

peace be with you

# weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

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## Paddleboarding Friday

Leaning into the wind  
my shoulders work hard  
while paddling against the  
current at Standing Bear Lake,  
landing at last  
where my honey awaits.

Before the breeze picked  
up its pace I was lying  
lazily on my back  
gazing into the clouds  
amused at the  
memories of basset hounds.

The warmth of the late  
summer day seeps into  
my bones and I feel a bit  
wistful that we will soon be  
crossing the threshold  
and this season will be past.

Out of the blue, my eyes  
are drawn to one blue heron  
as it flies to my left and  
this one as it circles right.  
I forget the burn  
in my muscles and merely smile.

## ***Psalm 51: 1-10***

Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!

Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!

Wash me completely clean of my guilt; purify me from my sin!

Because I know my wrongdoings, my sin is always I've sinned against you - you alone. I've committed evil in your sight.

That's why you are justified when you render your verdict, completely correct when you issue your judgment.

Yes, I was born in guilt, in sin, from the moment my mother conceived me.

And yes, you want truth in the most hidden places; you teach me wisdom in the most secret space.[a]

Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and celebration again; let the bones you crushed rejoice once more.

Hide your face from my sins; wipe away all my guilty deeds!

Create a clean heart for me, God; put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!

## **A New Start**

Lately explanations of “sin” have appeared in my readings in various ways and now here it is in this week’s Psalm. One person describes sin as an absence of love. If I truly loved, would I have acted in this way or that?

Gratefully, sin is not foremost on my mind as it might be if it were pounded into my mind day after day instead of being brought up in a church that focused upon following Jesus’ greatest commandment to love one another as I have loved you.

However, I might wonder, why did I make such a stupid mistake? Through prayer and thought I’m able to understand myself better and judge myself and others less. Things are often not as they first seem to be and are not all about me.

I believe the most important part of our faith is the gift of transformation. When we are honest as possible with ourselves and with our God, and then let go of negative thoughts, we will be ready to do better next time.

After all, if we focus only on the times we don’t act in love, won’t we be more likely to stumble around in the dark and live in fear? And if we blame ourselves for the wounds that cause us to suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress, and addictions, how will we accept the tender healing that will bring us closer to God and to the Love that is in this world?

Instead, by praying and accepting forgiveness, God creates a clean heart for us! Accept the new, faithful spirit deep inside, for with the Spirit of Christ we can live more fully in Love each day. For that I am grateful and filled with peace.

*God’s love and peace be with you,*

*Marta*

Rev. Marta Wheeler