

2024 UBF South Sudan Bible Conference

Glory be to God in the highest heaven, for blessing the 2024 UBF South Sudan Autumn Bible conference abundantly. The conference was held from November 1st to 3rd 2024 in a good shepherd venue. God has sent 54 adults and 11 children to participate in the conference. Missionary Andrew and Hope Kim, from Namsan UBF Centre, Korea sacrificed many things and risked their life to attend the conference despite many warnings not to visit South Sudan in that time.

The preparation for the conference started early in May with many prayers and fasting. During conference preparation, our faith and commitment were tested, because most of us were not faithful as usual. So we were attacked with a sense of failure thinking that this would be the worst Bible conference ever in the history of Juba UBF. But God is faithful. He turned our worries and fears into joy and victory. God reminded us that: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty." (Zechariah 4: 6)

The theme of the conference was "Is God among Us or Not?" This theme was challenging to everyone. It looks like we were complaining against God as did the people of Israel in the wilderness. With doubts, they asked "IS GOD AMONG US OR NOT? We chose this theme as well as other main messages to address our current situation in South Sudan. South Sudan is going through severe suffering due to economic, security, and political problems. Poverty, famine, flooding, and ethnic arms clashes are ruining people's lives and driving children out to the streets, immorality, and crimes. Problems of hatred, tribalism, and terrible crimes against humanity done by South Sudanese tribes against themselves are destroying the nation. As such, bitterness, trauma, and an unforgiving heart affected the entire nation of South Sudan. In such a situation, many South Sudanese started doubting God's love and care, and asking "Is God among us or not".

The open message delivered by Shp. Stephen Dak based on Psalm (23:26) was intended to help the attendees to give their hearts to God so that they can see God's ways and plans for them through the conference. Otherwise, the conference will be

just a picnic. In previous conferences, we realized that some people who attended the conference had no regard for things of God, and had no strong desires in Bible studies, listening to messages, and writing testimonies. Their attitudes made conferences look like just a picnic or social gathering. Through the opening message, God prepared the participants' hearts, and we all devoted ourselves to God's word, and the environment was so spiritual. All the attendees wrote gracious testimonies which indicated that we gave our hearts to God from the beginning of the conference.

The main message (1) was based on Exodus 17:1-16. Through this message, God healed us from doubting God's presence and care. This message builds our faith and trust in God who is with us and caring for us amid our suffering and crisis. After hearing the message delivered with tears, God comforted us through his word assuring us that God is among us in this time of suffering. And that he has a perfect plan and guidance for us even though we are going through suffering. God is guiding us to repentance, and to raise us to another level of faith, truth, and depending on God. Sh. Taban Moses who delivered main message (1) with tears, testified that he was born to a single mom and lived a difficult life for the entire of his life. When he was a student at university he was invited to UBF Bible conference. He was full of doubts and complaints against God because of his bad life experiences. But the conference turns out to be his turning point in his life. He became one of the faithful Bible students. Till now even after seven years of graduation, he is just a motorcycle rider to feed his family. He deserves the best and better position. It looks like God abandoned him, but he is so thankful for the presence of God in his life. God bless him to establish his house church and have two children.

The second main message based on Mark (12: 28-34) was delivered by one of our growing leader's sh. Alor Biong. Through his message, the word of God came to us that during time of suffering, we should love God and build a strong relationship with him. And build a strong relationship between all tribes of South Sudan by obeying God's commandments. Loving God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength. And loving our neighbors as ourselves is what South Sudan needs the most.

Whenever South Sudanese remember bad things that were done to them by other tribes, they burn with anger and wanted to revenge. South Sudanese are confined within their tribes. Any person out of the tribe is considered an enemy. So Special lecture by Emmanuel Joshua based on Luke (23: 34) helped us to receive God's direction to pray and forgive anybody or any tribe that did bad things against us. It teaches us to take the example of Jesus' forgiveness. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Jesus forgave his enemies who mercilessly nailed him to the cross.

On the evening of the second day of the conference, we celebrated with four graduate students, three with bachelor's degrees and one with a master's degree in accounting from China. May God open the way for them to get suitable jobs and establish their house church for God's mission.

We had two morning devotion delivered by two sister of faith. Shs. Kimo Philip and Dr. Teresa Caleb. Based on the 2 Samuel 15: 13-37, and Samuel 16: 1-16 respectively.

Main message (3) based on Matthew (28: 16-20) delivered by Sh. Johnson Deng, gave us instructions that after being blessed through the conference, we should go back as an ambassadors of Christ to take the good news to people, make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey God's word.

The conference was forecasted live on Facebook for the first time in our ministry for all three days.

Due to the current economic crisis in South Sudan, many people suffer in different ways. Most of the civilian workers in the government institutes have left without getting their monthly salaries for almost 12 months now. Still, we believe God is in control; he has disciplined us as the apple of his eyes to mold and shape us to be used for African suffering people one day. We believe God is among us today. One of our brothers was hesitating to attend the conference for 3 consecutive days without proving something to his family because he live by day to day work to survive. But he decided to attend by faith after the conference he testified God provided the family's needs.

In this year's conference, we saw God's hand at work. Attendees were hungry and thirsty for God's word. They studied the Bible with learning and repentance hearts. They all shared graceful testimonies. Shp. Bolis Apar give testimony testifying about how suffering and hardships had negatively affected his love to God and his mission. After the conference shp. Bolis received God's healing from bitterness, doubting God's love and care. He became more active and joyful than he was before. Brother Deng Daniel who joined UBF together with shp. Taban Moses received God's deliverance and his life was changed during the conference. Deng could not repented from his drunkenness all these years. He was discontinued from college because his academic performance was affected by his addiction to alcohol. But during this year's conference, Brother Deng Daniel repented and stopped taking alcohol. From the day he came back from the conference, he made decision of faith and joined with us in daily early morning prayers. His appearance begins to change for better. His face is now shining like a new born baby. His prayer topic is to rent a house near the UBF center to move away from the bad influence of his drunkard friends. He also prayed to resume his college studies.

Also, God blessed us with about 10 new sheep. Who are eager to study the Bible. They started to attend Sunday worship services with us. And we each one of them to shepherd who will take care of them with bible study.

Prayer topics

1. Take care of 10 new sheep and study the Bible with them every week until they grow to excellent bible teachers.
2. Raise Jesus' disciples amid difficulties to bring them to the true salvation of God
3. To establish a new house churches
4. New graduates to get jobs for better self-supporting