the corner. So what can you tell us as far as how we can begin to prepare?

Bob: My advice if I may, the number one thing is really to honor Christ as the Lord. The biblical teaching is any man who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus shall or will be persecuted. So the test is not about how much persecution. The first test is how much faithful you are demonstrating living a life to the Lord. So it's not 90%, not 95%, not 99%; have to be 100%, at least your heart. We're all counting the grace of the Lord. At least your heart we cannot compromise. I think too often the biggest problem is we live kind of halfhearted Christian life—

Kim: Yes.

Bob: —in this culture. We want to be political correct, cultural correct, everything—following the trend, following the pop culture. If the pop culture said, "Oh Christianity or gospel is a private affair, just hide in your heart or restrict it in your church building or just in your family and that's just a heritage or transition."

If we obey that, we fall in the devil's trap and that's exactly the same propaganda as the Communist Party. If you just believe your Christian faith in your home today, I mean you're relatively very safe. If you don't share the good news or leave out your faith in the public square, Communist Party even may not want to even bother you. So there's no prison theology over there. So I think that is the number one.

The number two thing I think always we count the church as one church. So the reason I say that is there's no such thing in the biblical sense called American church, Chinese church, Nigerian church, Saudi Arabian church, North Korean church. It is one church that consists both from the Apostle Paul's time to our time to the future churches that God provides for us. It is one church horizontally extended in different parts of the Word, God's word. It was Abraham Kuyper's words not a single inch on this word. The Lord does not declare it is mine, right?

Kim: Right.

Bob: So in Iran, God's church in Iran, in America, Saudi Arabia, or in Texas, anywhere is one church so we can't just say like "Oh, American church." We are showing some

mercy to the persecuted church. I mean persecution is norm so we should expect the persecution and that we should feel joyfully to enter into the same faith the persecuted church experienced. As we are told in the scriptures, it said “My brothers”—again it’s Paul’s prison letter—in prisons he said “My brothers you’re not only granted to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him.”

To suffer for Christ—the founder of Voice of Martyrs Richard Wurmbrand, he always used the word/he said sufferology—the theology of suffering, and the famous book is *Tortured for Christ*. So you’re tortured, you’re suffering, you’re for Christ. So our faith itself a heritage of our Christian faith and growth unless we don’t want to grow and it’s through suffering through persecution. So it is our privilege to not only suffer for Christ, but it’s also suffering with our fellow brothers and sisters in China, in Iran, in Nigeria, in Sudan, in North Korea.

I think we should have no fear. We should welcome that in a sense. I mean we’re not trying to make troubles—like try to get into the persecution, but I think when it comes like 1 Peter, my favorite verse, don’t be surprised. It’s just expecting. I think that means God’s blessing really pouring into the United States/into the church so that we can be tested. Because faith will not be a genuine faith until it is tested. Like you make a sword, right? Unless put in fire and really melt it and mold it, you can’t be the right vessel for the Lord. So that may be both a warning and encouragement.

Kim: When I listened to Bob share the significant challenges that he and his wife and many others had to face in order to follow Christ while living in China, it made me wonder, “Would I be able to endure the type of persecution they faced?” I’ve had to ask myself, “Do I love Jesus enough to sacrifice my comforts to stand for him?” And even greater than that, “Do I love Him enough to sacrifice my own life to follow Him?”

The sad thing is that here in the U.S. for so many years that question has not even come to mind for most of us. Yet these are questions that many Christians throughout the world are forced to answer every single day. But in America, we have often taken our freedom to follow Jesus for granted.

Now there was one thing Bob alluded to that stood out to me: that faith isn’t proven genuine until it’s tested. And in 2 Timothy 3:12 it says “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” So there will come a time when our faith will be tested and when that happens, will God find us faithful?

Jesus offers these words of encouragement and warning in Matthew 10: 28-33. He says “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” And here’s a warning, verse 32 “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father

who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

Again, I ask “When persecution comes our way, will God find us as faithful as Bob Fu was and continues to be until this day?”

Father, I pray for everyone who is following Jesus as their Savior and Lord. When persecution for our faith finds us, please strengthen us to cling confidently to you believing that you are who you say you are in the Word of God. And I pray that our faith would be unwavering/unshakeable, that we would be completely surrendered to you 100% with no compromise.

And when the times get difficult and we want to give up, please give us the grace we need at that moment. And compel us as brothers and sisters in Christ to bear one another’s burdens, to pick each other up when we stumble and fall, to lift each other’s arms in the midst of the battle. And Father, when your eyes run to and fro throughout the earth to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward you, may you find us standing firm in our faith, trusting in you in the face of opposition, so that we will let our light shine before men that they may see our good deeds and glorify you in heaven. Amen.

If you want to find out more about Bob Fu or his book *God’s Double Agent: The True Story of a Chinese Christian’s Fight for Freedom*, check out our show notes on the *Unfavorable Odds* page at FamilyLife.com/podcasts. There you’ll also be able to listen to the other podcasts on the FamilyLife Podcast network.

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Next time on *Unfavorable Odds*.

Dr. McDonough: And in that moment all I kept begging the Lord to do was take me. I just remember the unbearable pain and screaming “God, take me. Please, Jesus, take me, take me, take me,” and then one more second would pass.

Kim: That’s Dr. Mark D. McDonough, next time.

I’m Kim Anthony. Thanks for listening to this episode of *Unfavorable Odds*.

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