What is happening to me? “Who are these men?” “Where am I going?” “What should I do?” These questions flashed through Eunice Diment’s mind as the motorized outrigger canoe pulled quickly away. Only minutes before she had been one of a laughing, chattering boatload of people moving across the channel from Panigayan Island to the city of Isabela on the larger island of Basilan in the southern Philippines.

When she heard cries of alarm from the rear of their boat, Eunice thought someone had run into them. But when she caught sight of the man standing in the bow of the other boat aiming a pistol at them, she realized that they were either going to be robbed or killed, or both. When she heard the word puti, meaning “white,” she knew she was the one they wanted. They planned to kidnap her!

“Do I have to go with them?” she asked.

“Yes, you must go,” they advised. She stepped obediently into the other boat. They pulled quickly away.

“What will happen me?” she wondered. Surely when the men discovered that she was only a British missionary-translator working among the Bangingi Samal, they would realize she wasn’t a rich “American.” And if there would be no ransom involved, they would let her go.

After an hour and a half, they arrived at what appeared to be their destination. When the cold, steely eyes of the “commanders” appraised their captives, Eunice’s hopes of immediate release began to fade.

That night Eunice felt desolate. Sitting in the darkness, she realized in a new way that she must place her complete trust in the Lord and not in any man. “Psalm 23 came to me,” she recalls. “That was a great comfort. I also remembered Daniel 3:17: ‘Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us ... and he will deliver us.’ I held onto those that day and night.”

For the next several weeks, she lived in this windowless, nipa-walled room. As Eunice read and memorized Scripture and kept a daily journal, the Lord began to speak to her through the Psalms, and like the Psalmist, she asked him, “How long?” He reminded her that her times were in his hands (Ps. 31:15). He asked her to praise him, even in the midst of fear and uncertainty (Ps. 57:7-9), and when she obeyed in this, she felt great strength and peace. Another verse which came to mean a great deal to her was Psalm 79:11: “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.”

On March 20, the Lord gave Eunice the verse found in Psalm 119:126: “It is the time for thee, Lord, to work.” She felt assured that the time had actually come. “This is the day!” she said to herself.

Eunice finally saw guns and soldiers approaching. Thankful and overjoyed, she was hauled aboard one of the military speedboats. The verse that had meant so much to her during her captivity flashed into her mind, “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.” Truly, it was the “greatness of his power” that had appointed her to live.
The Philippines is composed of more than 7,100 islands and is surrounded by the South China Sea, Philippine Sea, Sulu Sea and Celebes Sea. The islands are home to beautiful and diverse landscapes, including two of the wonders of the world: the Banawe Rice Terraces and the Tubbattaha Reef.

Traces of Spanish and Chinese influences are evident in Filipino languages, and English is widely used as a second language by many Filipinos. English is also taught in schools across the country — a leader in education with a high literacy rate.

Filipinos value hospitality, loyalty, camaraderie and service. Filipino culture is diverse because of the influence of Malaysian, Chinese and American cultures and values, and Filipinos are able to easily assimilate themselves into jobs around the world. Today the Philippines plays an active role in Bible translation by sending missionaries and partnering with neighboring countries to bring God’s Word to people who are still waiting.

You can make a difference in countries like the Philippines by joining our prayer team. Sign up at wycliffe.org/prayer to receive weekly prayer emails on different countries, people groups and more that help you pray for what God is doing around the world.

Ways to Pray for the World

» Praise God for the work that’s already been done in the Philippines and the impact it’s made on communities.

» Pray that God would use Filipino individuals and organizations to further the work of Bible translation, both in their country and around the world.

» Ask God to continue to capture Filipino hearts for his glory.