

# Along the Way

By Charlene Ramstead

*Adapted from the VOM Radio recording, "Imprisoned in Sudan: It's a Privilege to Be Persecuted." Certain dialogue has been created for a younger audience.*

Quietly, from within their secret meeting place, a voice whispered: "Do you hear something?"

In an instant, chaos erupted as uniformed men burst through the locked door of the church gathering. Terrified and trembling, the believers watched in shock as officers suddenly grabbed Pastor Hassan. The church leader's thoughts raced as he struggled against their grip. "What's happening?" he wondered.

"Come with us!" the men shouted. Without warning, they forced the pastor's wrists into handcuffs, whisking him away from his church and family.

Months earlier, young Pastor Hassan Taour felt an urgent need to prepare his small church in Sudan for persecution. Now he understood why. The persecution had come – threatening not only their faith, but their very lives.

In a moment of clarity, Pastor Hassan realized that God had been preparing him for the trials ahead. "Lord, give me strength for what I will face," he prayed. What Pastor Hassan did not yet know was that the Lord had a special mission waiting for him.

In prison, days turned into weeks with no news from the outside world. Yet, even behind the cold prison walls, Pastor Hassan discovered opportunities to serve. He began sharing about Jesus with frightened inmates and even prison guards.

At night, in the darkness of his crowded cell, tears of joy fell as he reflected on God's goodness in sending him there. Though separated from his family and church, Pastor Hassan felt a deep sense of purpose in sharing the Gospel with the hurting and lonely. In that moment, he resolved to return after his release and continue bringing the hope of Jesus to inmates – who longed for a nourishment only Christ can provide.

Why would anyone do what Pastor Hassan did? Pastors like Hassan resemble shepherds.

Jesus called Himself the “Good Shepherd,” the One who laid down His life for the sheep. In the same way, pastors follow Christ’s example, serving others with humility, love and sacrifice. Serving is a daily way of laying down one’s life. And through these selfless actions, God’s love – which fuels a pastor’s heart in all they are called to do – is made visible to others.

A good shepherd protects and provides for the flock, even at great personal cost. Pastor Hassan did just that. In a place where hope seemed absent, the Lord used him in surprising ways – reaching the lost behind cold prison walls and preparing him for even greater ministry.

Do you think the Lord could be preparing your heart to serve others one day – perhaps even as a pastor?

## Reading Between the Lines

### Comprehension Questions

#### 1. Remembering Details

Who was taken away by the uniformed men?

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Where was Pastor Hassan taken?

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What did Pastor Hassan do while he was in prison?

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#### 2. Understanding the Story

Why did Pastor Hassan believe God was preparing him?

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How did Pastor Hassan help others while he was in prison?

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### Vocabulary Matching

Match each word to its meaning.

#### 1. Whispered

a) A spiritual leader who teaches and guides a church

#### 2. Pastor

b) People who watch something happen

#### 3. Detained

c) Spoke very quietly

#### 4. Persecution

d) The act of treating someone badly because of their beliefs

#### 5. Bystanders

e) Held or kept by force