



## SANCTUARY REFLECTION GUIDE

October 20, 2024

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**Title:** Making Peace With Your Past

**Preacher:** Rev. Paul Rasmussen

**Scripture:** Luke 18:9-14, Lamentations 3:22-23

We all have regrets about things we've done, decisions we've made, or people we've hurt. *Sometimes by accident. Sometimes with intention.* The impact of yesterday's choices often leads to a heart full of pain and chaos today. What do you do when the past just won't stay away from the present? What do you do when you believe you're forgiven by God and others, but you still can't forgive yourself?

Scripture tells us that God's mercies for us are new every morning, but we have to decide whether we are ready to receive them. *Am I going to live bound by the regrets of my past or freed by the grace and peace of Jesus Christ to embrace the possibilities of a different, brighter future?* In this sermon, we'll continue looking at the Fruit of the Holy Spirit called *peace* and what Jesus says about making peace with our past.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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1. What stuck out to you about this sermon? Was there an idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Re-read Luke 18:9-14 together. What stands out to you about how each of them viewed themselves in relation to God's mercy?
3. What is the best example of forgiveness you have ever witnessed or heard about? What do you think makes that story so memorable?

4. Why do you think it can sometimes be harder to forgive ourselves than it is to believe that God forgives us?
5. Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us that, “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.” What does this tell you about how God sees us and relates to us? What are some ways we can remind ourselves of His forgiveness and mercy?

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

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This week, we invite you to join us in praying the Serenity Prayer. This prayer, popularized by the Twelve Step Program, is a beautiful guide to cultivating a life with God where the Holy Spirit can create **peace** within us:

*“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.”*

Before you echo this prayer, spend a few moments in silence and take some slow, deep breaths. Then, after your prayer, get out a pen and a fresh sheet of paper or a journal. Make two columns: the left is for the things you cannot change, and the right is for the things you can. Spend a few minutes jotting down some notes in each column, letting the Holy Spirit offer you wisdom to know the difference. Then, conclude your time by praying specifically. Ask God to give you peace about the things you listed on the left column and the courage to change the things you listed on the right.