

MisSion CriTikal

#18 – Prison Kids

It was hypnotic, in a good way. Laying on the ground, face up and watching the leaves wave at the cotton candy clouds. Daenum spent many precious moments watching the afternoon sun dance through the leaves like the twinkling stars of daytime. The teen thought about the many people in God's creation that can't enjoy these relaxing moments that seem to wash away fear, care, or stress. And it wasn't just that.

His gaze drifted to other trees with different shapes and leaves that proclaim their difference. Each tree, each leaf doing exactly what God designed them to do.

As he looked at God's design near ground level, he saw all the insects, small and large, busy as bees, doing what they do best. It was one of those 'thank-you Jesus' moments when you realize the grandeur of Heaven's creation, its coordination, and His unending control.

Now it's poetic and somewhat true to say that mankind is the pinnacle; the center; God's spotlight in all this creation, until you cast your eyes on the prison kids. The village children don't know about the prisons that have bars and rooms, often without windows. They don't know about the prisons that many Bible characters had to endure, mainly because they loved Jesus and made it known.

They didn't know about God-fearing people locked in a body that no longer allowed communication, hugs, or even able to do basic things without help. But they did know they were in prison as surely as the sun rises every morning (yes, as God designed.)

The children of the village at the bottom of the hill below the tent mission, knew they were in a prison more harsh than bars. Their prison from which they'd probably never be paroled was called poverty. Their prison shacks they called home often housed critters not spoke of in the finer homes of big cities. Their sheet-metal shacks didn't include any churches, schools, or fancy grocery stores with shelves packed with good food for growing bodies.

Some big city folks wouldn't even be able to comprehend a home without insulation, indoor plumbing, electricity, and even without running water. Dae wanted to break free. He wanted to break into some ways he and his fellow teens could reach through

the walls of prejudice and plant seeds of God's good gifts deep in the hearts of the children – those prison kids.

Last Thursday was definitely one of those 'thank-you Jesus' days. Dae took his relaxing moments watching the never-in-a-hurry clouds when he spotted them. It was a real shocker – white leaves!

The teen rubbed his eyes twice to make sure he was seeing what he thought he was seeing. Sure enough – white leaves.

He jumped to his feet and took a close look at one of those spectacular white leaves. Well no doubt about it, it was a ragged piece of paper – kind of grimy on one side, but the other side, Dae would never forget in all his born days. The clean side of this particular white leaf showed the word, ME.

Inspecting another white leaf showed the word THIS. Each word obviously written by a small person. Scanning several nearby trees showed similar white leaves waving in the breeze, at the cotton candy clouds... and at Daenum.

The white leaf words declared over and over, JESUS LOVES ME THIS I KNOW FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO.

Dae remembered this was one of the Sunday afternoon Story Spot lessons that Lyla taught the eager children. Those very same children Dae's thoughts had just been locking in that poverty prison.

What does it say about the good news of God's unspeakable goodness? That goodness that blossoms God's beauty in every prison; from every person that begins by looking up and giving God the glory and praise He's due. And all amid those daylight dancing stars through leaves of every description – even white ones, that still carry a touch of the world's grime.

The Bible tells of a real person in the prison of a fish's belly. Yet we're still reading about him today. We learn about a small choir of fellows in prison, singing of God's goodness, at midnight. So amazed were others nearby, they trusted God's love and forgiveness and praised Him, from then on.

Are you in prison; maybe of the world's gimmies, and 'I wants'? Where can you discover and post your white leaves?