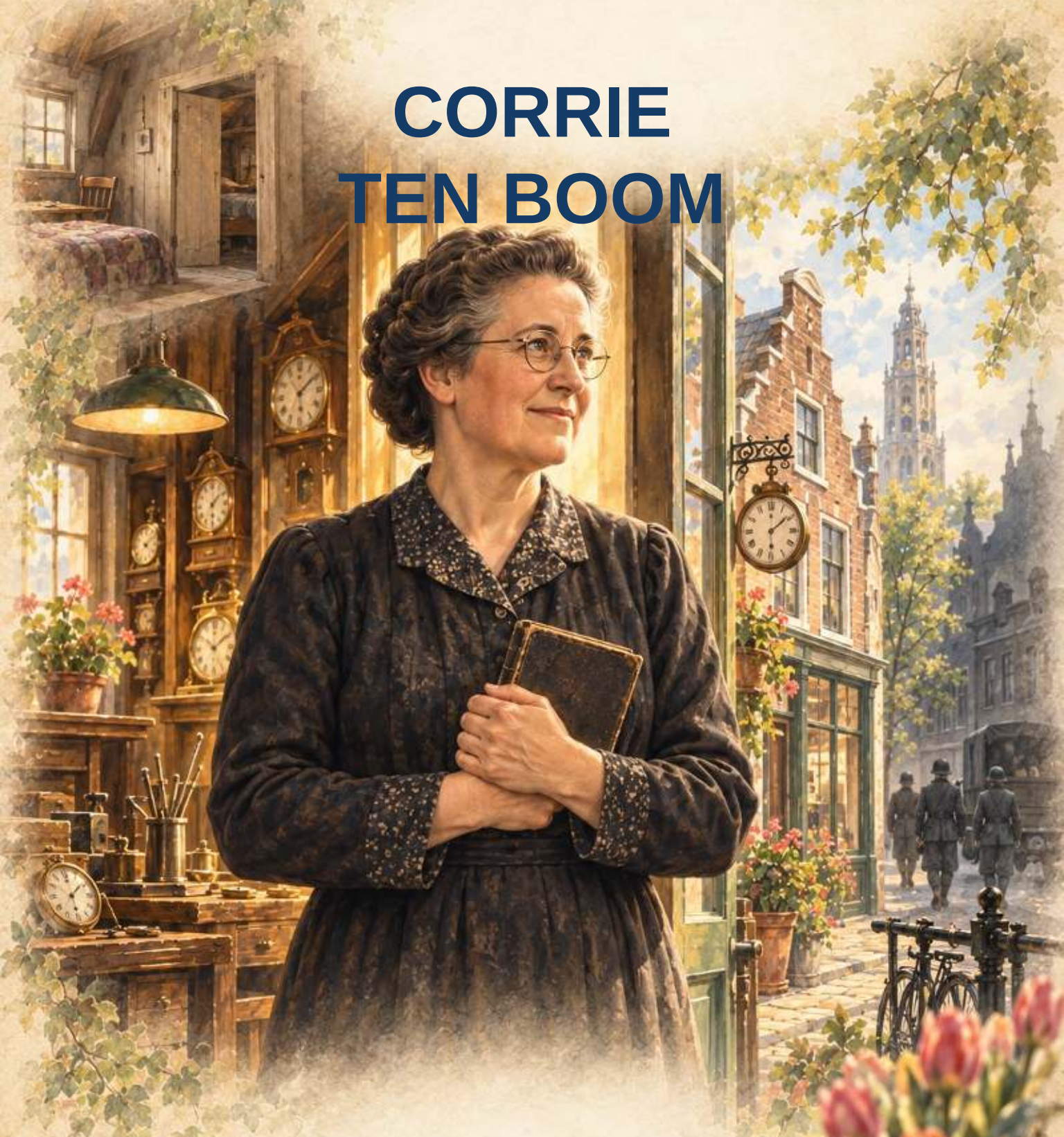
CORRIE TEN BOOM



A Light in the Darkness

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Prepared by Hollis McGehee • AimingForJesus.com



A Home Shaped by Faith

Corrie ten Boom grew up above the family watch shop in Haarlem, the Netherlands. Her father, Casper, taught his children that faith belonged in everyday life—not merely inside a church.

The ten Boom home was filled with Scripture, prayer, hospitality, and concern for neighbors. During the 1920s and 1930s, the family welcomed foster children and guests into their already crowded rooms.

Long before war entered their street, God was preparing this family to open its door when opening the door would become dangerous.

The Watchmaker’s Daughter

Corrie learned the watchmaker’s trade from her father and became the first woman licensed as a watchmaker in the Netherlands. She understood tiny gears, careful timing, and patient work.

Customers entered the shop carrying clocks that had stopped. They often carried troubles too. Corrie listened, served, prayed, and learned to trust the God Who sees every life completely.

She could not know what was approaching. But faithful obedience in ordinary days was preparing her for extraordinary days.





A Wall That Hid Life

After Nazi Germany occupied the Netherlands, Jewish neighbors and members of the Dutch underground needed places of safety. The ten Boom family chose to help.

A concealed room was constructed behind a false wall in Corrie’s bedroom. It was small, cramped, and difficult to reach—but it could hide six people.

The family practiced warning drills. At the sound of a buzzer, those in danger had to disappear quickly, carrying every sign of their presence with them. The hiding place was built with bricks. Its true foundation was love.

Faith Became Shelter

The Beje—the ten Boom home and watch shop—became a refuge and a center of nonviolent resistance. Some guests remained only a few hours. Others stayed for days until another safe house could be found.

Corrie helped obtain ration cards, locate shelter, and guide frightened people toward safety. The Corrie ten Boom House estimates that the Beje group helped save about 800 Jews and other refugees.

The family did not know how their obedience would end. They knew only that the person at their door was their neighbor.





Darkness Entered the House

On February 28, 1944, the ten Boom family was betrayed. Nazi security officers raided the Beje, searched the rooms, and arrested more than thirty people.

Corrie, Betsie, and their eighty-four-year-old father, Casper, were among those taken away. The officers searched for the people being hidden, but they never found them.

Behind the false wall, six people remained silent for forty-seven hours. Resistance workers later brought them out. The darkness had entered the house—but it had not conquered the light.

Led Away—but Not Forsaken

The family left the warmth of their home and entered an unknown future. Their work had been discovered. Their freedom was gone. Their lives were now in the hands of cruel authorities.

Yet the God they trusted had not changed. The same Lord they had served around the family table went with them into the cold street and beyond the prison doors.

The circumstances had become dark in a moment. God's presence had not dimmed at all.

"He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."
1 John 4:4 (ESV)





Separated at Scheveningen

Corrie, her sister Betsie, and their father Casper were taken to Scheveningen Prison. Once inside, they were separated. Corrie entered solitary confinement, not knowing what would happen to those she loved.

Solitude could shut out familiar voices, but it could not shut out God. Corrie prayed, remembered Scripture, and entrusted the people she loved to the Father Who could reach every cell.

Prison walls separated the family from one another. They could not separate any of them from Christ.

Casper’s Final Days

Casper ten Boom was already frail when he was arrested. Ten days later, on March 9, 1944, he died after becoming ill in prison.

His earthly life ended away from the clocks, family table, and watch shop he loved. But his final chapter was consistent with the life he had lived: he had refused to turn away people in danger, even when helping them could cost him everything.

The Nazis took Casper’s body for the short time before he passed, but they did not take his freedom. They did not disrupt his faith, and they surely could not alter his ultimate destination: being with Jesus.





The Word Entered Ravensbrück

Corrie and Betsie were eventually transported through Camp Vught to Ravensbrück, the notorious women's concentration camp in Germany. Hunger, disease, overcrowding, and cruelty surrounded them.

Corrie had hidden a small Bible in a pouch suspended from a string around her neck, beneath her prison dress. At the inspection line, guards searched the women ahead of her. Yet Corrie passed without being searched. She understood that God had protected His Word for the women inside.

In the crowded barracks, the sisters read Scripture aloud to women from many nations. The camp proclaimed the power of evil. The open Bible proclaimed the greater truth: Jesus Christ was still Lord.

Light in the Barracks

Women gathered around Corrie and Betsie after the day’s labor. They listened quietly as Scripture was read and explained. In a place designed to strip away dignity and hope, God’s Word restored both.

The barracks remained cold. The bunks remained crowded. The guards remained cruel. But the women worshiped, prayed, and learned that Christ could meet them even there.

The darkness described their surroundings. It did not define their souls. Many women came to faith because two imprisoned sisters continued to speak about Jesus.



Thank God—even for the Fleas?

At Ravensbrück, Corrie and Betsie lived in overcrowded barracks infested with fleas. As they read the Bible, Betsie urged Corrie to give thanks in every circumstance. Even for the fleas? Corrie struggled to agree.

Yet she joined Betsie in giving thanks. They did not yet know any good that could come from those biting pests.

The sisters found unusual freedom to read Scripture and pray with the other women. Later, Betsie learned why: the supervisor and guards would not enter their room because of the fleas.

The very thing Corrie had found so hard to thank God for helped leave room for His Word to be heard.

Based on Corrie’s account in The Hiding Place, chapter 13.

Trust Before You Understand



“give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)

Betsie gave thanks before she knew why the fleas mattered.

We can trust the Lord while His purposes are hidden. We may never see how He is working, but we can depend on His faithfulness today.



Betsie’s Last Witness

Betsie’s body grew weaker, but her faith remained strong. She spoke of helping people wounded by the war—even those who had participated in the cruelty. She believed God could heal what hatred had broken.

In December 1944, Betsie died at Ravensbrück. Corrie lost the sister who had walked beside her through every prison and camp.

But Betsie left Corrie more than grief. She left a charge: they must tell others that no darkness was deeper than the love of God.

“There is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still.”

— Betsie ten Boom, recalled in The Hiding Place

Hope Beyond the Wire

Betsie dreamed of places where survivors could recover and learn to live again. Her vision reached beyond the barbed wire to homes filled with light, gardens, kindness, and the healing truth of Christ.

She did not live to see that work begin. Corrie carried the vision out of the camp. After the war, she opened a rehabilitation home in the Netherlands for people scarred by the occupation.

What appeared to die in Ravensbrück became a seed of mercy beyond its gates.





Her Name Was Called

Near the end of December 1944, Corrie was unexpectedly released from Ravensbrück. She later learned that women her age were killed soon afterward.

She had entered the camp with Betsie and now left without her. Freedom came carrying gratitude, grief, weakness, and a responsibility she could not yet fully see.

Corrie did not believe that survival proved she was stronger or more deserving than those who died. She understood it as a summons to carry their witness forward.

The Road Out

Corrie stepped away from the wire into winter light. Her body was weak, but the message she carried had been tested in the darkest circumstances of her life.

God had not promised that His children would avoid suffering. He had shown that He would remain present within it.

The road ahead would take Corrie far beyond Haarlem. She would speak in more than sixty countries, telling people that Jesus Christ brings hope stronger than hatred and forgiveness stronger than revenge.





A Message Put to the Test

After the war, Corrie spoke in Germany about God’s forgiveness. At the end of one meeting, a man approached her. She recognized him as a former guard from Ravensbrück.

He told her that he had become a Christian and asked whether she could forgive him. Corrie had preached forgiveness. Now the wounded memories of the camp stood directly before her.

She could not manufacture warm feelings. She could choose to obey Christ and trust Him for the strength she did not possess.

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”

— Corrie ten Boom, Tramp for the Lord

The Hand She Could Not Raise

Corrie prayed silently and extended her hand. She later described God’s love flooding her as she acted in obedience. The forgiveness she offered did not call evil good or erase justice. It released vengeance into God’s hands.

This became the great public test of the message forged in Ravensbrück: Christ does not merely command the impossible and leave us alone. He supplies what faithful obedience requires.

The former prisoner and former guard stood together beneath the mercy of the same Savior.





Corrie in Her Later Years

The Letters in the Drawer
Holland, 1970

Years after forgiving the prison guard, Corrie still needed God's help with hurt caused by Christian friends. A visitor in 1970 heard her say she had forgiven them. Then she offered to show him the old letters that proved their wrong.

Her friend gently challenged her: why was she still keeping the evidence? That evening, Corrie asked Jesus for forgiveness and burned the letters in her coal grate.

She told this story at eighty years of age. She was still learning to draw fresh grace from God each day. The woman who taught forgiveness continued to practice it herself.

Corrie's own account, Guideposts, November 1972

A Message for a New Generation
The 1960s and 1970s

Corrie's ministry continued through the 1960s and into the 1970s. Over more than thirty years, her travels took her to over sixty countries. The Lord she had trusted in prison remained the center of her message.

The Hiding Place reached people through the book and its film adaptation. By 1976, speaking invitations were arriving from around the world, although her journeys were now mainly within the United States.

That year, Pam Rosewell Moore became her companion. Corrie continued inviting people to receive Jesus Christ and to depend on Him for the strength to forgive.

Dallas Baptist University, Corrie ten Boom Online Archive

A Home Called Shalom
California, 1977

In 1977, Corrie settled in Placentia, California. She named her home Shalom. After decades of travel, she continued her work by completing manuscripts and filming messages about the Lord she loved.

Serious strokes began in 1978. Eventually she could no longer speak, and Pam and a team of caregivers tended her. The woman who had encouraged so many now received the patient care of others.

Her dependence on Jesus continued through these quieter years. The story reaches beyond the war to an elderly woman whose life had become a witness to His faithfulness.

Dallas Baptist University, Her Story and Her Companion



Jesus Is Victor

For more than thirty years, Corrie traveled across the world. She spoke in churches, prisons, schools, hospitals, and public gatherings. Her message was not that human courage could defeat every darkness.

Her message was that Jesus Christ is Victor. She had seen human evil closely, yet she refused to make evil the center of her story.

Again and again she pointed beyond herself to the faithful God Who had sustained her, received Betsie and Casper, and taught her to forgive.

The Light Still Shines

Corrie ten Boom died on April 15, 1983—her ninety-first birthday. The clocks in Haarlem kept moving, but her witness did not end.

Her life still reminds us that ordinary faithfulness prepares us for unknown trials; that Scripture remains light in the deepest darkness; and that forgiveness is possible through the power of Christ.

Darkness may enter the story, but it does not write the ending.



Jesus is Victor.
The light shines in the darkness.

Go Deeper with Corrie

This little book offers a glimpse of Corrie's life. I encourage you to get these books and spend more time with her story. There is much more encouragement here for trusting Jesus in your own life.

The Hiding Place

By Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill

Read the fuller story of her family's rescue work, imprisonment, and faith amid suffering.

Tramp for the Lord

By Corrie ten Boom with Jamie Buckingham

Continue beyond the war into her travels and ministry, with lessons in obedience, forgiveness, and dependence on the Lord.

Click either book title for book details and ways to find a copy.