

FEARING

I am often afraid to ask anything because sometimes I know that the answer will be an impossible assignment. When I really dislike someone and I ask God what to do, I'm sure he'll tell me to love that person. And then? I don't want to love him, don't want to put my hate away. What if I talk to God about the fight I just had with my parents? If I discuss that with God, he might be so inconsiderate to say they are right. And then? It's impossible. And what about these things I don't want to do and still do? Sins—sexual sins, lying, bullying. How do I put these things in prayer?

The rich young man puts his question in prayer. Jesus answers and, too bad, the young man can't do it. Does this mean that the kingdom isn't for him? Is that what the story tells? No. There's another side to this story. This story poses a question. Namely, what to do if God asks the impossible. What should the young man have done?

WRESTLING

Well, he should have grabbed Jesus at his shoulders and shaken Him. He should have shouted, "Rabbi, you know I can't do that. Why do you ask? It's impossible. I even don't want to do that. Help! Please help!" That's where he should have put his questions. He shouldn't have considered his own possibilities in fulfilling this new assignment; he should have turned to Jesus. Then he would still have been in touch with God, with the one with unending possibilities.

But this young man wanted to clean up his own mess, as I often do myself. We often think by ourselves whether we can or cannot do what we are asked. If we can't, well, bad luck. I'm considering by myself whether I'm able

to stop bullying, or to admit that my parents were right, or to forgive my ex-girlfriend for cheating, and I conclude: No. I can't and I won't. Well then, no point in asking God. Sad and a bit demoralized, I walk away, my shoulders hanging, trying to hide what's really wrong.

SEEKING

This walking away and hiding is the source of the problem. Hiding has no purpose. God's close and knows you. He's so close. He knows how you wrestle with your own possibilities. Jesus knows why the

heart of the young men is restless. He gives on-the-spot advice and then He waits. Will he or she turn to Me for help? Will he or she surrender? God sees clearly that I have no intention to forgive, no intention to wrestle with sins. He knows I cannot do what He asks me to do.

But why give up as if I'm alone in this world? As if I have to fix everything myself? God is here. He sees my heart and wants to help. He asks me to surrender. That is scary and it even feels humiliating. But it's the only way, if I really want to deal with my own impossibilities. God not only sees right through me, but loves me unendingly. Well, that's amazing. The young man knew that. He called Jesus "Good." Jesus asks, "Are you serious? 'Cause if you really believe I'm good, then you will have to take my next advice too. The advice of giving up, the advice which comes close to forcing you to surrender."

"God, I really want to do it your way. I hate that guy, he's stupid and ignorant. But somehow I think that you like him. Not for what he does, but for who he is. And I want to do the impossible. To do what you ask me. I hate to be nice to him, so please, please help me"

God understands the impossibilities, and does not stop at the border of the possible. "With men things are impossible, with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).



Eva Marie ØSTERLIND

A Time Pocket

Living in the present,
in a time pocket,
now
combining past and future.

Tearing down all kinds
of walls and limits and borders
and so on.

Honesty.

Fighting for the action and case
instead of worldly and personal power.
Neutrality.

In reality,
it is good to work towards one united family
but also to be honest and realise
we are not always one happy family.

Personal testimony makes everything.

Europe must come together.

Time flies.
We will leave tomorrow.
Lost in time, lost in space.
Tearing.

Who am I to judge—still I have an opinion.

Eva ØSTERLIND, a Lutheran, was born in Copenhagen, Denmark on July 18, 1978. She graduated from the University of Copenhagen's Faculty of Theology in January 2007 with a Master's degree in Theology.

Currently she is in a seminar for pastoral training, and afterwards she may apply for a position in the Danish Folk Church. Furthermore, she is the newly elected chairperson for the Danish SCM, 'Ecumenical Youth.'

