

Self-responsibility or trust?

Those who explain problems do not solve them. There are some challenges I can not master alone. Precisely these offer a chance.

**"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
John 9,2**

How do you feel when a young person asks you for money on the street? I think, "You are too young and too healthy. It would be bad for you if I gave you something. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps!" Or when someone openly shows an amputated leg, "You only do that to get something. Don't be so brazen with your handicap!" My thoughts apparently move easily to explanations and good advice. Then I don't have to ask why this person really wants something from me and how he really ended up where he is.

A friend is studying business administration with great success. He explained to me why the free market is good for everyone. "Imagine a village in India where an international drink company has established itself. The company uses the drinking water from the whole area. The local people no longer work on their small farms, but rather in a factory. But it is good for everyone. Finally, everyone is free to do something else if he finds better opportunities elsewhere." This ideology of absolute self-responsibility carries dangers with it. "You don't have a job? Then sell yourself better, present yourself! In the free market everyone has the chance to grab the best opportunity." As long as I am successful, the idea has its charm: I fight my way through. I enjoy my productivity. I explain the problems of others and give good advice.

A long time ago, the friends of Job enjoyed themselves analysing possible reasons for his suffering: "You have a problem, deal with it! Don't project your problems onto the world outside—leave God out of it!" They angered Job with their endless talking instead of helping him.

The friends of Jesus also think like this. They see a blind man who is a bother to them. No, they don't even see him, Jesus sees him (John 9, 1). Someone must be guilty in this case. He or his parents (John 9, 2)? But at least, they talk to Jesus about their thoughts. And they are prepared for an answer from him – he has a different perspective on things. They call him "Rabbi", they consider him a teacher whom one can trust in questions of life. How many people do I trust like that? Jesus answers: "Neither he nor his parents had sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." A new thought: there can be problems whose causes are not apparent and through which something good could happen. Perhaps I can even become aware that I have handicaps and limits. Perhaps my vision can become more open for young people who want money from me? Perhaps they provide a chance for something unexpected to happen? As God works....

For which challenges must I take responsibility in my own hands? And with which burdens can I only place myself in another's hands?