

WALK IN LOVE

as Christ loved us and gave himself for us.

Ephesians 5:2



Reflection by Hannah Roberts –

When I first read this passage from Luke, I was reminded of a quote by Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensker. The prominent Hasidic thinker wrote:

I am sure of my share in the World-to-Come. When I stand to plead before the bar of the Heavenly Tribunal, I will be asked, “Did you learn, as is duty bound?” To this I will answer, “No.” Again, I will be asked, “Did you pray, as is duty bound?” Again, my answer will be, “No.” The third question will be, “Did you do good, as is duty bound?” And for the third time, I will answer, “No.” Then judgment will be awarded in my favor, for I will have spoken the truth.

I have always loved this quote, because I can easily imagine myself defensively answering “No, but...” to each question. “I wasn’t *always* willing to listen and to learn, but I was already in the right, wasn’t I? Maybe I didn’t do good *all* the time, but I was polite! I voted for so-and-so! I even recycled, for crying out loud!”

Similarly, when I feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit, often at the most inconvenient moments as She is wont to do, my instinct is to remind Her, like the Pharisee in Jesus’s parable, that I am not a robber, an evildoer, an adulterer, a bigot, an extremist, or a racist. In fact, I smile at cashiers and tell them to have a good day. I’ve never yelled at another person in traffic. When I call my mother, sometimes I don’t even ask her for anything. I read articles (or at least,

parts of articles) by people with whom I disagree. When I see something that makes me angry on Facebook, I keep scrolling, usually. I am a good person.

All of that may be true, but I know that it is not the whole story. It is dishonest of me to respond to the Spirit’s nudges with anything other than humble reflection. Deep down I know that I, like the tax collector, must beat my chest and ask God for mercy, for compassion, and for grace. And though this introspection and repentance is difficult and uncomfortable, I am reassured by the promise of grace, which God offers as freely as conviction.

May we strive to meet conviction with humility, and may the guidance of the Holy Spirit always be accompanied by an outpouring of God’s grace.



Hannah Roberts grew up in Natchitoches, Louisiana and graduated from Louisiana State University in 2011

with a degree in history and religious studies. She recently worked for the Diocese of Virginia in the Office of Mission and Outreach and attended St. Andrew’s in Richmond. This fall, she began law school at American University Washington College of Law. She enjoys reading, running, crocheting, and eating good food with good friends.

Proper 25 | Luke 18:9-14

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Reflection Questions

- When has the Holy Spirit nudged you at an inconvenient moment?
- When have you asked God for mercy, compassion and grace?
- How did God respond?
- Learn more about St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Richmond at:

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