

Christmas Eve – December 24, 2025 – St. Mark's, Wellesley

Logan was a well-respected news reporter in the city. He wasn't afraid to get out into the community and see first-hand the news stories he reported on. He had finished the 6:00 o'clock newscast a few hours ago and was on his way home, wondering if it was all worth it. He had reported on a shooting in a large city on the other side of the country. He had watched as images of the war in Ukraine flashed on the screen while reporting on the number of Drone strikes that had flattened buildings across the country. Once again, images of the thousands of homeless people in the middle east captured the attention of the nation. Sprinkled amidst the bad news stories were feel-good stories of a local food bank providing food for hundreds of hungry people in the local city, and a church opening its doors as a homeless shelter. But what really got Logan thinking about whether what he did made any difference was the commercial breaks when advertisers would entice people to buy their products with almost too good to be true claims of happiness, renewed health, and loving relationships, simply by purchasing and using their products. Needless to say, Logan was feeling disillusioned and out of sorts as he walked along the almost deserted street on this cold, wintery day.

As he made his way home, he saw ahead of him a man lying on the sidewalk near an open vent that was offering a bit of warmth on this dreary night. A few pedestrians walked past him as they went about their business, possibly rushing to get to the store for last minute Christmas gifts before they closed. Logan slowed down as he approached the man, not sure what to do. Should he stop and offer help. Should he give him some money. Should he simply walk on by as the other people had done. Logan decided to at least ask the man if he was okay. As Logan got closer, he could see that the man was poorly dressed with a light shirt and grubby jeans with one pant-leg torn off at the knee, exposing his skin. There was a large red, bruise evident on the man's leg despite the poor visibility from the nearby street light. Logan stopped, bent down to get a closer look, when the man suddenly sat up and asked Logan

what he wanted. Logan explained he was wondering if the man needed help or if he should be going to the hospital to have his leg looked at. The man stared at Logan for what seemed like a very long time, and then shrugged his shoulders and said, “No, I’m good. But thanks for asking.”

Logan stood up and was about to continue on his way when, on a sudden impulse, he took off his warm winter coat and handed it to the man. “Maybe this will help,” Logan said, and then strode off into the night, walking quickly because he suddenly realized how cold it was without his coat for warmth, but feeling good about himself for his kind deed.

When he got home, Logan made himself a hot drink and put on a warm sweater to help take the chill out of his bones. Then it hit him! How stupid of him! His wallet was in that coat he had just given to the homeless man. Panic set in and Logan quickly grabbed another warm coat from his closet, put on his warm winter boots, gloves and hat and headed back to where the homeless man had been lying. Logan hoped the man would still be there. He breathed a sigh of relief as he ran along the street and saw a dark lump lying on the sidewalk in the same spot near the open vent. Logan relaxed a bit and slowed his pace, stopping by the man and bending down, just as he had before. But then panic set in again when he saw that the man was not wearing Logan’s coat. Logan glanced around but couldn’t see it anywhere.

The man looked up at Logan and with a friendly smile on his face asked Logan if he would like his coat back. Logan saw the smile and hesitated for a second before reaching down and grabbing the man by the arm. Logan asked him in a voice louder and rougher than he intended what he had done with the coat. The man replied, “I gave it to a friend who needs it more than I do.” Logan groaned and was about to say something when the man held out his hand, “Are you looking for this?” Logan saw the black object and recognized his wallet. “Yes,” Logan said, quickly taking it from the man and opening it. “It’s all

there,” the man said. “I took it out of the coat before giving it to my friend. I was hoping you would come back to collect it.”

Logan didn’t know what to say or quite what to do. So, he did the one thing he would never have thought of doing before when he first stopped, he sat down beside the man and thanked him for looking after his wallet. Logan opened it now and took out a twenty-dollar bill and offered it to the man. “For you,” he said. When the man didn’t take it or say anything, Logan opened his wallet again and pulled out another twenty, “and for your friend,” Logan added.

Again, the man was silent and still. Now, Logan was feeling uncomfortable and just a bit concerned. He didn’t know anything about this man or his friend. Logan was about to stand up when the man reached out and gently put his dirty, calloused hand on Logan’s arm. “I don’t want your money,” he said to Logan, “but I would really appreciate your company for an hour or so, if you can spare it.” Logan began to protest but then the man looked across the street and Logan’s eyes followed the man’s gaze. Directly across the street was a large well-lit building. A few people were making their way down the main sidewalk and up the smaller sidewalk into the building. “Watch with me for a bit,” the man said to Logan. “It would mean a lot to me. It might be good for you, too. It might even change your life.”

Logan glanced at the man to see if he was mocking him or being sarcastic. But Logan sensed nothing but kindness in the man’s words. So, Logan stayed where he was, sitting beside this homeless man on Christmas Eve, trying to keep warm as the moist air from the vent enveloped the two of them. “Here, take my coat,” Logan said, “I have a warm sweater on underneath it.” Logan slipped out of his coat and placed it over the man’s shoulders. For another 15 to 30 minutes, more people walked along the sidewalk and entered the building. Logan saw all sorts of people. Some were with one or two others, some were in groups, most were alone. They were all wearing warm coats and bundled up against the cold. Nobody seemed to notice the two men sitting on

the sidewalk across the street. "Are you watching closely," the man asked Logan. "What do you see?"

"I'm not sure what you mean," Logan said. "I see people entering a building."

"Yes, but did you notice what kind of a building it is," the man asked.

It was then that Logan looked closer. "It's a church," Logan said. "It's a Christmas Eve service."

"Yes, it is," the man said, in a voice that sounded a bit sad and disappointed. "What did you notice about the people as they walked along the sidewalk?"

"Nothing really," Logan said. "Just people hurrying to a service to celebrate the birth of Jesus."

"Did you notice the couple arguing on the way in," asked the man. "Did you see how many people entered alone?"

"Yes, but that's how it is for most people," Logan said. "I see it all the time in my work as a news reporter. People are lonely, People are discouraged. People are sad, People are angry. Not all of them. Some are quite happy and have family and friends, but the majority are not."

"What about you," the man asked. "Are you one of the happy ones with lots of friends and family? Or are you one of the sad ones who is lonely?"

Logan was taken aback by these questions. He was a news-reporter. He was the one usually asking the questions. Logan didn't know what to say, He wasn't about to open himself up to this stranger, a homeless man he had found on the street. There was no way Logan was going to admit to this man that he was feeling out of sorts and wondering about his purpose in life.

The man rescued Logan from answering by raising his arm and pointing at the church. “Those are good people entering that church,” the man said. “They want to help others. They want to do what is right. They want to love and be loved. They will sing Christmas hymns tonight and listen to the Christmas story like they have done many times before. They will probably light candles to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the light he brings into the world.”

The man paused and lowered his arm. Logan glanced at the homeless man and wondered what he might say next. Before he could look away the man turned and looked directly into Logan’s eyes. The man’s eyes locked onto Logan’s and Logan could not look away. It was as though the man was looking into him, deep down into his soul, knowing everything there was to know about him. Logan felt exposed but not ashamed. He didn’t know what to say and didn’t feel the need to say anything. He waited for the man to say more.

“It makes me wonder,” the man continued, taking his eyes off Logan and looking across the street, again, “why these kind, good-hearted people don’t seem to notice you and me sitting here on this side of the street, cold, and at least one of us without a home, while they gather to worship a child who would have been born homeless if it hadn’t been for the kindness of people who offered that small family a stable for at least a temporary home.”

Logan felt something stirring inside him but he couldn’t figure out what it was. “I know you, son,” the homeless man said, looking at Logan. Logan felt once again as though he was being examined closely. Logan wondered why this homeless man calling him, son, made him feel warm inside.

Logan said in a soft voice, “How? I’ve never met you before. I’d remember.”

The man said, “I’ve seen you on TV. I haven’t always lived on the streets. I know who you are and where you have come from. I know that you have

questions about many things. I understand your frustration with the world and feel your pain and anger as more and more seems to be going wrong.

“But why are you out here, now? Do you have somewhere to stay? Who are you?” Logan asked.

The man smiled and replied, “I know who I am. The more important question for you is, do you know who you are? Sure, you’re a news-reporter but what will you do with your position of influence and opportunity? What kind of stories will you tell? What message will you share with the world? What will your actions be? Will you see the homeless person lying on the sidewalk and do something about it or will you walk by, rushing to another news story?

“But I stopped to help you,” Logan said, feeling a bit childish as he said it.

“Yes, you did, and I thank you for it,” the man said. “You’ve sat with me for an hour and shared your time with me, which I will never forget. You’ve brightened my day, not because of the candles being lit in the church across the street but because of the light I see shining within you.”

Logan felt a bit of the cold night surrounding them losing its hold. He no longer felt as out-of-sorts as he had a few hours earlier. Something about him had changed, as the homeless man had said it might. Logan buried his face in his hands, not wanting the man to see the tears forming at the corners of his eyes. For a long minute Logan sat there, and when he raised his head and turned to thank the man for allowing him to share his warm vent on the sidewalk, the man was gone. The coat Logan had given the man lay on the sidewalk.

Logan stood up and looked around but the man was not to be seen. Logan felt a glimmer of hope beginning to grow within him. He made his way across the street, up the sidewalk and into the church, wanting to join his fellow citizens as they lit candles to celebrate the birth of light in a dark world.