

To Be Free & Clean – A Modern Day Parable

Inspired by Mark 1:40-45

An addict came to his supervisor's office and bending down so no one else would hear said, "If you wish, you can help the others see that I am clean."

Ralph had given this young man a chance when no one else would hire him. He had a terrible record of stealing, even from his own family, to support his addiction. No one else in the factory trusted him. They all treated him like a leper. No one wanted to be near him. They wouldn't sit by him during lunch and break time. They didn't speak to him, or even shake his hand.

Moved with pity, Ralph said, "I do will it. I know you are clean. You are a hard worker and a great team member. They are just afraid of becoming like you once were, so they have convinced themselves that they are better than you. The two men walked out to the middle of the assembly room floor and in front of everyone, Ralph stretched out his arms, hugged the young man and said to him, "I am so proud of all you have overcome. You have truly turned your life around, and we can all take a lesson from your courage and commitment to doing the right thing and beginning a new lifestyle.

The whole room was stunned and silent. Ralph warned them all sternly to stop the spread of their negativity and to see that this young man has been made clean. He said to them, "See that you tell no one anything of his past, but go show yourselves as accepting of his brokenness and your own brokenness. Look in the mirror as proof you are more alike than different. We all have some weakness and some struggle. None of us wants to be judged by our past mistakes and difficulties.

The young man went back to work and all the others began to shed new light on the whole matter. They spread the report around the whole factory and his co-workers began to share their vulnerabilities and seek advice from the young man so that it was impossible for him to have a break on his own. Even when he was outside of work and in remote places, people kept coming to him from everywhere.