Where Am I? Retreat Outline

# Talk 1 – Where is man and where are you?

## The Garden

### Humanity turned from God

#### Turning from the source of life is turning towards death

### Humanity was designed for union with God

### Humanity must choose to turn again towards God if we are to live

### Time on earth is the opportunity to turn towards God

#### Humanity could have died immediately after turning from God

#### Time on earth is our opportunity to respond

#### Without responding and turning towards God we remain lost

## God seeks for us

### God afforded us time to respond

### God must respect our free will

### God will always present opportunities to respond

### Choosing to respond is less situational and more of a mindset

#### God can use any and all situations if we are willing?

## Nehemiah’s predicament

### Set the stage and context of Nehemiah

### Wrong place at the wrong time or just perfect?

#### Nehemiah wants to help Jerusalem, but he is the cup barer to the king far away

##### Opportunity to turn towards God presents when ‘what is’ is different than what ‘should be’

#### Key: turning towards God is a mindset

### Nehemiah turned towards prayer

#### Consistent prayer allows for growth of our vision

#### In prayer our vision moves from ‘what is’ to ‘what could be’ to ‘what it should be’

#### Prayer affords us the time to see why we got into the situation we are in

##### We must go back in order to go forward

## Preparing for opportunity

### Planning and expecting God to present the opportunity

#### Prayer over time begins to mature plans

##### Plans can and will never be perfect

##### Planning is our turning towards God

##### It’s our engagement in His plans

#### We think of what we would do if the opportunity presents itself

##### Ex. New Years and the old lady who asked how much we needed…blown opportunity

#### Even though we don’t have the means, planning is essential

#### Planning well, allows the vision for what we want to do sink into every part of our being

### A well thought out plan will take any opportunity to execute the plan

#### Nehemiah thought out his plan and waited for God to present the opportunity

#### Nehemiah’s sadness before the king, was opportunity knocking

#### Before every step remember to pray…Turning to God

## Take home points

### God is asking where are you?

### Stop making excuses based on circumstances

### Start looking and planning for ways and opportunities to turn towards God

# Talk 2 – Dealing with life God’s way

## All plans face challenges

### We need to plan because it won’t come on a silver platter

#### Whenever we turn towards God, the devil will try and turn us back

### Nehemiah had a plan…but Nehemiah had unknows

#### Condition of the wall

#### Reception of the people

#### Surrounding conditions

### Always more questions than answers

#### Plans allows us to answer the questions we can

#### Prayer provides the courage to stay the course

## Heed the warnings and adjust the plan as needed

### Surrounding governor’s plan to attack

### Repeated warnings from travelers help gauge the seriousness of the threat

### Nehemiah adjusted the plan

#### Workers carried weapons

#### People on guard

#### Plan put in place if attacked

## Beware of distractions

### Whenever we are working, distractions will try to siphon our focus away

#### Invitation to a meeting seems harmless

#### When we say yes to something we are saying no to something else

##### Every moment presents an opportunity to turn towards God or away from God

#### I am doing a good work and cannot come down

## Criticism/rumors is a distraction

### Criticism and rumors are a twisting of the truth

### The easily get into our heads and make us spin

#### They stir our emotions

### Its important to remember what is true and what is false

#### God in time will bring all things true to the light

##### Even if it takes years

### Prayer, is our again turning towards God

#### Prayer is how we ask for God to strength us to stay the course

## The deadliest attack is the one on our character

### When threats, invitations, criticism and rumors all fail the devil strikes at the core…our character

### They could not stop the wall despite many attempts

### They aimed at defiling Nehemiah…if they could discredit him and make him violate the commands of God then the construction would stop

### Threaten his life…hid in the temple.

### Nehemiah would abandon the project of the wall before abandoning his value of honoring God

## Summary points

### In our desire to turn to God we will have many opportunities to turn away

#### Threats, invitations, criticism/rumors are all opportunities to turn towards God or away

#### Mindset matters

##### Determination to turn towards God in every opportunity begins to create a pattern and eventually a direction in life

### Our character matters most