

Gladys Aylward

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Part 1



Have you ever had to make an important decision? Do you remember where you were? We are going to be talking about someone who made an important decision while in her kitchen—a decision that would not only change her life, but the lives of many others. Her name was Gladys Aylward (AIL-ward).

Gladys was born in England in 1902. When she was 14, she left school to work as a maid. When Gladys was 18, she believed in Jesus as her Savior.

One day as she read an article about China, she realized millions of Chinese people had never heard the Good News of Jesus. *Someone must do something about this!* she thought.

For over a year, she tried to find someone who would go to China and tell the people there about Jesus. But no one would go. They didn't seem to think it was important. Finally, she decided to ask her brother. If he wouldn't go, she'd stop asking people. She found her brother in the kitchen and asked, "Will you go to China to tell the people there about Jesus? I'll work really hard to pay for your ticket and for you to live there. You can send letters to me and tell me what you need, and I'll get it for you."

Her brother laughed, "Not me! I'm not interested in going to China." He then walked out of the room! But just as he was leaving, he stuck his head back around the door, looked right at Gladys, and said, "If you really believe someone should go, why don't you go yourself?"

Gladys sat in that kitchen for a long time thinking about what her brother said. She thought, *It couldn't be me. I don't have a lot of education, I don't know a lot about church, and I'm still learning about the Bible.* But then she thought, *Why not me? Am I willing to go?* And right there in her kitchen she made a choice. "Dear Lord Jesus," she prayed, "if you will open the way and show me how, I will go myself."

God did open a way. One day, Gladys heard about an older missionary in China, Mrs. Jeannie Lawson, who was praying for a helper. *That helper is me!* Gladys thought. She sent a letter to Mrs. Jeannie, who agreed she should come! But a trip to China cost a lot of money. She began to save every bit of money she could from her job as a maid. For months she worked very hard. Finally, she was able to pay for the trip.

Since going by boat cost so much more than going across land, Gladys took a long train ride across Europe, Russia, and Siberia. She didn't have money to buy food on the long trip so she brought food with her. The trip was filled with dangers. One cold, snowy night after her train refused to take her any farther, she walked alone through the woods with wolves howling around her. While in a Russian village, she was taken prisoner and only escaped with the help of a local woman. But finally, Gladys reached China!

Gladys made it to China, but she didn't know the Chinese language or ways of living. She had a lot to learn and a lot to do! Would she be able to share the Good News of Jesus with the people there? You'll find out more next time!

