

Understanding the Message of Lamentations
Lamentations 3:19-33 (p.873)

Intro

I. The Lord encourages you to _____ and to _____ your sorrow, grief, and disappointment...

Grief, sorrow, and disappointment are a very _____ part of our lives, and the Book of Lamentations invites us to be _____ with ourselves and with others about our _____.

How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave. (1:1)

Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah (2 Chron. 35:25)

She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies. (1:2)

Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction and wandering all the precious things that were hers from days of old.... All her people groan as they search for bread.... "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.... "For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears.... "Look, O Lord, for I am in distress; my stomach churns; my heart is wrung within me, because I have been very rebellious.... my groans are many, and my heart is faint." (1:7,11,12,16,20,22)

Suffering invites us to think about our _____ with the Lord and about God's _____ in our suffering; grief and sorrow are often _____.

How the Lord in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. The Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the habitations of Jacob... He has cut down in fierce anger all the might of Israel; he has withdrawn from them his right hand... he has burned like a flaming fire in Jacob... He has bent his bow like an enemy... he has poured out his fury like fire. The Lord has become like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel; he has swallowed up all its palaces; he has laid in ruins its strongholds, and he has multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. He has laid waste his booth like a garden... The Lord has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary; he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces... The Lord determined to lay in ruins the wall of the daughter of Zion... (2:1-8)

Honesty with ourselves and our feelings before the Lord allows us to move _____ grief; we grieve in part to get through grief and to _____ grief.

Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad. (Eccl. 7:3)

"Occasionally weep deeply over the life you hoped would be. Grieve the losses. Then wash your face. Trust God. And embrace the life you have." (John Piper)

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away; he has broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has made my chains heavy; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; he has blocked my ways with blocks of stones; he has made my paths crooked. He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding; he turned aside my steps and tore me to pieces; he has made me desolate; he bent his bow and set me as a target for his arrow. He drove into my kidneys the arrows of his quiver; I have become the laughingstock of all my people, the object of their taunts all day long. He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord." (3:1-18)

Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. v.19,20

II. Even while you remind yourself of God's _____ and faithfulness.

Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it [i.e. my affliction] and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases...v.20-22

Even in the midst of your suffering, God's love does not _____; God's love and faithfulness do not _____ like our feelings.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning...v.22,23

God always has new _____ for you, even in the midst of sorrow; learn to _____ for the mercy and faithfulness of God.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. v.22,23

Place your hope in the _____ when circumstances fail you; sooner or later your _____ will fail you, and in fact it already has, but the _____ will get you through.

"No one is righteous, no not one...." all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... (Rom. 3:10, 23)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Ps. 73:26)

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." v.24

Often you don't have to say anything; be _____, demonstrate your concern, and _____ that you care; don't _____ that nothing has happened.

...weep with those who weep. (Rom. 12:15)

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Be _____ with yourself and be patient with the Lord; hang in there and let _____ do the work. Don't set a _____ on grief.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust—there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off forever, for, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men. v.27-33

Let us test and examine our ways and return to the Lord! Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven... my eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. "My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees; my eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the daughters of my city. (3:40,41,48-51)

Grief is a _____; God will fulfill His good _____ for those who trust in Jesus Christ; we grieve, but we grieve in _____.

the Lord gave me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand. (1:14)

All your enemies rail against you; they hiss, they gnash their teeth... (2:16)

he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead...I have become the laughingstock of all my people, the object of their taunts all day long. He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood. (3:6,14,15)

"I have been hunted like a bird by those who were my enemies without cause; they flung me alive into the pit and cast stones on me; water closed over my head; I said, 'I am lost.' "I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit; you heard my plea, 'Do not close your ear to my cry for help!' You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!' "You have taken up my cause, O Lord; you have redeemed my life. (3:52-58)

The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter of Zion, is accomplished... (4:22)

...we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers... that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. (1Thess. 4:13)

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Grief, sorrow, and disappointment are a very real part of our lives, and the Book of Lamentations invites us to be honest with ourselves and with others about our feelings.

How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave. (1:1)

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Suffering invites us to think about our relationship with the Lord and about God's sovereignty in our suffering; grief and sorrow are often multi-faceted.

How the Lord in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. The Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the habitations of Jacob... He has cut down in fierce anger all the might of Israel; he has withdrawn from them his right hand... he has burned like a flaming fire in Jacob... He has bent his bow like an enemy... he has poured out his fury like fire. The Lord has become like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel; he has swallowed up all its palaces; he has laid in ruins its strongholds, and he has multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. He has laid waste his booth like a garden... The Lord has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary; he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces... The Lord determined to lay in ruins the wall of the daughter of Zion... (2:1-8)

Honesty with ourselves and our feelings before the Lord allows us to move through grief; we grieve in part to get through grief and to overcome grief.

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