



Introduction

- Lamenting can seem very abstract
- As a culture, we are allergic to grief unless it can somehow benefit us.
- The church is by no means immune from this cultural allergy to grief.
- The human experience is more than just what is positive and good.

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

- 2 *a time to be born, and a time to die;*
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- 3 *a time to kill, and a time to heal;*
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 *a time to weep, and a time to laugh;*
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- 5 *a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;*
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 *a time to seek, and a time to lose;*
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- 7 *a time to tear, and a time to sew;*
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- 8 *a time to love, and a time to hate;*
a time for war, and a time for peace.” (Ecc 3:1-8)

- Times of joy and hardship for all mankind.
 - The rain falls on both the righteous and the wicked (Matt 5:45).
 - “It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart.” (Ecc 7:2)

Definitions

- Grief
 - Sorrow or Heaviness of heart brought about through disappointment, disillusionment, failure or sin.
- Lament
 - A loud cry, a howl, or passionate expression of grief. It is a prayer in pain that leads to trust.
 - Lament is the reconciliation of God’s good character and the terrible circumstances which you find yourself in. Lament is how one grieves well.
 - “Lament rises from a firm belief in the character of God, an understanding of the brokenness of sin, and a heartfelt longing for the completion of God’s redemptive plan.”
1~ Mark Vroegop

¹ Vroegop, Mark, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, (Wheaton, IL; Crossway, 2019), 158



Should a Christian Grieve?

- Questions
 - If everything that comes to pass does so according to God's perfect will, then who are we to be discontent?
 - Should we accept everything from the hand of the Lord?
 - If our Christian friend or family member died, is in the glorious realms with Christ, and I will see them one day eternally, then why should I be sad?
 - How can a Christian grieve if we have a great hope?
 - Is it ok to cry over our losses or is that selfish?
- Positive text that speaks to Christian grief.
 - *"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." ~ (1 Thess 4:13-14)*
 - *"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise." (Js 5:13) ESV*
- Most perfect example of our Lord doing so.

"17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 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. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But



some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?” ~ (Jn 11:17–37).

- Jesus is moved with compassion and grief of his friend and sympathizes with her and weeps.

When do we Lament?

- Lamenting is not just for times of severe grief, but should be a normal practice for any trouble or concern that one has.
- Since lament is a means of processing our grief with God in view, then why would we not do it even in minor times of distress.
 - *“When a friend misunderstands you, a child’s behavior is embarrassing, your family finances are inadequate, or the flu has knocked you down, you can use lament to redirect your heart. When a conflict in your marriage is discouraging, the invitation to the wedding didn’t come, your church’s vitality is subpar, or your baby won’t sleep through the night, let lament do its work in the ordinary grief of life.” ~ Mark Vroegop*
 - *“If God’s hand be not seen in the affliction, the heart will do nothing but fret under affliction.” Thomas Brooks*
- It also should be done during times of communal grief.
 - *“that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther obligated them, and as they had obligated themselves and their offspring, with regard to their fasts and their lamenting.” (Es 9:31)*

What are the benefits of Lament?

- a. Language for loss
 1. Provides vocabulary for grief
- b. Solution for silence
 1. Establishes communication with God
- c. A category for complaints
- d. A framework for feelings
 1. “Lament validates the expression of pain while providing a framework—a God-centered structure—so we avoid falling into the trap of self-centeredness, which can take root in times of deep sadness.” ~ Mark Vroegop
- e. A process for our pain
- f. Way to worship



Lament as worship

- Ultimately, we grieve as a means of sanctification which brings glory to God.

1 *Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.*

2 *Preserve my life, for I am godly;
save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.*

3 *Be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all the day.*

4 *Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*

5 *For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.*

6 *Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
listen to my plea for grace.*

7 *In the day of my trouble I call upon you,
for you answer me.*

8 *There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.*

9 *All the nations you have made shall come
and worship before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.*

10 *For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.*

11 *Teach me your way, O LORD,
that I may walk in your truth;
unite my heart to fear your name.*

12 *I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.*

13 *For great is your steadfast love toward me;
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.*

14 *O God, insolent men have risen up against me;
a band of ruthless men seeks my life,
and they do not set you before them.*

15 *But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.*

16 *Turn to me and be gracious to me;
give your strength to your servant,
and save the son of your maidservant.*



*17 Show me a sign of your favor,
that those who hate me may see and be put to shame
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me. (Ps 86:1–17)*