

The Book of Job

The Unsearchable Wisdom of God



LESSON 17 PRAYERS OF LAMENT

I. The Problem: Job Complains a Lot



- Lament:
 - to mourn or complain out loud.
- In the Old Testament, lament is a genre that “may be recognized quickly by expressions of grief, sorrow, fear, anger, contempt, shame, guilt, and other dark emotions.”

I. The Problem: Job Complains a Lot



- Sinful to lament?
- Bildad says:

Job 8:2-3 “How long will you say these things, and the words of your mouth be a great wind? ³Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right?”

- Eliphaz says:

Job 15:4-6 But you are doing away with the fear of God and hindering meditation before God. ⁵For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. ⁶Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; your own lips testify against you.

- Elihu accuses Job of sinful speech during the three cycles of debate:

Job 34:36-7 Would that Job were tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men. ⁷For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God.”

I. The Problem: Job Complains a Lot



- Is lamenting Christian?
 1. They contain strong outbursts of anger and vengeance directed at one's enemies.
 2. They include bold, seemingly irreverent, accusations pointed at God.
 3. There is uncertainty over whether the laments constitute a failure of faith, or whether the courage to doubt or question should be viewed instead as a legitimate part of faith.
 4. There is a lack of clarity about whether laments still have a place after Christ's victory in his death and resurrection, or whether they are no longer appropriate.

II. Lament in the Old Testament



1. An invocation (calling on God) usually comes first.
2. The lament or complaint itself.
3. An expression of confidence.
4. A petition.
5. Praise or a vow to praise.

II. Lament in the Old Testament

Psalm 13



- **Ps 13:1** How long, O LORD?
- Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? ²How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
- **3** Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, ⁴lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
- **5** But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
- **6** I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

II. Lament in the Old Testament

Psalm 77



- Invocation:

Ps 77:1 I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me.

2 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted.

3 When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. — Selah

- Lament:

4 You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

5 I consider the days of old, the years long ago.

6 I said, “Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart.” Then my spirit made a diligent search:

7 “Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?

8 Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time?

9 Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?” — Selah

II. Lament in the Old Testament

Psalm 77



- Statement of Confidence:

Ps 77:10 Then I said, “I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High.”

11 I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

12 I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.

- Praise:

13 Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?

14 You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples.

15 You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. — Selah

II. Lament in the Old Testament

Prophets



- Jeremiah (includes Lamentations)
- Habakkuk
- *Wilson* - “The focus of the lament is not primarily about venting feelings, [rather] it is fundamentally a plea or petition for help. It is designed to bring about change, for those lamenting are seeking a resolution of their distress. Thus Job laments in order to change or restore his relationship with God.”

III. Lament in Job



- Nine laments:
- 3:11–26; 6:2–7:21; chapters 9–10; 13:3–14:22; 16:1–17:16; chapter 19; and chapters 23–24
- Chapters 21, 30

III. Lament in Job



- **Job 3:11** Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire?
- **Job 3:20** Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul . . . ?
- **Job 3:26** I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes.

III. Lament in Job



- Petition:

Job 6:8-10 “Oh that I might have my request, and that God would fulfill my hope, ⁹that it would please God to crush me, that he would let loose his hand and cut me off! ¹⁰This would be my comfort; I would even exult in pain unsparing, . .

- Assertion of innocence: . . . for I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

III. Lament in Job



- Petition:

Job 6:28-29 “But now, be pleased to look at me, for I will not lie to your face. ²⁹Please turn; let no injustice be done. Turn now; my vindication is at stake.

- Assertion of innocence:

Job 6:30 Is there any injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern the cause of calamity?

III. Lament in Job



- Job 10 = all lament
- **Job 10:1** I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

III. Lament in Job

Signs of Confidence



- **Job 13:13** Let me have silence, and I will speak, and let come on me what may.
14 Why should I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand?
15 *Though he slay me, I will hope in him;* yet I will argue my ways to his face.
16 This will be my salvation, that the godless shall not come before him.
- **Job 14:13** Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!
14 If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come.
15 You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands.
16 For then you would number my steps; you would not keep watch over my sin;
17 my transgression would be sealed up in a bag, and you would cover over my iniquity.

III. Lament in Job

Job 19



- Lament:

Job 19:6 know then that God has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me.

7 Behold, I cry out, ‘Violence!’ but I am not answered; I call for help, but there is no justice.

8 He has walled up my way, so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness upon my paths.

9 He has stripped from me my glory and taken the crown from my head.

- Petition:

Job 19:23 Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book!

24 Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!

III. Lament in Job

Job 19



- Expression of confidence:

Job 19:25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,

27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

III. Lament in Job

Job 19



- Praise

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

2 “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

3 . . . Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you . . .”

III. Lament in Job

Acceptable to God



1. God's endorsement of Job's words "about him" (42:7–8).
2. The laments are directed to God.
3. The laments assume God is in control.
4. The laments expect no one but God can correct the situation.
5. The laments are ultimately a call for the presence of a seemingly absent God.

IV. Our Laments



“We need to recover that sense of bold, honest faith that moves from a questioning of God’s ways through to a settled and deep conviction that he is God who is ‘for us.’ Rather than an embarrassment to faith, the laments of the OT are a challenge to genuine faith in the midst of trouble, a faith that knows that, even when God seems silent, help can come from no one else except God.” - *Lindsay Wilson*

IV. Our Laments



- James 5:10-11
- Psalm 50:15
- Luke 18:1-8

Keep on praying!