

Sunday Equipping Class: Studying the Psalms

Psalms of Lament – Psalm 42

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? 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.

Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul?
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.

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 and my God.

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?”

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.

Pleasant Feelings

OPEN ALIVE POSITIVE
reliable **confident** JOYOUS HAPPY **EAGER**
fulfilled Receptive fortunate **free** surprised **Elated**
warm relaxed **excited** ecstatic **content** *daring* **BOLD**
amazed delighted blown-away **touched** safe
sympathetic **thankful** GOOD brave
interested important peaceful *powerful* *capable*

SATISFIED ENCOURAGED CHALLENGED
awesome blessed optimistic **determined**
LOVE *Jubilant* reassured **secure** STRONG **unique**

Unpleasant Feelings

ANGRY CONFUSED reserved *disillusioned* wary SAD
irritated **uncertain** disrespected sorrowful HELPLESS
BETRAYED ENRAGED *indecisive* alienated HURT *aching*
grief
hostile hesitant crushed impotent
anguish
annoyed **doubtful** repugnant **deprived** useless desolate
anxious hateful **frustrated** skeptical dejected **fearful** **heartbroken**
ashamed *desperate* **weary** agonized paralyzed discouraged
disappointed bitter tense terrified rejected *humiliated* unhappy
powerless **lonely** DEPRESSED worried INDIFFERENT **tormented**
offended dismayed scared neutral despair **ALONE**
disinterested *wronged* panic **disgusting** AFRAID

Notes

The End of Lament

Revelation 21:1-7 (ESV)

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."

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.

"[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