

Scripture Reading: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

The voice of sin is loud, but the voice of forgiveness is louder.
—Dwight L. Moody

Last summer, I was walking Hawthorne Street in Salem, Oregon, and happened to pass a car dealership.

Cars of every type were on the lot: SUVs, sports cars, sedans, convertibles and pickups. Often, the price of the car, especially if it was a used car, was on the windshield.

Along the sidewalk was a strip of beautiful green grass. On the grass at various intervals were small signs with big red lettering on them. They were the types of signs you might see on a neighbor's lawn during an election year.

Some of these signs screamed: BAD CREDIT OKAY!!!

Another sign said, FINANCING AVAILABLE!!!

These signs reminded passersby that if their credit was poor, they still had a chance to buy a beautiful car. Their bad credit rating could be taken care of. They invited people, in spite of their bad credit, to come on in, because a great deal was there's for the asking.

This is essentially the message of the Cross. This is the grace of God. "Bad credit okay!"

Jesus said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners" (Mark 2:17).

Today on the First Sunday of Lent, we recall (1) that we have bad credit, and (2) that Jesus has opened an office just for us. When we visit Jesus' credit office, he lays out a plan perfectly suited to our needs.

Jesus offers forgiveness and redemption and eternal life!

What a deal!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for looking past my past! For looking beyond my shortcomings and faults. Thank you for your love and compassion. In your name, I pray. Amen.