



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Examining Our Lives
Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor
Scripture: Lamentations 3:40

Let us examine and probe our ways,
And let us return to the LORD.

(NASB1995)

Sermon Outline:

When was the last time that you spent time at least 30 minutes of your time reflecting on your life? Paying attention to the stories you tell yourself, the ways you are using your time, your priorities, and your values.

We do not take the time examine our lives and consequently miss out on the rich revelation that God wants to impart in us, which can only take place when we slow down and pay attention to God.

The book of Lamentations speaks to us living in the wisdom of the presence of God. God's words to his people in Lamentations 3, are to consistently return to the Lord. The gravitational pull in our lives is to pull away from his love, where it is very easy for us to step away from God. Lamentations is a book about the ways the people of God have gone into exile because they decided to live according to their own will, going their own way where they were not able to reflect on their own lives. We see God continuing to show up and speak to his people, despite they are living according to their own will. God shows up with words of hope and restoration. The people of Lamentations are told they can come out of exile, but their ability to return to God was contingent on their reflection of their own lives.

We are called to the same type of reflection as we see in Lamentations. For many of us we chose one of two contrasting ways to reflect on our lives.

- We reflect but do so with regret, where we look back and see all the ways we make mistakes, have hurt others, and live with shame.
- We are invited to reflect with a sense of redemption, where we recognize that there is nothing outside God's ability to use for good, so much so that he takes our greatest mistakes and uses them for good.

When we think about reflection, there are three truths we are to hold on to:

- God is always active in our lives.
- God knows how to bring good out of our mistakes.
- There is a new future available if we would discern the Spirit's activity. (HS is active and wants to give us a new future)

In order for us to reflect appropriately, we need to know where we are first and locate ourselves.

Use the four questions below to help you draw closer to God during your time of reflection:

1. What are the spiritual disciplines you need to anchor you in a life with God?
2. What are the practices of self-care you need to care for your body?
3. What core relationships do you need in this season of life to support you on your journey?
4. What are the gifts, passions, and burdens that God wants you to pay attention to for the blessing of others?

One of greatest gifts you can give yourself, and those around you, is the gift of interior examination in the presence of God. May the Lord lead us to deeper experiences of this type of interior examination in His presence.

²² Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
²³ They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."
²⁵ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;
²⁶ it is good to wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

-Lamentation 3:22-26 (NIV)

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, leads us in a sermon entitled Examining Our Lives. Pastor Rich explores the need for us to take time to examine our lives so that we can take part in the rich revelation that God offers us when we slow down to be in His presence.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, did you grow up in a home where there was an intentional time set aside for you to reflect and examine your life? What did this experience look like for you and your family? Journal about your responses to these questions, offering them up to God.
In your time of reflection, write down your responses to the questions below, seeing where God might be leading you. Share these responses with another brother or sister in Christ or in your small group.
3. Which of the following spiritual disciplines - silence, prayer, fasting from food/technology or meditation on Scripture - do you need at the present time to help anchor your life with God?
4. Do you presently have a self-care practice? If not, which of the following self-care practices do you need to start to care for your body: Sabbath, more consistent sleep, beginning an exercise routine?
5. Which core relationships do you need to begin focusing on moving forward? Will you begin meeting with therapist or Spiritual Director, or maybe it is time for you to join a small group?
6. Where do you feel God leading you to use your gifts, passions, and burdens to bless the lives of those around you? Maybe you need to begin volunteering, serving poor or encouraging others?