



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: Cultivating Presence in a World of Social Distancing,
Until the Disaster has Passed**

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Psalm 57:1-5

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.

I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me. He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me—God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.

I am in the midst of lions; I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

Psalm 57:1-5 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

The Psalms are necessary for our souls. They speak to universal experiences that we all share and are God's gifts to train us in prayer. There are three different movements in the Psalms: orientation, disorientation and reorientation.

In Psalm 57, David gives us a clue as the disorientation that he is experiencing. He is on the run and looking over his shoulder because Saul (his boss) is looking to kill him. David is careful of his actions, of what he touches. He is praying for God's mercy, as he doesn't know when this time will end. In the midst of the disaster, and in the middle of the storm, he holds onto God. David was in a situation in which the problem lingered, and he did not know when his trouble would end - he needed mercy. He took refuge in the shadow of God's wings, until the disaster had passed - not allowing the environment to mark his life.

Like David, we have a lingering problem as well. The Coronavirus is lingering, and we pray this this would be resolved quickly. We are wondering when this will pass, as we really don't know how long this will continue. Life has changed as we know it. We are living in a new reality.

The challenge is the uncertainty of the end – we don't a lot of things right now. What we **do** know is that God is never distant, and we are under God's wings no matter how much social distancing we need to practice. We need to take shelter in God as well and find our refuge in the One who is hovering over us. If you are uncertain about your health, uncertain about your employment, uncertain about your future – remember that you under God's wings!!

What does it mean to be under God's wings? We are called to cultivate meaningful connection with:

- God – slowing down to be with God in silence and prayer,
- ourselves – naming and releasing our fears and anxieties in the name of Jesus, and
- others – although we are scattered around the city and distanced from each other, we are to call one another, pray for each other, attend Zoom calls.

Breathe in the presence of God, breathe out all your anxieties and all that is not of Him. Until this time passes, may we all remain the presence of God.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Lead Pastor, Richard Villodas takes a break from our Humility series to preach on what it means to cultivate presence with God, each other and ourselves during this challenging time.

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, how were times of crisis handled? How did each person react and how does that affect how you deal with times of trouble today?
3. This week, as most of us are at home, what can you actively do seek refuge in God?
4. Take time to think about: What are you mad about? What are you sad about? What are you anxious about? And what are you glad about?
5. Be in prayer this week, not just for your family but for the elderly you know, the healthcare workers, the business owners and those who are struggling financially. Intercede so they can find refuge during their most difficult times.