

What have you felt has been the main thing or main things that God has revealed to you during your time in Korea?

So how do I even begin to describe the ways that God broke my heart for the things that break His heart? Do I talk about Eun-suh, a precious 1st grader who experienced violence from the time she was in her mother's womb, who witnessed only physical abuse and fighting between her parents from the moment she entered this world, and who now suffers from anxiety, depression, and constipation/bowel movement problems because of the constant stress she puts herself through? Or how about Han-seul, the mang-neh at the orphanage, and too young to go to school, who, when his yoo-chee-won friends leave for school, says "sheem sheem heh" and starts crying bc he is so lonely and there is no one to be with him or take care of him with the attention that most kids his age need? Or what about Sae-mi, a 7th grader who is one of the 2 true orphans at Namsanwon, who, when her friends get to go home with family members on holidays and other special occasions, has to stay with the dorm mother and says "I wanna kill all those kids with family"? Every one of the children has a story of their own, and it was just so heartbreaking to hear them, and humbling that God would give me a better glimpse of how much it breaks His heart to see His children hurting so.

I'd like to share about one girl in particular. Her name is Ah-reum, and she was one of the jr high girls with whom I was living. Currently a 7th grader, she is struggling with depression and self-confidence issues. Ah-reum is overweight, and that is where most of her struggles stem from, especially since the Korean culture is all about stick skinny girls; those who are obese are ostracized, and I cannot imagine that it helps to be in jr high school, at the mercy of changing bodies and taunting kids and the struggle to fit in with the right crowd. Even the girls and dorm mothers at the orphanage are so careless with their words – "Ahreum is the biggest eater out of us all!" "Ahreum has not been gaining weight so much these days – good job!" "Ahreum's nickname is dwe-ji" – and Ahreum simply laughs along and brushes it off. But words are powerful, and I know she hurts bc of those comments, maybe not in huge blows, but they have built up and chipped away at her self confidence, little by little. To make matters worse, her own older brother, a current high school student also at the orph, doesn't even acknowledge her as his sister. He refrains from speaking to her and acts ashamed of her when he is around her.

Ah-reum has also struggled with a bad habit of stealing since she was young. She has trouble discerning whether what she is doing is right or wrong, so she just does it without realizing that her actions are deliberately offensive. About a week before my time in Korea was over, I noticed that 6,000 Won (equivalent to \$6) were missing from my wallet. Though we had no idea who it was at first, Ah-reum later confessed to taking the money "without realizing" and spending it on snacks and such.

The funny thing is, even when I initially discovered that the money was missing, I had no inkling of feelings of annoyance, anger, or frustration. I actually didn't even have a desire to find out who had taken the money. But when the dorm mother notified me that it had been Ah-reum who had stolen the money, I was immediately filled with so much more love for her than before. There was just a sense of such deep and understanding love that welled up inside of me, I knew it had to be God's love being poured out into me, so that I could love this girl with that same powerful love. Ah-reum later wrote me a note of apology, saying that she regretted her actions

and causing trouble for me so close to my departure date. This only caused more love to well up in me. The love that God gave me to love this girl is beyond my own heart and my own emotions – I know that for sure. If God allowed even me to love Ah-reum like that, how much more must God love each of His children?

One of the many many things that I walk away with from this trip is a whole new level of having experienced God's love. As I prayed for each of the children, it was my hope and prayer that God's love would be sufficient for them – that there really is nothing in this world that can fill that void in their hearts, the lack of affection and attention and parental love, than the powerful and all-surpassing love of Christ. And then I realized the sin in my own heart – if God's love is enough for these kids, then it should be enough for me too, right? But so often, I find myself living as if God's love is, in fact, not enough for me. I seek to find love and approval in so many different things and people, to find my identity in things of this world, and not wholly in the love of God and the sacrifice of love that Christ displayed on the cross. These kids at Namsanwon – they have so little else in their lives that they can depend on, and I kept praying “if only they would find and know God's love, then that is enough.” Well, if God's love is sufficient for them, it certainly is sufficient for me.

This trip was a really blessed time of growth and renewal for me – one thing in particular that God showed me was the power of His Word. I didn't realize how little I depended on the Word until I actually started to really and truly depend on it. God met me each day in my quiet times with Him, and I felt like I was literally drawing strength from the words of the Bible. There were so many times I felt drained, both physically and mentally, - busyness of schedules, constantly being around the super energetic kids, planning/teaching English classes – during those times, I desperately prayed for joy and love to be abounding in me, and I found that the constant source of those things was the Word of God.

Please share or list some of the joys of your time here.

Seeing the children smile. I absolutely loved seeing their faces light up in smiles and sheer joy over the simplest things. I also saw that under those smiles, there are so much hurts, built up wounds that have yet to be healed. But seeing genuine joy on their faces brought so much joy to my heart. The look of genuine happiness sticks out because many of these children don't have much joy, and there are so many children on whom I never saw an expression of true joyfulness.

Getting to know the older girls. They were a bit slower to open up than the little kids (as expected), but as they gradually started to feel comfortable around us, I appreciated the level of communication and maturity that allowed for more understanding and dialogue between us. With the little kids, it was easy to simply love on them, but it was awesome getting to talk with the jr high school girls on a real level.

Being able to give attention to the kids. It's so apparent that most of these children never get the attention that they need. To be able to simply notice them and focus all my attention on them – and then to see that the attention is so nourishing to their self-confidence – that brought peace and joy to my heart.

Please share or list some of the difficulties of your time here.

- Not being able to provide sufficient attention to every child.
- Balancing between showing love while rebuking in that same Godly love.
- Being patient with certain kids that really test your patience, especially while teaching English classes.
- Waking up at 5:45am everyday!

How do you feel Jerusalem Ministry could better equip or prepare future summer volunteers?

Not sure. I had no experience at all with orphans/orphanages, but I felt fairly comfortable easing into my time here at the beginning. I think Jerusalem Ministry's prayers prior to and during the volunteers' stay was/is so crucial to the success of each volunteer's ministry. So thank you for the prayers.

The only thing I felt underprepared for was teaching the English classes. Because I had no idea what level I would be teaching, it was hard to prepare anything in advance. We kind of had to gauge each student in each class for the first few sessions, and then plan class by class from thereon. But I suppose there's really no other way to go about it, since it's hard to determine levels and such beforehand.

Please share any extra comments, advice, or reflections you have for the ministry.

Thank you, Jerusalem Ministry, for being God's hands and feet in Seoul's orphanages. It was such a blessing to serve with all of you, and to be a part of God's movement in this ministry and this city, even if it was just 3 ½ weeks. I'll definitely be keeping the children and this ministry in prayer, and I trust that God will grant Jerusalem Ministry continued victory in the future, for His glory. Hopefully I'll have a chance to serve in this ministry in a greater capacity sometime in the future...

God bless.