

Carrying God's Presence Begins With This Small Choice

One morning when my husband and I were on our way to work, the Lord gave me a simple command. My husband was driving, and I was holding a gift from him in my lap—a pot of my favorite flowers, mums that look like daisies.

I was admiring them and picturing how they would look in my classroom. I knew my students would be blessed by this lovely expression of spring. I thought, *Oh God, these are so beautiful!*

The Lord responded to my expression of delight in a still, small voice that said, “Give those flowers to Merry.” Merry was the teacher whose classroom was next to mine.

By all appearances, Merry was the model Christian school teacher. She was stoic, disciplined and strict, with the highest academic standards. She rarely smiled and didn't give an inch.

Unfortunately, the students did not appreciate her selfless efforts, and her contract had not been renewed for the following year. Nevertheless, Merry was determined to work out the terms of her contract to the best of her ability. It was an agonizing time for her as she faced the students that were responsible for her dismissal day after day.

I empathized with Merry, but I was not particularly receptive to the Lord's directive. “What?” I replied. “But Lord, these are my flowers. Art gave them to me. They are special.”

I waited. Silence. The Lord did not reply. Finally, I said to my husband, “Art, I think the Lord wants me to give these flowers to Merry.”

“Well, you better do what He says.”

I was hoping he would say, “That’s not God.”

We continued our journey in silence while I tried to bargain with the Lord. “OK, Lord,” I said. “I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll stop by Merry’s room to see how she’s doing.”

When I arrived at Merry’s door, she was already in her classroom, arranging some flowers in a vase. I thought maybe I was off the hook. “Look, Lord, she already has flowers!” No response from Him.

I greeted her. “Hi, Merry. How are you doing?” She answered, “I’m OK.” She did not smile, but continued purposefully arranging the flowers. “How pretty,” I commented. “Who gave you the flowers?”

“Oh, these aren’t for me,” she explained. “One of my parents has been helping me in the library all year, so I stopped by Albertson’s this morning and picked these up for her. It’s just a little thank-you.”

My heart leaped within me. Suddenly I understood. Instead of thinking about herself and her circumstances, she was thinking of blessing someone else—and the Lord wanted to bless her in return. He wanted her to know how pleased He was with her.

Pointing to the pot I carried, Merry asked, “What are those flowers? They’re beautiful.”

Instantly, I handed them to her and said, “These are for you. They’re from the Lord.” It was as though the floodgates of heaven opened. “He wants you to know how much He loves you and how pleased He is with your heart. He has not forgotten you. He is with you. He will see you through this.”

At that, my stoic colleague broke. She began to sob, releasing the pain she had kept hidden in her heart. A sense of peace and joy came over her, just as it had on me. She had never

allowed herself to show or receive affection before, but that morning, she allowed God to embrace her through my arms.

When students began to enter the room, I left. But on the way to my own classroom, I realized what the Holy Spirit had just taught me through the experience: Nothing is hidden from our God. He sees it all. He knows those who need His touch—and those He can use to carry His presence. He looks for willing vessels to be His hands, feet and mouthpieces on earth.

I thank Him that He made me willing that day. And I challenge you: Will you be a carrier of His presence to this generation? Will you choose to become God-conscious rather than self-absorbed so He can show you what He sees and help you to love with His love? Will you acknowledge that everything you have is His and surrender it for His sake?

God just may have another Merry He wants to touch through you.

Prayer Power for the Week of March 26, 2017

This week, ask the Lord to direct you to where He can use you to be His hands, feet or mouthpiece and carry His presence. Ask Him to help you stay sensitive to His still small voice and leading. Surrender everything to Him so that it's at His disposal and ready to be released as a blessing at any time. Continue to pray for the persecuted church, those in leadership over us and for revival to ignite in our nation and spread around the world. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2. {eo}