

# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 32

[Worship]

1 Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

6 Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. 7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. 9 Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you. 10 Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD. 11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

### Consider:

[Words]

Lent is a time to ponder and receive the new life that God wants to give. All of these readings are about new creation that is both personal and public. The familiar story of the Prodigal Son concerns the gracious welcome home of a wayward, exploitative son, so that the family can sing and dance and eat in joy (Luke 15:22-24). The son must be willing,

but it all depends on the father's readiness to reach beyond propriety to limitless self-giving.

That story, whereby Jesus justifies keeping company with the "unacceptable," is paralleled in the narrative of Israel's entry into the land of promise. The new land of bounty is a gift from God, not unlike the big party given by the father. Such a gift of new land (new creation!) removes the "disgrace" of being slaves in Egypt (Joshua 5:9). The "disgrace" of enslaved Israel is similar to the disgrace of the enslaved son. In both cases, a generous God transforms life. Psalm 32 is a meditation on the wonder of forgiveness. Without forgiveness there is loss of strength and psychosomatic symptom (32:3-4); after forgiveness, there is gladness and joy (verse 11).



Imagine in Lent that personal disgrace may be transformed! In our national community, the disgrace of slavery, racial, ethnic, and gender brutality, and the violence of war may be transformed into viable life in community. It all turns from God's readiness, the very readiness exhibited in Jesus' life among the socially unwelcome, now welcomed, like the prodigal child, home at last. **Walter Bruggemann**

[Scripture]

## 2 Corinthians 5.16-21

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Also, read **Luke 15. 1-3, 11b-32**

Question:

*Who are you in this story? Why?*