

The Bible 20/20 Week 28: “How lonely sits the city” (7-19-20)

Reading this week - (Jeremiah & Lamentations) Open with this reading (the opening of Lamentations) . . .

Lamentations 1:1-4 (ESV)

(1) **How lonely sits the city** that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave. (2) She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies. (3) Judah has gone into exile because of affliction and hard servitude; she dwells now among the nations, but finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress. (4) The roads to Zion mourn, for none come to the festival; all her gates are desolate; her priests groan; her virgins have been afflicted, and she herself suffers bitterly.

Lamentations is Jeremiah’s reaction when he sits and looks over Jerusalem after it falls

The Septuagint opens his lament with: “And it came to pass, after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said...”

Introduction: Jeremiah (known as the weeping prophet): Sits and laments over the fallen city Jerusalem

- Babylon - 2 year siege of Jerusalem, then the City falls & is stripped - including the temple
- People taken in to captivity - only a small portion remained - the poorest of the poor
- Jeremiah both warned of this, and called the people to turn to God & repent

We are going to spend time in Lamentations Chapter 3 this morning. **Let’s discover the way of Lament . . .**

1) There is a time for Lament

The first 16 verses describe the trouble that has come upon Jeremiah & Jerusalem, and the feeling of being both punished and abandoned by God. It culminates with these words . . .

Lamentations 3:17-18, 48-51 (ESV)

(17) my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; (18) so I say, “My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD.” . . . (48) my eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. (49) “My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, (50) until the LORD from heaven looks down and sees; (51) my eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the daughters of my city.

Note: Even though Jeremiah knew this was coming, in fact he warned them against this very thing, yet he mourns and feels despair over the trouble of his people . . .

Jeremiah 8:18, 20-21 (ESV)

(18) My joy is gone; grief is upon me; my heart is sick within me . . . (20) “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” (21) For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded; I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me.

Note: No matter how long you have walked with Jesus, there is room to mourn, to despair, to question

We have often done a great disservice by rushing too quickly to say - “all things work for good”

We are called to mourn with those who mourn, not to tell them to stop . . . **Let’s learn from Jesus example:**

John 11:32-35 (ESV)

(32) Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." (33) When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. (34) And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." (35) Jesus wept.

Note: Jesus has just finished telling Martha - "I am the resurrection and the life" He knows he has the power to save even from death. But he climbs into our situation with us and mourns. He mourns too - he loves Lazarus and his sisters Martha & Mary!

- Let's be aware of the pain of many right now, we can even admit our own pain!
- Let's lament together, and cry out. Verbalize what hurts, what's been lost.
- There is a time for lament, but because of Jesus - **We can lament in Hope!**

2) We can Lament in Hope**Lamentations 3:21-26 (ESV)**

(21) But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (24) "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." (25) The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. (26) It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Note: The power of the gospel is in the context - it's not a call to ignore or "cope" with the difficulty of life.

Jesus offer hope and healing in the midst of the troubles of this life!

A beautiful picture of this: Jeremiah purchases a field - in his home town, 3 miles north of Jerusalem

Jeremiah 32:2, 6-8 (ESV)

(2) At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah. . . (6) Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me: (7) Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you and say, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.' (8) Then Hanamel my cousin came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

Note: In prison during a siege - God says buy a field! God gives a tangible reminder of a future hope!

Jeremiah 32:14-15 (ESV)

(14) 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware vessel, that they may last for a long time. (15) For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.'

Note: This will not last forever - God will have the final word. He there is hope for his people!

- **This is what Jesus did when he raised Lazarus! I wonder what Lazarus' second funeral was like?**

3) Godly lament leads to Repentance & Return

Lamentations 3:31-32 (ESV)

(31) For the Lord will not cast off forever, (32) but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love;

Note: Grief can and will come from God, but his compassion & steadfast love leads to redemption!

Lamentations 3:39-41 (ESV)

(39) Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins? (40) Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD! (41) Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven

Note: Examine your ways - lift your heart to God - return to him as needed!

Don't miss the opportunity that pain provides to reveal both Our Need and Our Savior!

Luke 19:41-44 (ESV)

(41) And when he drew near and saw the city, **he wept over it**, (42) saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (43) For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side (44) and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, **because you did not know the time of your visitation.**"

Note: Jesus mourns when we miss his visitation - he warns us not to miss him!

Then he takes action to get our attention . . .

Luke 19:45-46 (ESV)

(45) And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, (46) saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."

Note: Homework - (For Personal Reflection: Compare Luke 19:45-46 to Jeremiah 7:1-11)

What is Jesus shaking up right now? What parts of your life has he flipped upside down?

Ask him to reveal Idols you have been blind to, and then call out for help & healing . . .

Lamentations 3:55-58 (ESV)

(55) "I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit; (56) you heard my plea, 'Do not close your ear to my cry for help!' (57) You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!' (58) "You have taken up my cause, O Lord; you have redeemed my life.

Conclusion: There is a time for Lament, so let's cry out to God in hope, and answer His call to return!

Let's Pray!