

After listening to Dan's message, I kept thinking about the verse from 2 Peter 1: 9 "But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins." And 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

When I think about my past sins, sometimes I've had a hard time forgiving myself. 2 Peter reminds me that not only has my sin been forgiven, but I have been washed clean. Jesus' death on the cross has removed my punishment and God now sees me through Jesus' righteousness. In addition 2 Corinthians tells me that God can use my past as a ministry. He wants me to share with others what He's done in my life. He wants me to talk about my struggles and tell how God redeemed them. The things that Satan intended for evil, God uses to bring hope and healing to others.

Isn't a common theme in humanity the need for hope? Sometimes I look around and get overwhelmed at the hopelessness in Lenawee County and around the world. As we journey alongside people, we sometimes learn more than our hearts can bear. But God can handle our unbelief, our painful struggles, and our shouts of frustration. And He can turn our lives into something beautiful. I've seen God restore broken marriages. I've watched Him renew the lives of former addicts. And I've seen him reconcile families. I don't know how He does it, but Isaiah 61:4 promises "They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations." People need to know this side of our Father. Are we willing to tell them?

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37, 39)

Dan listed several "isms" that we often use to fill the gap or replace our relationship with Christ. Why isn't Jesus enough for me?

In the Bible account from Mark, Jesus was asked why his disciples weren't fasting. Dan stressed that the men were with Christ! Why were the Pharisees so concerned about their laws, instead of celebrating that the men were with Jesus?

Talk about the pictures and teaching of the wineskins . . . What new insights did I gain?

Read through the verses from 2 Peter 1. What does it mean to "make every effort?" What does it mean "to add to your faith goodness . . . ?"

Dan asked, "What needs to change in my life?"

What do I want to see changed in my country, state, county, family, relationships?

Name an area of my life that God has restored. Name an area that I still need restoration.

This month's memory verse: *On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mark 2:17 TNIV*

Additional Verses: *Mark 2:18-22, 2 Peter 1:3-9, 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Isaiah 61:4*

Reminders:

7.15 – The Gathering at SHU at 10am...

7.22 – The Gathering at SHU at 10am & 4 the City Initiative

7.29 – The Gathering at SHU at 10am & 5th Sunday Family Fun Day!

Radical Reminder:

I will pray for the entire world.

I will read through the entire Word.

I will sacrifice my money for a specific purpose.

I will spend time in another context.

I will commit my life to a multiplying community.