

Lenten Devotional

2021 series

Ash Wednesday Devotion

2.17.2021

By Dr. Susan Lowe

Luke 18:9-14

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt...”

I have read this parable many times, but for whatever reason, the words of the first verse upon *this* reading caused me to stop and ponder and wonder. I confess, I have likely skipped over this part and gotten straight to the story. The thing is, I don't know that I fully identify with either character in the parable and yet, I do recognize myself in that first verse. The part about “trusted in themselves,” anyway. I don't know about the contempt part, but I think we all find it way too easy these days to dismiss others. Many are tired, frustrated, weary of Covid, of financial strain, of broken relationships (or no relationship). It is easy to put others down, to not see another as human, as a child of God or at the very least get caught in the trap of thinking we know better, we are better.

Today is Ash Wednesday, a day we remember our mortality and a time we pause and reflect on our short comings, failures, and sins as well as think about practices we want to engage in during the Lenten season to draw us closer to God. Lent is a season of preparation, a time in which we are intentional about slowing down, quieting our hearts and minds in and through prayer and meditation, and becoming more aware of what it means to follow Jesus in service and sacrifice. As we read today from the parable Jesus taught long ago, those who humble themselves will be exalted and those who exalt themselves will be humbled. How does our pride, our trusting in ourselves, get in the way of our relationship with God (and others)? What do you need to confess to God today, to let go of, that is getting in the way of your being closer to God? What practice might you humbly engage in this Lenten season that will allow you to grow closer in your relationship with God and others?

Loving God, help me to see the ways I have fallen short of who you have created and called me to be. Forgive me of pride, of dismissal of others, of times I have not fully trusted You. Bless this Lenten journey, that I may draw closer to You and grow in my faith.

Amen.