



The Way Forward Series Guide

Oct. 11: Through Reflection

Welcome for the group and Check-in

"I am feeling..."

Psalm 23 Rhythm

- Slowly read as a group twice.
- Make observations about your experience of the meditative reading of Psalm 23
- What part resonates or creates an allergic reaction within you as we read the Psalm today?

Group Prayer:

"Good Shepherd, thank you for pursuing us, providing for us, and protecting us. Continue to refine our thoughts of you and your ways. We open our lives to receive your goodness and mercy and correction. Remind us of your love as we engage in reflection and see both virtue and vice, healing and brokenness, love and apathy. Amen."

Group Discussion about The Way Forward: Through Reflection

Overview of ideas the sermon explores:

1. Diminished spiritual sensitivity, Christian practice that has become rote, an absence of joy are indicators that God is prompting His people to reflect.
2. Soul reflection can prompt two forms of sorrow. Godly sorrow of what we're lacking, godly remorse (genuine guilt) over sin.
3. In a sacred assembly we face the issues that have hindered our walk with God. We seek Him and where we've failed, we change our mind, change our direction.
4. When God prompts us to reflect, it will lead us to sorrow, and when God's people repent, God promises to work.

Reading of passages from the sermon: **Joel 1:1-4; 9-13; 2:12-21**

Group Discussion:

1. Pastor Dave started his message with a description of the First Great Awakening. If you've had any experience with revival at Union Center (or elsewhere) please describe it. What initiated it? What needs to happen today for us to be ready for revival?
2. Joel called for a holy fast, and for a sacred assembly (1:14). Why? Are we desperate enough to respond to a call for a holy fast, a sacred assembly? Please explain.
3. Their circumstances were basically 'getting their attention', a call to reflect on their heart condition. How are today's circumstances getting your heart's attention? Give an example on how the circumstances have caused you to reflect on your soul.
4. Consider the following statements. Which one 'gets your attention', and touches your heart? Why?
 - a. My soul is so dry, my relationship with God is stale and it has been for a long time
 - b. My relationships (work/home) are strained, sometimes antagonistic
 - c. I spend lots of my 'free time' either working, busying myself, not investing in the ones I love
 - d. I consider 'coming to church' weekly as being the church – there isn't much more than that
 - e. For years I haven't practiced daily spiritual disciplines
5. Soul reflection like this can cause one of two forms of sorrow: genuine remorse over sin or godly sorrow of what is missing in our lives. Have you experienced either recently? Please share an example?
6. Pastor Dave said that "When God prompts us to reflect, it will lead us to sorrow, and when God's people repent, God promises to work." Can you please describe how you have seen God bring a change, a work, after genuine repentance?

Take away practice for this week:

Set aside 30 minutes. Start with the Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner." Then spend 5 minutes in silence. Read Joel's call to lament (1:13-20). Reflect on how the Holy Spirit might lament over Union Center.

Alternatively, you could reflect on Jesus' lament over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-38), then reflect on how and why Jesus might weep over Union Center.

Closing Prayer:

From John Knox (1513 - 1572)

The great Bishop of our souls, Jesus our Lord, so strengthen and assist your troubled hearts with the mighty comfort of the Holy Spirit, that neither earthly tyrants, nor worldly torments, may have power to drive you from the hope and expectation of that kingdom, which was prepared for us from the beginning, by our Heavenly Father, to whom be all praise and honor, now and forever. Amen