Parsley and People

I quickly gathered the parsley, I wanted to preserve my harvest by freezing small packages to be used throughout the winter. As I rinsed and dried the herb, I threw out pieces that were spotted or brown. Why would I want that when I have so many good sprigs? And so the imaginary conversations began in my mind:

"You know, Jo – I can't believe some of the people who are coming to OUR church – really, that gal with the screaming kid – I bet she doesn't even know who the dad is! … Or that man who was just in the paper with a DUI conviction! Why on earth would WE want these people in OUR church?"

"So true, Sally Lou – and how about the smelly guy. I'm sure he sleeps under the Main Street Bridge, good grief, he needs to get a job and quit being such a freeloader! Can't imagine what people must think when he comes into OUR church…. And that woman who barely speaks English and wears that hijab - well, you know what those people are all about… And that woman, who cheated on her husband, how can she even show here face in OUR church?"

And Jesus said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10 ESV) Paul wrote to Timothy: "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost." (1 Timothy 1:15 ESV)
Truth be told (AND THIS IS THE TRUTH) – "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23 ESV) More than once Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their "we are SO good (glad I'm not like that sinner) attitude". HIS church is made up of sinners such as I (yep, I have quite a rap sheet and I am guilty as charged) – but thanks be to God – HE has preserved me through the washing of baptism and His redeeming blood.

Dear Triune God, thank you for redeeming me, a lost and condemned sinner. Forgive me for putting limitations on your love toward other people. By the power of the Holy Spirit, let me proclaim your redeeming love to the lost. In the strong name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

I ONCE WAS LOST, BUT NOW *I'm found*