



The Sprout Report

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed..."
Matthew 13:31

The Newsletter of Mustard Seed Ministries

"I believe, help me overcome my unbelief" Mark 9:24

I like to think of myself as someone who has a balanced approach to Faith and Medicine. I've seen many things over the years that would be difficult to explain from a strictly scientific/medical perspective. However, thanks to a young man I've cared for over the past year, I realize how limited my faith can be.

Hermi was brought to our clinic about a year ago. He was carried into the clinic, his young family in tow. He looked positively skeletal, in significant pain with a massively swollen and disfigured left foot. A biopsy taken before his visit was read as a very rare and malignant tumor. An amputation was recommended but Hermi had refused. I explained the importance of this lifesaving treatment and he still refused. On occasion, we've treated patients like this with medication for tuberculosis on the off chance that someone misread the biopsy. This sounded good to him. To me, his clinical presentation was more like something we call Madura foot which is also pretty rare here and can be very challenging to treat. I started the TB treatment with the understanding that he would have a repeat biopsy and culture at the best Infectious disease hospital in the country. This would help us know what he really had and how best to treat it. Unfortunately, he reneged on his promise to go for the recommended biopsy and culture. He continued to worsen in spite of two months of aggressive treatment for TB.

Desperate, I asked a staff member to take a day away from clinic to accompany this patient to the hospital with a note detailing the need for biopsy and culture. Finally, I thought, we'd have our answer. Sadly, in exchange for the effort, I received a CT scan report saying "probable Madura foot" and a kind suggestion from the doctors there to try treating him for TB (nothing about the biopsy and culture I had requested). I was exasperated! Why couldn't they just help in the way I suggested? I threw up my hands and basically said, "OK, we'll continue the TB treatment." I fully expected to see this young man die within weeks. We prayed with him but my frustration made it more perfunctory than faith-filled and heartfelt.

But he didn't die. In fact, he slowly improved. The swelling, drainage and pain went away. A few months later, he was able to walk with crutches. A few months after that, he began to walk without crutches. A month ago he could hop on his left foot. He recently got a job as a caddy at a golf course and now walks for hours and miles on that foot. It is amazing!

It wasn't just his foot that got better. I saw Hermi change. He changed from resigned and hopeless to upbeat and hope-filled. He clearly recognized that it was Christ's work in his life that made the difference for him, he credits God with healing him. And I praise God for His humbling reminder: this isn't about my clinical acumen, this is about a God who delights to heal and make whole for His name's sake. Jehovah Rapha (Exodus 15:26)

Love, Scott and Cindy