

Process Your Pain at the Throne of Grace

Studies in the Book of Lamentations

Lamentations 3:1-66

“Dare to Hope”

Introduction: Lamentations Chapter 3 contains a reminder that even at the lowest depth of pain and suffering you can dare to hope because of who God is.

I. The Reflections of One Afflicted by the Lord (Lamentations 3:1-20)

- A. Verses 1-20. The poem switches to a first-person perspective in which the narrator identifies himself as the sufferer/afflicted one. Many colorful metaphors are used to describe divine chastisement. The afflicted one is ridiculed, became a taunting song, and has forgotten prosperity. The chastisement was the result of covenant unfaithfulness (Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Galatians 3:10).

II. The Righteous Judge is Our Source of Hope (Lamentations 3:21-42)

- A. Verses 21-23. The afflicted one feels real pain but is grounded by truth. The reason the afflicted one has hope is because he can recall biblical truth about God’s character. The term translated mercy is *hesed* and refers to an unfailing kind of love, kindness, or goodness. His compassions (great, tender mercies) never end. The phrase “His mercy (*hesed*) endures forever” is repeated 42 times in the Old Testament. His compassions/mercies are new every morning (Psalm 86:5 Psalm 86:15 Psalm 100:5 Psalm 103:8 Psalm 106:1).
- B. Verses 24-33. Do you hope in the Lord? (James 5:7–11) This passage encourages patience in suffering and humble submission to chastisement. Corrective discipline is temporary. The Lord does not enjoy bringing affliction or suffering to people (Ezekiel 33:11).
- C. Verses 34-39. This is a reminder of biblical ethical standards derived from God’s character. The Lord does not approve of mistreating captives, denying justice, or subverting people in their lawsuits when they are trying to correct a wrong. A biblical theology of suffering must account for the effects of sin. This passage acknowledges the illegitimacy of complaining about suffering for the consequences of your sin. This is not a blanket statement that applies to all reasons for suffering. The entire book of Lamentations is an emotional reflection on the consequences of experiencing the curses of the law. This lament is designed to help the people remain grounded in reality and keep God in proper perspective.
- D. Verses 40-42. Now after identifying the sin and accepting the judgement of God, the narrator makes a call to repentance. Lifting hands is an act of surrender and when you



physically lift your hands to the Lord it is an outward expression of the inward posture of the heart. This is a corporate confession of sin and subsequent consequences.

III. Confession of God's Just Chastisement (Lamentations 3:43-66)

- a. Verses 43-66: This section describes chastisement, suffering, and grief and is an imprecatory prayer of Jeremiah. He laments the persecution he suffered. He called out to the Lord for deliverance and the Lord answered him. Jeremiah models how to react to injustice and persecution by crying out to God for vengeance. He trusted God to execute justice and judgement. He did not retaliate or take matters into his own hands.

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

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