

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

University Baptist Church – Online Bible Study
Session 5: November 1, 2020

To prepare: We return today to Lamentations. Read Lamentations 3:25-33. The first 20 verses of this chapter are far more pessimistic in tone than this section, which seems to inject some level of hope and expectant waiting into the poem. Scholar Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932) created a system for identifying different genres of psalms and Hebrew poetry. He said the five major elements of a lament include an invocation (“Oh Lord, hear me...”), a complaint (what is wrong), a petition (asking God to do something about the complaint), an affirmation of trust (“but I trust in the Lord...” “nevertheless, God has heard me...”), and a word of doxology (celebrating who God is). [For a clear example of all of these elements, see Psalm 6.] How does this movement back and forth between despair and hope in Lamentations 3 still fit into the category of lament? Are there times in your own life when you moved toward hope, despite feeling like you were in a season of lament?

Sunday morning session outline:

Lamentations 3:25-26

- What are you waiting for in this season of life?
- What does it look like for us to “wait quietly” right now, in a world where we have very little quiet in our lives?
- In today’s sermon, Matt will be talking about stewardship through the frame of loving God with all our soul (Matthew 22:37). This writer in Lamentations refers to “the soul that seeks him.” How do we *seek* God with our *soul*?

Lamentations 3:27-30

- Lament definitely does not only happen when we are young (v. 27) – so why would this writer reference bearing the yoke in youth?
- These verses remind me of the theme song from *The Facts of Life*: “You take the good, you take the bad, you take them both and there you have, the facts of life.” It feels like the writer is reminding us that this is just how life goes, and when the Lord gives a season of lament, we have to lean into it. Can you think of a time in your life when you struggled to lean in to the grief? Do you think we are always called to lean into grief this way, taking it as it comes?

Lamentations 3:31-33

- How do you feel about the writer suggesting that God “causes grief” (v. 32), but “does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone”? What does this teach us about the role God plays in our suffering?