Dear Ones in Christ,

I greet you in the name of the One who is Love. Let us quieten our hearts to hear God’s word for us today.

Today’s Lectionary psalm in Psalm 17:1-7, 15

1 Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit. 2 From you let my vindication come; let your eyes see the right. 3 If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress. 4 As for what others do, by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent. 5 My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped. 6 I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words. 7 Wondrously show your steadfast love, O savior of those who seek  refuge from their adversaries at your right hand... 15 As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

Asking God to hear what the psalmist calls “a just cause” we are shown how one cries out to God. This is about one crying out seeking refuge from adversaries in God. The psalmist looks in the mirror into his own heart focusing on what he has said and where he has gone. This psalm is not about justifying one’s own self-righteousness. This is about someone who is honestly crying out to God for help and examines his own heart first.

The psalmist calls upon God because he has faith God will answer, so he tells God to listen. Then he asks God to wondrously show God’s steadfast love “O savior of those who seek refuge from adversaries at your right hand”.

In verse 15 it’s not about what others have done it’s about what the psalmist is going to do and that is keep looking to God. Seeing God in righteous and letting God be God brings satisfaction.

It’s okay to cry out to God, yet we are to look at our own behavior first. Let us keep our steps fast on God’s path instead of lashing out at others who hurt us. Let us take refuge in God seeking to behold God’s righteousness and right living.

It’s hard, I know. I continually have to come back to looking at my own behavior. I always think about Rep. John Lewis, who taught me so much throughout his life about peaceful protests of injustices towards others and myself.

Let us all cry out to God, look at ourselves, and beg God to wondrously show us steadfast love.

Rev. Janice A. Stamper