

February 20, 2021

Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 25:1-10

Psalm 32

Matthew 9:2-13



Selected Verses:

Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, Lord, are good. – Psalm 25: 6-7

Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one
whose sin the Lord does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long. – Psalm 32: 1-3

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

– Matthew 9: 12-13

Devotional:

A few weeks ago, I had ankle surgery. Without going into much detail, two years ago I twisted my ankle and tore one of the ligaments. This caused my ankle to shift and I walked on the side of the heel bone. With healthy bones regenerating every seven years, after two years, the heel bone had wasted away. The doctor had to add some bone to reshape my heel into its original shape. If I had bucked up and lived through the pain for a few more years, it would have been unrepairable. The surgery would have required fusing the heel to other bones. When this happens, it is difficult to walk on uneven surfaces. Mowing the lawn or taking a hike would be impossible.

In Psalm 32, David uses this image of bones wasting away. It has led some scholars to think he suffered from osteoporosis, a disease characterized by low bone mass and fragility that leads to brittle bones and fracture risk. I think David has realized that when he sinned, and kept silent, he was walking with a limp. Sin had caused him to adjust his lifestyle in a way that caused his bones to ache, his life to deteriorate. While he could live with the guilt and pain, it was not the life God had intended for him.

Sin has that way with us. When we sin, our lives shift and we limp through life. WE do not live the way God has intended us to live. For example, a simple lie leads to another lie and to another. In a little while, we forget what the truth is. We are weighed down with the false narrative and unable to live in right relationship with others, with God and even with ourselves. We have died to the life God has for us.

In Matthew, some friends have brought a paralyzed man—a person with bones that had truly wasted away. The first thing Jesus did, was forgive his sins. With that, those who thought they were righteous, criticized him. Then, Jesus told the man to pick up his mat and walk. God had given him back his life, both physically and spiritually. The man was able to walk in the Lord. Then, Jesus did the same thing with Matthew, the tax collector. The healing wasn't a physical paralysis, but a relational one. As a tax collector, Matthew broken his relationship with family and neighbors. Again those who thought they were righteous criticized Jesus, “why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Now Jesus tells them, “it is the sick that need a doctor.” When we realize we are sick, that we have sinned, and confess our sin to God, God is the doctor healing us. Allowing us to walk in the way of the Lord. Being faithful is acknowledging that we all sin and need to healing power of forgiveness. Then, we are able to “Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!”

Prayer:

Healing Lord, when we are silent, we walk with a limp. Our bones waste away and we do not live as you created us. Holy God, you alone are pure and righteous. We confess our sins to you. Hear our prayer and forgive us for our unrighteousness. Allow us to walk upright and sing praises to you. Instruct us in your ways and show us the life you have called us to live. With the example of your Son, may we share your healing love with others. Remind us that all need to healing touch. May we hear your call and follow you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.