

Talk It Over

Lamentations

Week #1- "Honesty"

June 1-2, 2019



Background

Lamentations is a historical book in the Old Testament which, technically, is anonymous; however, ancient Jewish and early Christian traditions believe it to be authored by the prophet Jeremiah. Lamentations is a poem made up of five chapters. Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 are laments that contain 22 verses, one for each of the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 3 or the third lament is distinctive in that it is made up of each letter of the Hebrew alphabet used three times in a row for a total of 66 verses. It is believed that the poem may have been written by Jeremiah after the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem during the Babylonian exile around 586 BC. The prophet and his fellow Jews lament the devastation of their beloved city at the hands of the Babylonians. It is important to note that the author of these laments understands clearly that God allowed the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem. God, in his power, could have, at any time, saved Jerusalem yet He didn't.

Read Lamentations 1

Questions

1. What does the title Lamentations suggest to you? Is this the grief of an individual or of a nation? Can you think of similar outpourings of grief in scripture?
2. From this, what overall picture of Judah comes to mind? What one word would you use to describe her situation?
3. What has happened to the sanctuary (v. 10)? What does it suggest about God's attitude toward Judah?
4. In his distress, to whom does the poet appeal? What does he pray (verses 21-22)? On what basis does he make this request?

Application

1. We are told by Paul to rejoice in the Lord (Philippians 4:4). Can you simultaneously lament and rejoice in the Lord? How do we praise God and lament to God without offending him?
2. What does it look like to be our true self in the eyes of God? How important is it to be honest with God about how we feel about Him in any given moment, even when we are upset or mad at God?
3. Can God make meaning from misery? How can practicing lamenting help deepen our relationship with God?
4. How can lamenting help us when we don't feel God's presence in our life?

Closing Prayer

Read the following quote:

“Come to me in your pain. Express it to me, child. Allow me to show you my compassion. Dive deeper into intimacy with me until your sorrow turns back into praise. Like I did at Creation, like I did in the Exodus, like I have done in my courts, like I did on the cross – through my suffering and in your suffering, I will show up. I will rescue you. I will display my very good once more”.

“The Louder Song” (page 37; It’s Okay to be Honest) written by Aubrey Sampson

With this quote in mind, pray to our Father. Set hesitation aside. As your group prays, embrace the vulnerability of a wholehearted relationship with the Father. Allow this time of prayer to be worshipful.

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