

Hannah Kuper Homecoming Ceremony

<MESSAGE>

I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

Marcos Kim (Buenos Aires UBF, Argentina)

2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

We have gathered today to see off our beloved coworker missionary Hannah Kuper who went ahead of us to see the Lord. On May 14, 2020, I suddenly got a call from Korea and the center phone also rang, and I thought something must have happened. I was shocked to hear the news that missionary Hannah had passed away. I couldn't believe that someone who had been healthy until that very morning and only gone for a check-up on some breathing trouble had passed away so suddenly.

Then, when I went to gather her body the next day, I was shocked again to see to the poor conditions of the hospital, and my heart ached to think that she had taken her last breath in that small hospital. Moreover, I felt sorry and resentful that the coronavirus prevented very many people from gathering to send her off.

However, when I looked at Jesus' death, I was surprised to see that he also died in loneliness. Jesus died a lonely death, taken outside the city like a common sinner, where only three or four people could come near the cross and a few faithful women could only look on from afar. Likewise, as we send missionary Hannah off, there are only four missionaries present and hundreds look on from afar through the Internet. It seems like she is lonely, but she is never alone.

Missionary Hannah met Jesus when she was young and vowed to live her life as a missionary. Out of love for Jesus, she would go to the center every day, and her mother even misunderstood and suspected she found a boyfriend. Later, she was sent out to the United States as a missionary. She started a family with the pure and upstanding Don Kuper, served God in Toledo with fiery passion, and raised two smart, wonderful sons, Paul and John. After that, she responded to the late Dr. Samuel Lee's suggestion

and went out as short-term missionary to Paraguay, then responded again by coming as a permanent missionary to Argentina.

Physically, missionary Hannah was a small person. She tenaciously endured many hardships, yet she was always bright before God's Word. Truly, she went too suddenly. She had been complaining of breathing trouble since early last week, and then less than three hours after getting treated in the hospital, she suddenly passed away. There are so many things I wanted to tell her, but now she's just gone.

Seeing her face before the casket closing yesterday, I first thought of how much hardship and pain she had endured, and my heart ached. But later, I realized how peacefully she must be resting now, and my heart filled with thanks. During the ambulance ride with her family, she said, "No matter what happens, the Lord is my shepherd." Just four hours before she passed away, she was helping her students in class, and she served jjajang noodles for dinner. I wish missionary Hannah were still here with us. But God said, "This is far enough. Leave the rest to me," and he called her home. God is God. He is Sovereign Master of our lives. He doesn't need to consult with us. And his sovereignty is good.

As I meditated on what word to speak on, I read 2 Timothy 4 and felt that God was looking at me and saying, "Why are sad? Take heart!" What does Apostle Paul say in verse 7-8? He says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." The battle that Paul and the other apostles waged was not a battle to kill others but a battle to bring sinners to repentance and make them children of God. This battle requires extraordinary patience and demands you to lay down your life in the dirt. It's a battle to put one's self to death. This was the battle that Apostle Paul fought. And this was the battle that missionary Hannah fought.

How did Apostle Paul feel as he sensed the end of his life drawing near? Was he afraid? Was he full of regrets? Not in the least. He was so happy that he burst with overflowing praise. Look at verse 8. "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." How amazing. Missionary Hannah now shares in that same crown with Apostle Paul. She endured so much while living as a compassionate missionary in Argentina and South America. Now, in God's kingdom, she doesn't have to struggle so hard to prepare her online classes. She doesn't have to suffer through chronic coughing. God brought her labor to a close and welcomed her into his rest in his presence. God is good. When we finish our lives on this earth, we, too, we will be given a crown of righteousness, we will be clothed with a powerful,

glorious, imperishable body, and we will meet missionary Hannah once more. How great our joy will be on that day.

I asked missionary Don Kuper, "Where do you want to have her buried? America? Or Korea?" He answered, "Argentina." Missionary Hannah is laying her bones to rest in Argentina. Today, after we finish this ceremony, we will bury her in the Korean community cemetery. It seems similar to Abraham when he purchased the cave of Machpelah. All of us missionaries will also lay our bones to rest here in Argentina.

Looking at the beginning part of today's passage, I was surprised to think that Paul was unmarried and had no biological son. But he loved Timothy like a spiritual son knew that he couldn't be near him in the moment of his death. So he wrote to Timothy about his life and his hope.

Timothy was a tearful, soft-hearted person. So Paul commanded him in 2 Timothy 4:5, "But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry." If missionary could be here to share her testimony, she would probably say the same thing seeing us in this moment.

"I'm going home. Be sober in all things. Endure hardship." What can a person accomplish without patience? If we decide to study the Bible, do our lives suddenly change? We need to be patient. Be sober, deny yourself, follow Jesus. We must endure these hardships until we bear the fruits of the Spirit. Also, we must do the work of an evangelist. The gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. Through our lives, we can give glory to God. But we can't reveal the gospel in detail.

We must speak about the righteousness and life that is through Christ. Paul also commands, "Discharge all the duties of your ministry." Students as students, workers and workers, shepherds as shepherds. We have to discharge our duties, fulfill our ministries. Then, the gospel will be preached all the powerfully, and we will participate in his glory.

I feel such a sense of loss sending off missionary Hannah. Do you know what every parent wishes? A parent's greatest joy is to see their children outshine them. When Paul and John stand before God as great spiritual generals, missionary Hannah will truly be so full of joy.

Until the very last moment, missionary Hannah lived giving her all strength. Now she's at rest, waiting for her crown. Today we say farewell to her. Although we won't be able to see her for a short while, we shall see her again. So that we won't be ashamed when we meet again, let us lay down our lives and follow Jesus.

Above all, I pray that God may keep missionary Don Kuper healthy like Caleb (who lived to 85), and for God to bless Paul and John as spiritual generals. Amen.

Marcos Kim, Buenos Aires UBF

<Words of Farewell>

Don Kuper (Argentina)

Today, we have lost a wife, a mother, a missionary and a second grade teacher. M. Hannah Kuper had many roles in life, all of which she accepted with great responsibility. If there was one word to describe M Hannah, it seems to be the word "mission." She did everything with a clear and strong sense of mission. She was a missionary in every walk of life. At a very young age as a young Korean college student, M Hannah loved world mission and set her heart to live as a UBF missionary. This led her to Bowling Green, Ohio, USA as a student missionary where she did her Masters in English Lit. Her love for God and God's mission led her to marry a young American who was an alumni of Bowling Green State University (BGSU) who in spite of being very ordinary loved God and was full of passion for God's work. When they were just newlyweds, they opened their small apartment to a young girl to whom M Hannah taught the Bible. They wanted to have a house church from the beginning. Together, they formed a small fellowship within the Toledo UBF church called the Good Soldiers Fellowship where she served many young people as a Bible teacher including a young American student in the ROTC. She taught him the Bible via the mail and all on his own he in turn taught the Bible to his platoon in basic training and held worship service with them. He grew in God's word and brought his brother Greg into the ministry. It was God's marvelous work.

Don and Hannah Kuper went out in 1998 as UBF missionaries to Paraguay and then Argentina where they served together as teachers and Bible teachers. They formed a small chapter of UBF in Buenos Aires together with two other families. Their spirit of mission led them to Korea and even China and then back to Argentina where their son John is studying Medicine. They had two wonderful sons, Paul and John, who

themselves inherited her spirit of mission. Paul now lives in Seoul, Korea working and studying while John is living with his dad in Argentina serving in their ministry.

During the pandemic Hannah was enclosed in her home in Buenos Aires, Argentina where she held online classes for the second graders of BAICA. She also had a new Bible student Edeline with whom she had just begun one to one Bible study. In one sense, life at home was very nice and it was good to have mom back at home. She taught me how to make different dishes and she made us one last meal and a batch of kimchi before she went to heaven. But during the quarantine, she came under more stress than usual as a teacher due to all the work involved in teaching online. In addition, she had ongoing diabetes and high blood pressure that she tried to manage through medication. Although she was very faithful in taking medication, it seems that these underlying conditions combined with stress was having an effect on her. She began to complain about shortness of breath the last few days. She also kept getting hot and cold alternately. On the day that she went to heaven, she held one last class for her students. Afterward, she asked me to call for an ambulance because she was still having trouble breathing. They arrived in ten minutes, and after examining her, they felt it was necessary to run some tests to make sure it wasn't corona virus. After an hour and a half in the clinic, she was about to be taken up for x-ray when she fainted in the arms of her husband Don and son John with doctors standing a few feet away. It was actually a cardiac arrest due to respiratory complications. This is something no one ever expected. They tried to revive her for an hour but she had another cardiac arrest and she went to heaven. She did not have corona virus since the test results were negative. She literally sowed her life for Jesus and God's world mission purpose.

To the end, M Hannah fulfilled her mission here on earth as a missionary wife, a missionary mom, a missionary teacher and a Christian missionary. Now she is in the arms of her heavenly Father where she can rest eternally from all her labors in the Lord. She leaves us a tremendous spiritual legacy to follow. Thank God who used Hannah as a great woman of mission who reflected Jesus in everything she did.

UBF General Director Moses Yoon (Chicago, USA)

As we remember missionary Hannah Kuper was an elegant woman of faith. When I think about her I am reminded of Proverbs 31:10 which says "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies." As the whole chapter 31 says she was a wise, hard working woman of noble character. Most of all, she was a spiritual warrior of faith. She fought the good fight, finished her race and kept the faith. She entered the kingdom of God ahead of us as our spiritual senior. In the kingdom of God,

she remembers us and cheers us up to run our races to the end. I pray that we may learn her life of faith that she poured out her life as a drink offering, and that we may run our races with all our best. I also pray that God may comfort missionary Don, Paul, and John. As a community, we are with them and will be with them as the Lord is with us.

In Remembrance of Hannah Kuper (1953-2020)

Paul and Sarah Hong (Toledo, OH, USA)

It was in 1980 we met her in Bowling Green, OH. Since then she and Don have been with us—many here in Toledo remember her dearly.. Clearly Hannah Kuper was a holy pilgrim—in obedience to God she constantly moved from one place to the next—Korea to Bowling Green, Toledo, Chicago, Akron (USA), Paraguay, Argentina, back to USA, Korea, China, USA, and then Argentina. Her heart was filled with her Savior and thus she accepted her call to be a missionary—the highest calling...Leaving behind routine path of worldly fame and recognition..she chose to store her treasures in heaven...She gave herself to God and others...everything away to receive more than all things back.. She did not save for herself...She was highly gifted—rational and emotional, articulate and simple, compassionate and firm...she imparted her gifts of mindfulness and care to many.

Hannah Kuper frequently recited Psalm 23, “The LORD is my Shepherd...I shall not be in want”...By faith she experienced God’s timely provision in all things but the reality was too often different...In COVID-19 world she was in need of health, strength and freedom—until the last day...yet she chose to trust God and accepted simple and humble life with joy...Abundant silver and gold she did not have, but in the name of Jesus she made many walk..she helped others laugh..she supported the weak to be strong...She wiped out tears of those who were weeping in sorrow and planted the living hope to those in great distress...Her favorite Psalm 23 ends with this song of joy, “Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” We offer our prayer, “May Hannah find strength, rest, comfort, joy and glory in the house of the LORD forever.” In response, we feel hearing what she would say to us, “May the grace of our Lord be with you all to the very end....”. Now she is not with us.. She is with the LORD. We truly miss her so much.

Sooner or later we will also depart here and join her there in glory. Until then, we live by faith, not by sight.

Isaac Kim (Akron, Ohio, USA)

I salute M. Hannah Kuper's life of faith, especially her life of mission from early on 1980 in Bowling Green, OH and her marriage by faith.

I saw young bible students were always around her. She took care of them with prayer and giving them the word of God like her own-children. God used her proficient English and intellect preciously to further the Kingdom of God. She even gave up her career to serve South America pioneering work in Paraguay and Argentina. In fact, she was ready to follow God's leading. Truly, she lived as a holy pilgrim sojourning her mission field, Toledo, Korea, Chicago, China. She came to Akron three years ago. M. Don and Hannah bought a house and they were ready to settle in Akron as their mission field. Her one to one bible students were coming to our worship service. We saw God's wonderful work through them. But God had a different plan. Their original mission field is Argentina.

I praise thank God for her beautiful life of faith and her clear mission mind to serve God and please him in all she did to the end.

May the grace of God and God's comfort be with M. Don and his family.