

Mt 4:1-17, Psalms 32 2, Samuel 12:1-13

*I must confess when Dr. Alica McNair at Hood Theological Institute asked our Doctoral class to meet her at a nearby park with one of our favorite things to play with, I felt foolish. Most of us were in our fifties. Play? Well, what did I pick: bubbles? While blowing bubbles in the park, I began humming a nursely rhythm played by my first Jack in the box. Never knew the tune's real meaning. Here's the nursery rhyme that popped into my head, Listen:*

All around the cobbler's bench	Pop! Goes the weasel.	Pop! Goes the weasel.
The monkey chased the weasel,	I've no time to wait and sigh	Half a pound of tuppenny rice,
The monkey thought 'twas all in fun	No patience to wait 'til by and by	Half a pound of treacle. That's the way the money goes,...
	Kiss me quick, I'm off, goodbye!	

A hugely popular, nonsensical lyrics spreading like wildfire throughout 1680s London slums. The poorest immigrants lived outside the walls of the City of London slaving away in London's textile sweatshops.

Rice and molasses are the regular diets for the poor. Rice cost two pennies per pound. To pay for it, the poor would pawn (pop) father's best suit (whistle [weasel]). When the father got paid, he would redeem the pawn on Saturday so he could go to church on Sunday. Putting on a front-distorting, giving a false impression that everything was OK. Then next week, the father downs a few drinks at Eagle Bar. No money left to buy food; he pawns his suit again. A vicious cycle, nothing changes. The monkey (poverty) still on his back. Pop Goes the Weasel

We all know about distortions: the action of giving a misleading account or impression. Not facing the reality right in front of us. We see it often in media: misrepresentation, twisting, misreporting, misstatement, imbalance, tinkering, doctoring. Many of the Psalms are about David's successes and distortions.

David became King of Judah and unites 12 tribes of Israel( [2 Sam 2:4](#) ).

David commits adultery with Bathsheba who became pregnant( [2 Sam 11:4-11:5](#) ).

David conquers Jerusalem( <a href="#">2 Sam 5</a> ).	David arranges the death of Bathsheba's husband Uriah( <a href="#">2 Sam 11:17</a> ).
David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem <a href="#">2 Sam 5:7</a> ; <a href="#">1 Chr 15:25-16:3</a> ).	David confesses and repents his sin and God forgives him, but Bathsheba's child dies( <a href="#">2 Sam 12:10</a> , <a href="#">13</a> , <a href="#">19</a> ).
God made a covenant with David promises that his throne will last forever( <a href="#">2 Samuel 7:16</a> ; <a href="#">23:5</a> ; <a href="#">1 Chr 17:16-27</a> ; <a href="#">2 Chr 13:5</a> ; <a href="#">Sir 45:25</a> ; <a href="#">47:11</a> ).	David fails to discipline his sons. His son Amnon commits rape and incest; he is murdered by David's son Absalom( <a href="#">2 Sam 13:14-29</a> ).
David defeats the Philistines( <a href="#">2 Sam 8:1</a> ).	David's son Absalom leads a rebellion in an attempt to usurp David's throne. ( <a href="#">2 Sam 16-17</a> ).

David paralyzed by the vicious guilt is caught in a vicious cycle of the distortion in his past.

If I listen to David's voice it says, When I kept silent, when I hid, when I don't talk about it, when I keep it a secret, I felt like I'm dying inside.

Until the prophet, Nathan confronts him in his wilderness. The prophet brings it to the surface. It starts a new journey for David. Somewhere along this wilderness journey, David discovers the freedom of confession. David becomes aware of his hidden brokenness. He acknowledges his shortcomings and changes his direction back to God.

Notice how David finally was able to let go of his guilt and begins healing.

*"I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And You forgave me! All my guilt is gone. — Psalm 32:5*

Jesus comes as the Great Physician. He comes for all who wrestle with distortions. I believe Jesus goes into the wilderness with us to show us how we can overcome our distortions. Those daily temptations we encounter. Our physical need, our doubts, our emotional need for security, our desires for power and achievement separating us from our walk with God. When we wonder and doubt: will God provide, protect, guide us we enter the wilderness. Jesus continues John the Baptist wilderness ministry by starting where John left off repent-change your direction. Head back to God or remain silent?

I imagine most of us can relate to these feelings or thoughts in some way or another. There are things in our lives, we keep silent about. Things we feel ashamed of; family problems, compulsive habits, addictions, to name a few. It's silence, holding it in, rather than letting it out. To protect ourselves, it seems like the best, safest way to handle them. However, this kind of silence leads to more pain, guilt, and festering. It corrodes away our soul. It corrodes away our spirit. It always begins to affect other parts of our lives.

If we want spiritual healing, we need to be honest with God and ourselves. What secrets do we carry around that are killing us inside? Maybe it's the past, the fears of the future, or the unknown of the present. Maybe it is something you have hidden or a pattern you feel tripped in: impulses, bitterness, anger, finances, marriage, work, or whatever. If you keep pushing the bubbles down, keep silent about the distortions, you can't heal and move forward.

Until like David, we deal with the problem of distortions in our life. All the stuff David was doing — including being the king of Israel — was quite pointless. He is going about his life, about his duties, but inside his bones were wasting away.

We may have forgotten the words or the real meaning of a nursery rhyme, yet they contain a pearl of intuitive wisdom. What am I hiding from, what has been pushed beneath the surface by the hands of time, pain, and fear in the hopes it would be forgotten, will surface.

If we repress them, they become distorted bubbles. Distorted images we hide. Distorted images we accept about ourselves, rather than knowing our true self. In the hands of a broken world, we push our stuff beneath the surface of life, little bubbles, not easily forgotten, just waiting to pop.

We hide behind the false image of thin bodies, perfect clothing, aisles of makeup, bigger houses, shinier cars, trophies, crowds, bank accounts, anger, perfection, flawless children, denial, deception, or unconscious projection on others. We focus outward rather than inward protecting the fragile world we create for ourselves. We push the true self down, afraid that our hiddenness brokenness might be exposed, terrified of the moment when-POP!

Have you ever thought a POP might be the voice of Jesus calling us to go beneath the surface into the wilderness to emerge, grow, and thrive?

I have discovered in my wilderness journeys that these hidden bubbles are waiting to be unearthed. There is healing waiting in the wilderness. It is possible with God's help to take something we think of as a negative and make it a positive.

We are people of patterns. We play out those patterns again and again in our lives, even when they are tired or unhealthy. We play them out even while we are in the process of walking with God who can transform them. We may think we have dealt with emotional, physical, or spiritual distortions, only to find ourselves exhibiting the same behaviors and responses in another situation. Week in and week out, we go through the same routine and nobody knows we're dying inside, or worse, we don't even notice.

At that moment, there is another kind of silence.

A Godly pop, revealing the things holding you back to bubble to the surface. It's the good news of God's grace bringing freedom to play and live and love.

Engaging in the Lenten discipline of self-examination, we allow the distortions to surface, allowing us to let go of thoughts holding us back and renewing our attention to the divine presence that moves us forward. To the one who forever forgives, forever forgets. The divine POP where the Holy Spirit brings them to the surface for spiritual healing through forgiveness.

Prayer of Forgiveness" from The Aleph by Paulo Coelho:

*The tears I shed, I forgive  
The suffering and disappointments, I forgive  
The betrayals and lies, I forgive  
The slandering and scheming, I forgive  
The hatred and persecution, I forgive  
The punches that were given, I forgive  
The shattered dreams, I forgive  
The dead hopes, I forgive  
The disaffection and jealousy, I forgive  
The indifference and ill will, I forgive  
The injustice in the name of justice, I forgive  
The anger and mistreatment, I forgive  
The neglect and oblivion, I forgive*

*The world with all its evil, I forgive*

*"Dear Lord, you offer me the gift of love, forgiveness, and grace. This is what I desire. As I journey in the wilderness, bring to my mind the things I need to confess, so that I may give them to you. Forgive me of my sin and cleanse me. I empty myself so that You can fill me with Your humble paths of love discovered in the wilderness bringing healing to my soul." Amen*

