

How Much is a Soul Worth? By Judy Heath

Judy Heath, TCM missionary to Malaysia, writes about a journey she and her husband Tim took from Malaysia to Nepal to find a former security guard at their apartment complex whom they had befriended. The journey required blind faith, with no guarantees of success or safety. But their love for God drove them to seek out this man so they could make sure he had a chance to clearly hear the gospel. This account evokes the question, how much does a soul matter and, as ambassadors for Christ, what are we willing to sacrifice to communicate to others the life-saving message, Jesus saves.

Tim and I developed a relationship with a couple of security guards at our apartment complex last year. Most guards are hired from Nepal. They work here two years and send money back to their families. One guard in particular, Surya, wanted to learn how to pronounce English better so after work we would invite him to our apartment. Tim used the gospel of John to help him read and pronounce English. Then he would explain what the words meant. Surya seemed interested but as a Hindu he didn't want to pursue it any further...just practice his English.

Surya became a dear friend. He met Mom Eunice during her visit and always gave her hugs. He also helped Tim get down the elevator and to the car during his attack of vertigo. We had him up several times to use our Skype so he could talk to his son in Kathmandu, at the university. And one time his family arranged to have his wife get to someone's home that had a computer so they could talk on Skype together. He had not seen her for four years because he didn't go home after the normal two years. He was overjoyed to see her and talk to her. It was such a joy to bless him with our Skype!

The other guard, Aniel, came up to our apartment when I invited all three guards for dinner. Tim shared the gospel and Aniel said that he was Hindu but that his brother was a Christian. His brother is Bishnu, the director (and father) of an orphanage. That same evening, while Aniel was there, we called Bishnu on Skype in Nepal. After talking to him we really sensed he was a believer. He was thrilled that his brother had contact with Christians in Malaysia. He also invited us to visit him in Nepal. He and Tim began emailing back and forth about the orphanage and their needs. He asked if we could help with a donation for batteries, but Tim didn't feel like giving money until he actually saw the orphanage. At that time, we had no plans of visiting.

After visiting Kuantan, Malaysia for a few days we returned home to discover Surya was gone. All our guard friends were gone because our apartment complex had changed administrators, which we weren't aware of, and they had hired a different guard company with different guards. We discovered later that Surya had left before that happened because he got news that his younger son had been killed in a motorcycle accident and several of the residents here had given him money to get back home. He was well liked by everyone. We were so sad and concerned and tried to find him and contact him somehow. Tim called the one phone number we had but it wouldn't go through.

Finally, Tim found another number that had been entered into our Skype account and called it and it was Surya! We started praying about whether to go to Nepal to visit the orphanage and also locate Surya and visit him...to comfort him and share the gospel again. The more we prayed, the more we felt God tugging at our hearts.

After Tim received approval from Ben Anderson to visit Nepal he contacted Bishnu about visiting the orphanage. Bishnu said that there were several pastors who would enjoy a little conference and Tim could share with them. Bishnu is also a pastor whose church meets at the orphanage. So Tim said he would like to teach about the Rapture and about dispensations. Bishnu said it sounded great and that we would also need to pay for the pastors to eat for the two days, which we were happy to do since they are so poor. So, we planned our trip to Nepal and let Surya know and he was elated!! Surya and Bishnu did not know each other and lived several hours apart but we gave them each the others' phone number and they made arrangements for us during our stay.

When we landed in Kathmandu, Bishnu, Surya, and Surya's older son, Jay (who is attending college in Kathmandu), all met us at the airport. Surya waved to us through the crowd and yelled, "Hi Boss. Hi Boss!" It took about 4 hours through a winding mountain pass to the orphanage in Bharatpur. It was dark when we arrived but all the children were still up and so happy to meet us.

Aniel was also there at his brother's because he had gone back to Nepal when the guards were let go. Aniel and Surya did not know each other in Nepal. Tim had shared with both Surya and Aniel that night the reason we came and that we didn't want to lose contact with them. He said he wanted them to know God loves them and he explained the gospel again.

We spent the next day with the 32 orphans, along with Surya, so we could get to know the children and try to learn some of their names. The following day began the two-day conference with 45 pastors & wives and visitors and some of the older orphans attending. All the food was prepared on an open fire with a clay oven/stove, and a propane burner.

Surya and Aniel sat through all the meetings without knowing anything about the Bible. But Tim had started his teaching time by going over salvation first, since he didn't know who were truly Christians and also for Surya and Aniel's benefit. Tim's translator was the director of Voice of the Martyrs of Nepal. He reviewed salvation several times over the two days. During breaks, different pastors were also talking to Surya knowing he was not a believer. At the end of the conference and after all the pastors had gone, we noticed a difference in Surya's countenance. Tim told Surya that he wasn't going to push or pressure him about making a decision. He wanted to let all the information sink in and allow the Holy Spirit to work in his heart.

Three days later we left by bus for Surya's home after visiting some of the local pastors. The grace message was well received and the pastors had a lot of questions. One in particular, who is a teacher at a small Bible school, seemed to really understand what Tim was teaching and wants to learn more.

Surya had contacted a local pastor near his village to come meet us when we arrived. When the young pastor came we visited awhile and then Surya said to him, "I accepted Jesus." We all looked at him in amazement! So he asked, "Do you believe me?" The pastor said, "Yes, I believe you." But Surya seemed to think the pastor doubted him. I asked, "Surya, when did you make your decision?" He said, "During the meetings while Tim was teaching." We were overjoyed! He confessed his decision without us prompting or pushing him. He did say it was going to be difficult because his whole family and village are Hindu.

The pastor asked Tim to speak in his church on Saturday. They meet on Saturdays instead of Sundays because school is in session Sunday-Friday. Surya said he wanted to go to church with us. Before we left Saturday morning, he came into the room we were staying at his very humble home, and held a straight-edge razor in his hand. He wanted to denounce his Hinduism in front of us. He took his one long lock of hair and cut it off. We all had tears in our eyes...it was a huge step for him. He was proving to us and God that he was turning to the one true God from idols and from his past! He went to church with us and sang and clapped. Whenever we ate a meal, he always made sure we stopped and had Tim pray to thank God for the food and said that he wanted to try to pray before we left Nepal...and he did! We witnessed his heart for God and a desire to know more about Him!

The day before we left, Surya's wife Gita and several of the ladies in the village had dressed me up in one of Gita's sari's so they could take pictures of me. Most of the village came to see what was going on. After all the pictures, Tim said he would like Surya to translate for him so he could tell the village why we came there and proceeded to share the gospel. What an opportunity!

Afterward, some of the people told Surya that this Jesus seemed to be a good man and our God must be good because He brought us all the way there to meet all of them! Lots of seeds were planted. We were also able to share the gospel with Surya's son, Jay, and his roommates when we returned to Kathmandu to fly back home.

Gita doesn't speak English although she understands some. We are praying for Surya and Gita as he desires to share with her what his decision has meant to him. He is well liked in his village and could have a huge impact. Please pray for him. One thing he said that meant a lot to him was when Tim said, at the conference, that when we become believers in Christ we are all one in the Body of Christ and there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Americans and Nepali are one in the Body of Christ. That made a big impression on Surya and he began calling Tim "brother" instead of "boss" like he used to.

Surya escorted us back to Kathmandu on an overnight bus ride where we visited with his son for a couple days. He stood in the airport until he couldn't see us any longer; and then he began the long bus ride back home to his village.

Neither Surya nor the pastor near his village own a computer, but Tim will be in contact with them by mail and phone. The trip was hard physically but so rewarding!