

## “WHY DID YOU NOT COME SOONER?”

DEACONESS NICOLE ESTRELLA

**W**ar images from Palestine and Israel continue to make headlines. The effects of the Ukraine and Russia dispute are still present. The effect of the pandemic, though in our rearview mirrors, is forever etched in our memory. We will have known grief, disappointment, sorrow, heartbreak, and failure as we continue to walk as pilgrims in this broken world.

In the hour of our darkest time, a light would cut through this forsaken darkness and fill our hearts with hope. Such is the joy of the Lord. We may be on our knees, but we also know that even in those moments, the Lord is right there with us. Oh, the joy and comfort the presence of the Lord brings into our lives. Can you imagine a life without God? But this is the desolate reality of those who do not know the Lord.

The hope that resides in us is the hope the disbelieving world needs. Within our own spheres of influence, there must be at least one who has yet to experience the liberating freedom found in Jesus. John 13:35 says, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” The convicting truth is that the love we have for others reveals the love we have for the Lord.

At the age of 21, Hudson Taylor sailed to China from England with a burden for the Chinese people. He founded the China Inland Mission, now called OMF International. One day, he comes across a middle-aged man who is a reformed Buddhist in China. The man searched for truth by studying Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism; only to find rest for his soul when he heard the Gospel of Jesus. After his conversion,

he asked Taylor how long the Gospel had been known in England. When he was told that it had been known for hundreds of years, the man was shocked. “What! For hundreds of years, you have had these glad tidings, and only now have you come to preach them to us? My father sought after the truth for more than 20 years and died without finding it. Oh, why did you not come sooner?”

Sorrows will persist, trials will multiply, and hardships will continue, but the hope of Jesus reassures us that all these sufferings will see an end. But as we await such a time, there is a great multitude of weary, broken souls that we encounter daily. Let us point them to Jesus! ✱