



Learning to Lament

Lament is something that many of us have not learned how to do well. However, given what we have been through as a community, as a state, as a nation, and as a world, it is appropriate that we lament the situation that we find ourselves in. Lament is not the same as complaining, nor is it the same as whining about the things that we are going through. Biblical lament is the deep inner and personal reflection of the situation that we find ourselves in, recognising all the while that God is sovereign and in control of all things. Those who complain tend to ask, “why me?”. However, biblical lament is a form of prayer to God. One author defines it this way: “It is a divinely-given invitation to pour out our fears, frustrations, and sorrows for the purpose of helping us to renew our confidence in God.”¹

Today, we will be looking at the book of Lamentations and read how Jeremiah² lamented to God. He has much to teach us today on how he approached God during his lament. Let us learn from him and learn how to pray to God in the form of a lament.

Launch

- 1) Why do you think we don't lament much in our society today?

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Read Lamentations 3:1-24

- 2) How does Jeremiah describe himself? (v1)
 - a. Who does Jeremiah say is the one who subjected him to all these things?

- 3) How would you summarise everything that he went through? (v2-18)
 - a. Who does Jeremiah say is the one who subjected him to all these things?

 - b. How does that affect your view of who God is and what he wants for us?

¹ Vroegop, Mark, taken from: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/dare-to-hope-in-god>

² Traditionally, Jeremiah is known as the author of Lamentations

- 4) Who does Jeremiah blame for everything that he has experienced?
 - a. Who do you blame when things are not going well?

- 5) What does Jeremiah remember and what does he call to mind? (v19-21)
 - a. What are some practical habits that you can develop to help you “call to mind” so that you have hope? (v21)

- 6) What does Jeremiah say about the Lord? (v22-24)
 - a. What do you think it means to Jeremiah that the Lord is his portion?

- 7) How can we learn to see the Lord as “our portion”?

- 8) What does it mean to wait for the Lord? What do you think we’re waiting for?

Conclusion

Lament is a form of prayer to God – recognising the situation we’re in and also that God himself is in control of all things. Jeremiah never lost sight of that. He acknowledges that all the things he went through are all in some sense from God himself. Throughout Lam 3:1-21, we see that it is God himself who put him through all those trials. However, Jeremiah does not complain or blame God. In fact, he remembers and reflects on what he is going through and calls to his mind the hope of the Lord. What hope is this? It is the hope of the love of the Lord! (v22) His compassions never fail us and they are new every morning. Because God is faithful to us, therefore we will wait for his deliverance. This is ultimately talking about deliverance from the final judgement of God. God may deliver us from earthly trials, but he has promised through faith in Christ that he will deliver us from the coming judgement, because of his love for us.

In light of this, we look to God and we wait upon him through Christ. We have all been through many trials and challenges over the past few months because the pandemic. God is in control of all things, and we want to remind ourselves of his love and faithfulness throughout this time. Let us remember that he is our portion and that our ultimate hope and identity is in him alone.