

Prayer ... moved by Psalm 145 and Romans

Psalm: The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and Lord's compassion is over all that the Lord has made.

Romans: I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ... I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil... Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Psalm: The Lord is faithful and gracious in all the Lord's deeds.
The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.
The Lord is just in all the Lord's ways, and kind in all the Lord's doings.
The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Merciful One we gather here today because we know the psalmist's words of your steadfast love to be true and we know that the contradictions within our human condition that Paul writes of are also true. We gather to acknowledge both. We gather to celebrate your compassion and confess our contradictions. But more than that we gather with a longing for your compassion to touch and transform, and to calm the warring contradictions within us – that cause so much hurt and brokenness in the world.

We gather to be changed. To be changed. For our thoughts, words and deeds to be congruent to your calling on our lives. So that our living may reflect your image. Your image carved within our innermost being. Hear our confession:

We think we have to be strong and powerful to make a difference in the world – but you tell us that it is the gentle who will inherit the earth.

We think we must be right in all things to be righteous – but you tell us we must be loving in all things to be holy.

We think we must be tough to get the best out of people – but you tell us we must be merciful.

We think and plan and worry about tomorrow all the while you invite us to ponder the lilies of the field.

We scramble for more and more never believing we have quite enough – while you encourage us to give and share trusting there is always enough for the generous at heart.

We are quick to speak – you ask us to be quick to listen.

We judge others – you ask us to deal with the log in our own eye instead of focusing on the splinter in another's eye.

We desire to do to others what they have done to us, yet you instruct us to do to others as we would desire them to do to us.

We want a god who destroys our enemies – yet you come tell us to love our enemies as you so love them.

We want a divine power that will help us to win – and you teach that the last will be first and whoever humbles themselves will be truly great.

Give us an unshakable knowing that your compassion covers all you have made – including each one of us. By your compassion help us to have compassion for ourselves and each other. Amen.

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