

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Epiphany 2 – January 18, 2026

*“He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.”*

- Psalm 40:2 -

The playground had a big sandbox. One day the sandbox was filled with rainwater. The teachers knew that it would be messy, but allowed the children to play in the sand anyway. The children were clothed in smocks to keep them clean and were encouraged to play nicely. It worked well for a while; some muddy water fell on skin and smocks with the occasional slip of a shovel, but it could easily be washed with soap and water. Eventually the children became wild. The splashing stopped being accidental; some became greedy and vengeful and threw mud on the other children.

The teachers tried to be peacemakers, speaking with firm, kind voices about proper behavior, but it didn't work. They had to get right into the middle of it all to stop it with action rather than words. The sandboxes were closed. The children were cleaned and the extremely dirty ones were given clean clothes.

We are like those children. Our toys are different, and the mud we sling is not made with sand and water. We are selfish and vengeful. We will do anything to get our way, no matter who gets hurt in the process. Unfortunately, spiritual mud is not so easy to clean. We are wallowing in the mud of sin and death, and the consequences can be eternal. We don't always see how our self-centeredness affects others, but our neighbors are harmed by our behavior. The consequence of sin is never limited to us; it affects others to some degree.

The psalmist speaks as a child of God who has realized his own sinfulness. He cries out for the saving grace that will save him from his sin. God is the peacemaker. He is the teacher that speaks to those who will not hear. Like the children who did not see how their play was harming others, the world does not recognize its sin and need of a Savior. But Jesus enters in, nevertheless. Jesus was willing to “get his hands dirty” in the cross to make things right for us. He lifted us out of the mud, and by his own blood, he made us clean. In Christ, we are clothed with something new: His righteousness, without a spot or blemish.