

Voicing Lament and Nurturing Community: A Study of Lamentations and 1 Corinthians

University Baptist Church – Online Bible Study

Session 3: October 18, 2020

To prepare: This week, we return to Lamentations, examining Lamentations 1:18-22. After 17 verses recounting the terrible circumstances of Jerusalem after it was conquered by the Babylonians, the first chapter of the book closes with this acknowledgement that “The Lord is in the right.” The rebellion and disobedience of the people is the cause of their downfall. As you read these verses, consider the added pain of believing that the horrible suffering was your own fault. How do you respond in such a situation?

Sunday morning session outline:

Throughout this session, be attentive to ways that last week’s discussion of 1 Corinthians may inform our conversation today. Do you see a connection to the themes we discussed, such as relationship building, wisdom and foolishness, weakness and strength, and the scandal of the cross?

Read Lamentations 1:18-22

- This section begins with an assertion that “The Lord is in the right.” What is meant by this statement?
- In 1:18, the speaker cries out, “but hear, all you peoples, and behold my suffering.” Why do you think it is important to the writer that someone sees their suffering?
- Note the vivid imagery in 1:20: “my stomach churns, my heart is wrung within me.” What is it that gives the speaker so much visceral turmoil?
- Verses 21-22 returns our attention to the bystanders who mock and laugh at Jerusalem’s downfall. The closing verse asks God to “deal with them as you have dealt with me.” How do you perceive this request: as a call for vengeance or fairness? Or both?

Discussion and Application

- Has there been a time in your life when you were suffering deeply, yet knew it was your own poor choices that led you there? How did that feel? What did you learn from it?
- What would you have wanted to hear when you knew you’d made a mess of things?
- Looking around us at the turmoil and division of our nation’s politics in this moment, it seems clear that all is not well. Far from it. Many of us lament where we find ourselves, both politically and with the pandemic. Yet are there ways we have participated in what brought us to this point? Are there ways this is also our “fault?”
- How, then, are we to respond?