

Mindful Girl, Mighty General, Merciful God

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When I visited local churches in Nepal during my time in the mission field, I often asked people how they became Christians. Over and over, I heard the same pattern in their testimonies.

A woman's mother was sick. The family went to the doctor—no change. They went to the Hindu temple—no change. They tried traditional healers—still no change. Then someone said, “Why not go to church? Just try it.” They did. They prayed. They worshiped. And something unexpected happened. The mother was healed. And the family believed.

I'm not suggesting we abandon hospitals or rely only on prayer. But what these stories show is that when human efforts have run dry, people become radically open to grace. In those places, God often works in surprising ways.

That openness, that desperation, and that mercy—those are exactly what we find in our Scripture reading today. In 2 Kings 5, a great general with leprosy is healed not through power or prestige but through humility, obedience, and the quiet faith of a forgotten girl.

This story is not just about Naaman's healing. It's about how God moves through the margins, and how we are called to be part of that movement—not as heroes, but as faithful sowers of grace.

The first person we meet in the story is not the general, the king, or the prophet. It's a young girl. She's unnamed. She's been taken from her home in Israel—likely during a violent raid—and now she serves as a slave in the household of the very man who led the army.

Yet she notices Naaman's affliction. And she speaks: “*If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his skin disease*” (v. 3). Her words are brief. But they are bold.

She could have chosen silence. She had every reason to remain resentful or fearful. But instead, she opens her mouth in compassion and faith. She becomes the first sower in this healing story.

She is what I would call a Mindful Girl—someone attentive to both suffering and possibility. She doesn't perform a miracle. She doesn't quote Scripture. She simply points to the source of healing.

That's how God often begins something great—through a word, a whisper, a testimony. Sometimes it's not the sermon that changes someone's life; it's a casual conversation in the hallway. Sometimes it's not the prophet's thunder but a child's sentence that cracks open the door to salvation.

This young girl is a Missional Gardener. She plants. She hopes. She trusts.

Can we be that kind of people? Not necessarily powerful or perfect—but attentive enough to notice suffering and courageous enough to speak of hope?

Then the scene shifts. Naaman enters. He is the general of Aram's army—a decorated hero, a national celebrity. He has everything: authority, access to the king, wealth, and victory. But none of it can save him from the slow decay of leprosy.

Leprosy, in biblical times, wasn't just a skin disease. It was a sentence of isolation. You couldn't touch people. You couldn't worship. Eventually, you couldn't even function. It stripped away more than skin—it took your humanity.

Naaman hears the girl's words. He's desperate enough to listen. So he goes to Israel, bringing silver, gold, and extravagant gifts. In his mind, healing is something to be purchased, earned, negotiated.

But Elisha doesn't even come out to greet him. He sends a messenger: "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored."

Naaman is furious. "What kind of prophet doesn't come to meet me himself? Why this dirty Jordan River? Aren't the rivers in Syria far better? At least those are on my turf."

You see, he expected healing on his own terms. How often do we do the same? We want God's help, but without surrender. We want restoration, but with dignity intact. We want God to act, but not in ways that require humility.

Fortunately, one of Naaman's own servants speaks reason to him: "If he had asked you to do something heroic, wouldn't you have done it? Then why not something simple?" So Naaman finally obeys. He steps into the river. Once. Twice. Three times. Seven. And when he rises, his skin is like that of a young boy.

But more than skin has been healed. Naaman has undergone a spiritual transformation—from entitlement to trust, from pride to surrender. The mighty general has met the merciful God.

God could have healed Naaman in his own country. God could have used a dramatic sign or a spectacular miracle. But instead, healing came through a young girl's memory, a servant's encouragement, and a prophet's simple instruction.

This is how our God works. Not through the thunder of empires, but through quiet mercy. Not always in sanitized spaces, but in the muddy waters of the Jordan.

And isn't that grace? Unpredictable. Humbling. Free.

You may think your words are too small to matter, your faith too weak to share, your efforts too humble to bear fruit. But the story of Naaman says otherwise. God's mercy flows through the faithful actions of ordinary people.

This brings us to Paul's message in Galatians 6:7–10, where he speaks to a church struggling to stay faithful amid difficulty. "*Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow.*" (v. 7)

That's not a threat—it's a principle of grace. Just as a gardener doesn't harvest apples from tomato seeds, our spiritual lives will reflect what we've sown. If we sow bitterness, we'll reap isolation. If we sow selfishness, we'll reap emptiness. But if we sow trust, compassion, and faithfulness—even in small acts—we will reap a harvest in due season.

Paul continues: "*Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.*" (v. 9) That's the heart of the message today. Don't grow weary. Even when you feel invisible. Even when your kindness goes unnoticed. Even when prayers feel unanswered. Keep planting.

The girl planted a word. The servant planted a voice of encouragement. Elisha planted obedience. And they reaped healing, transformation, and testimony. God doesn't overlook what you sow in faith.

So what does it mean to be a Missional Gardener?

It means you see your neighborhood, your workplace, your church—not just as places to exist, but as gardens where the Spirit invites you to plant seeds of grace.

- Like the girl, you speak even when you feel powerless.
- Like the servant, you encourage when others are angry or skeptical.
- Like Elisha, you stay faithful to your message even if it's not glamorous.
- Like Naaman, you humble yourself to receive what you cannot control.

To be a Missional Gardener is to sow healing, truth, hope, and mercy—not because you control the harvest, but because you trust the One who does.

You don't have to be loud to be prophetic. You don't have to be brilliant to be faithful. You don't have to be successful to be fruitful. You just have to sow.

And yes, gardening takes time. There will be weeds. There will be dry seasons. There will be discouragement. But the call is this: "Let us not grow weary... for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up."

Maybe you're here today feeling like your faith has grown tired. Maybe you feel like the leprosy of doubt or pain is creeping in. Maybe you've tried everything else, and you're wondering if there's hope.

Hear this good news:

There is a mindful girl. There is a mighty general.

There is a merciful God. And that merciful God still heals. Still speaks. Still receives those who humble themselves.

God still whispers through the Spirit:

Don't give up. Keep sowing. The harvest will come.

So go now—Be mindful. Be humble. Be merciful.

And above all, be Missional Gardeners, sowing seeds of hope wherever God plants you. Amen.