February 20, 2021 Lenten Devotional
Matthew 9:2-13 - "I Have Come to Call"
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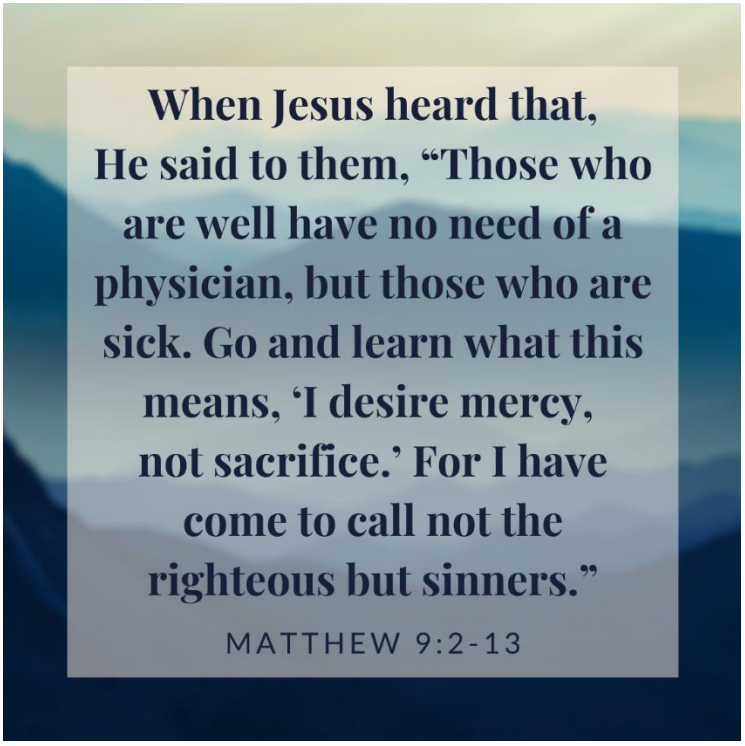

And just then some people were carrying a paralysed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.' Then some of the scribes said to themselves, 'This man is blaspheming.' But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he then said to the paralytic—'Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.' And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?' But when he heard this, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

Lenten Reflection: Matthew 9:2-13

I'd like to bring your attention to the last few lines of this reading:

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

As I read this passage, I wonder:
Who are these people, the paralyzed man and his friends, the people in the crowd, the tax collectors and sinners, the scribes and Pharisees?
What are their stories? And how did they get here?

In the Gospels, we don't hear about people who have it all figured out. Again and again, Jesus tells us, "Come as you are." Bring your exhausted, covid-stressed, overwhelmed, burnt out, vulnerable self. Sure, you're resilient. But you can't do this alone. You don't need to do this along.

Like the crowd, find awe in the unexpected.
Find community among the outsiders; the tax collectors and sinners.
Find resilience in connection. Care for one another.
Ask for help when you need it.
And when you're struggling, let yourself be carried.

And when Jesus calls out to us to "Stand up, take your bed, and go to your home," we can become that source of grace and awe for others.

One day soon I hope we can come together to share meals and form crowds again. Until then, may we find hope in the promise of grace and the invitation to come as we are.