

Sunday Morning Equipping Class

Studying Psalms
Jan 8 - Feb 12

Text to Check-In

If you haven't checked in today or any other Sunday morning, please text *Equip* to 678-929-4050

This will allow us to communicate with you when there are schedule updates and other class information!

Psalms of Lament

[The primary function of corporate and individual laments] is to lay a troubled situation before the Lord, asking him for help. We find community laments, dealing with trouble faced by the people of God as a whole (e.g., Psalm 12), and individual laments, in which the troubles face a particular member of the people (e.g., Psalm 13). This latter category is the largest by far, including as much as a third of the whole Psalter.

-John C. Collins, *ESV Expository Commentary on the Psalms*, p.32

Lament as Honesty

"But, you inevitably respond, 'Isn't it wrong to complain by lamenting to God? Is it not a sign of rebellion and faithlessness? How can it be appropriate to show my anger to Him? These are all fair questions. But let me do what Jesus usually did and answer your question and another question: Why then, does God enshrine so many laments in His Word? Laments, we must realize, are God's Word. Why are so many biblical characters shown as disappointed and angry with God? Do we seek to learn from all the other facets of their lives but this?"

Lament as Honesty

I would put it to you this way. People like Job, David, Jeremiah, and even Jesus reveal to us that prayers of complaint can still be prayers of faith. They represent the last refusal to let go of the God who may seem to be absent or worse- uncaring. If this is true, then lament expresses one the most intimate moments of faith- not a denial of it. It is supreme honesty before a God whom my faith tells me I can trust. He encourages me to bring everything as an act of worship, my disappointment, frustration, and even my hate. Only lament uncovers this kind of new faith, a biblical faith that better understands God's heart as it is revealed through Jesus Christ."

-Michael Card, A Sacred Sorrow, p.30-31

Lament as Formative

"As a rule, adversity will play an outsized role in most of our formation. In the stripping away that comes in adversity, we learn to see what counts and find that when all is said and done, God and his love are more real than anything else. If individuals are to grow through the experience of adversity, there must be a climate of worship, use of the Psalms, teaching, and prayer support to help them walk well through their various trials."

-James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, p.29

Lament as Corporate Worship

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Psalm 42

Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul?

42 TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A MASKIL OF THE SONS OF KORAH.

1 As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my food
day and night,

while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”

4 These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:

how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.

Psalm 42

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation 6 and my God.

Psalm 42

My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.

7 Deep calls to deep
at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.

8 By day the LORD commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

9 I say to God, my rock:
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?”

10 As with a deadly wound in my bones,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”

Psalm 42

11 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

On Your Own

Reread Psalm 42

- 1. What is the Psalmist lamenting over?*
- 2. Who is the Psalmist addressing in this psalm?*
- 3. Next to each stanza or line write emotions that you suspect the Psalmist might be feeling.*

Table Discussion

1. *What is the Psalmist lamenting over?*
2. *Who is the Psalmist addressing in this psalm?*
3. *Next to each stanza or line write emotions that you suspect the Psalmist might be feeling.*

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The Taunt We're Tempted to Believe

“Where is Your God?”

"Though it may seem profoundly counterintuitive, lament and despair are polar opposites. Lament is the deepest, most costly demonstration of belief in God. Despair is the ultimate manifestation of the total denial that He exists."

–Michael Card, *A Sacred Sorrow*, p.55

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“Where is your God?”

The Songs of Jesus

Psalm 47:9

I say to God, my rock:

“Why have you forgotten me?”

Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”

Psalm 22:1, Mark 15:34

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

The Songs of Jesus

Psalm 47:6

My soul is cast down within me;

Mark 14:32

32 And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. 34 And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch."

Matthew 27:41-44 “Where is your God?”

41 So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 42 “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” 44 And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

1 Peter 2:21-24

21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Table Discussion

Consider Psalm 42:5, 11

How might these verses help us when we're grieving?

Where does the Psalmist find hope?

Psalm 42

11 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

As the psalm proceeds we see that the phrase “I will yet praise him” (verses 5 and 11; Psalm 43:5) is not a mere prediction of change but an active exercise. When we are discouraged, we listen to the fearful speculations of our hearts. “What if this happens?” “Maybe it’s because of that!” Here instead we see the psalmist not merely listening to his troubled heart but addressing it, taking his soul in hand, saying, “Remember this, O soul!” He reminds his heart of the loving things God has done (verse 6–8). He also tells his heart that God is working within the troubles—the waves sweeping over him are “your” waves (verse 7). This self-communion is a vital spiritual discipline.

- Keller, Timothy; Keller, Kathy. *The Songs of Jesus* (p. 89). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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Lament in the Already and Not Yet

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Revelation 21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Revelation 21:1-7

5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

The End of Lament

"[Speaking of the New Jerusalem] Lament is over forever. It comes to a crashing halt with the words: 'Behold, I make all things new.' In that moment, we will realize to our great joy that, all along, this journey of lament has been a journey toward the New Jerusalem... Lament will become the faithful companion with whom we part ways when the journey comes to an end... But the future hope does not cancel out our need to lament now; in fact it accentuates our deep need to lament what remains."

-Michael Card, *A Sacred Sorrow*, p.142

Have Thou not bid me seek Thy face,
And shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of sovereign grace,
Be deaf when I complain?
No still the ear of sovereign grace,
Attends the mourner's prayer
Oh may I ever find access
To breathe my sorrows there

Dear refuge of my weary soul
On Thee, when sorrows rise
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll
My fainting hope relies
To Thee I tell each rising grief
For Thou alone canst heal
Thy Word can bring a sweet relief
For every pain I feel

But oh! When gloomy doubts prevail
I fear to call Thee mine
The springs of comfort seem to fail
And all my hopes decline
Yet, gracious God, where shall I flee?
Thou art my only trust
And still my soul would cleave to Thee
Though prostrate in the dust

Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face
And shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of sov'reign grace
Be deaf when I complain?
No, still the ear of sov'reign grace
Attends the mourner's prayer
O may I ever find access
To breathe my sorrows there

Thy mercy seat is open still
Here let my soul retreat
With humble hope attend Thy will
And wait beneath Thy feet
Thy mercy seat is open still
Here let my soul retreat
With humble hope attend Thy will
And wait beneath Thy feet

Text: Anne Steele

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Table Discussion

How does singing/reading a lament impact you?

What is your most significant takeaway from this morning?