

Our Lamenting Lord

I'm trying to get where Jesus is, but I'll never reach who He was. I need to offer a bit of clarity, because people don't attempt a goal they know they can't reach. So, here's what I mean. I want to be with Him, and that is attainable, but I will never be exactly like Him. There are so many areas in my life, brethren, that I fall short. Love for God? I fall short. Faith in Him? I fall short. Devotion to Him? I fall short. Discipline? I fall short. Loving others? I fall short. Humility? I fall short. Jesus never fell short. I'm just not going to reach who He was, but I know I'll be with Him and strive to be like Him.

Yet, though I know I fall short and whatever storm that comes my way should be weathered, I struggle. Sometimes sin has caused pain in my life. Sometimes life running its natural course or the sins of others have caused pain in my life. You know, when a storm hits, the skies are dark, aren't they? So many storms in life . . .

- Husband dies and leaves wife alone with child.
- Your child passes leaving a hole in your heart.
- Wife leaves your side after 20 years of marriage.
- Child abandons the Lord resulting in parents' broken hearts - crying alone in their rooms.
- Enemies attack like hungry dogs - sometimes close friends or even family members.
- Sin you've committed and you struggle feeling restored.
- The list goes on and on . . .

How do you deal with the sorrow? How do you respond? **Someone request we discuss this.**

This was a fun week. I read through Lamentations. Then I tried to make my way through all the Psalms of Lament (albeit, obviously very quickly) in order to get a feel and trend of the Psalms. First of all, it's fair to say that David had enemies and his own sin. He addressed this over and over to the Lord. Many times he goes straight into praising God, or acknowledging God's goodness and confidence in His help. He'll call for God's justice and help towards his enemies.

However, there are many times when he expresses his feelings of helplessness as well and wonders where God is or how long He'll allow his suffering to last. A very common phrase is "Will you be angry with us forever?" While most Psalms end with a light at the end of the tunnel (God is faithful and will deliver and deserves praise), sometimes they don't, such as [Psalm 45; 60; 88](#).

You are human. Humans have questions and can be easily confused. I unfortunately read an article about a young man (15 years old) who was shot this past week and died. One witness said "He was screaming out for his mom. And it's hurtful to hear that man. And no one was able to help him."

What is lament? Well, it's mourning. It's sadness and grief being expressed in various forms. That's what it means, but what is it? Give me context and put some meaning behind it in my life.

It's that thing you do when your world is being torn apart. **It's when the inner storm can no longer be confined.** It's sometimes understood in clear precise words, but other times there are no words to offer - only moaning and tears. It's a feeling of hopelessness - deep sadness. Behind it all, usually, is a call for help as well. Did you know that, by far, the two most quoted OT books in the NT are from Isaiah and Psalms? Did you know that over 1/3 of the Psalms are in the "lament" category? 59 out of 159 Psalms.

I'm not gonna lie. I've struggled with Psalms. It's not because I don't feel comfortable expressing my thoughts or emotions. It's partly because there are references to the culture at that time I can't totally relate to, partly because it can be very repetitive, and also because it was probably even more powerful when put to music. I equate Psalms to country music: not crazy about it as a genre, but there's some gold in there. One of my favorite passages is from a Psalm. However, part of the problem could be that, while we're comfortable with the idea of lament, that doesn't mean we practice it. It doesn't mean that we go out of our way to talk to God in such a manner. They may not seem practical. However, that would be a mistake on our part. I know I've had to basically "walk through" with someone how I talk to God about my frustrations, worries, doubts, etc. Truth be told they're some of the most powerful moments with God, but I don't do it often enough. But perhaps we don't do it often because we don't have faith (like men such as David) that's it's going to be alright or that God will act. That's one thing that becomes very clear in David's songs - God will act and save.

Because non one wants to stay in a state of lament. It's a hard place to live in. **I don't want lamenting to become my Lord, but lamenting makes me feel more at home with my Lord.** See, here's where it gets tricky. You don't want to live in it, but we need to live through it because it changes us, Lord willing, for the better. **Lamenting's end goal is to grow our faith towards God.** The more depressing picture of the young 15 year old boy is that of a dying man with no one to call out to because no one is available or he perceives that no one can help. Yet, that's not what we find in Jesus. In Him, we find a man (around 33) crying out to His Father with complete confidence. But brethren, He grieved and experienced sorrow.

- At the news of John's death (John 14:13)
- At the death of Lazarus (John 11:35)
- At the thought of His departure (John 12:27-28)
- At the thought of His betrayer (John 13:21)
- At the thought of Israel's destruction (Luke 19:41)
- In the garden (Luke 22:39-44)

- Take note that agony resulted in more prayer. That's what Jesus did when hit with grief.

We sing about the "Old, Old, Story". You know it well. Our Savior was betrayed. He was handed over - mocked, beaten and scourged. He was led outside the city gates to Golgotha.

- On the cross (Mark 15:33-39)
 - Hebrews 5:7-8 In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard

because of His reverence. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered.

This brings us to **Psalm 22**. I titled this sermon, "Our Lamenting Lord", because that's what this passage is, but it was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. My hope is that you'll feel comfort from hearing Jesus' words during an agonizing moment in His life.

- **Psalm 22:1** This is what Jesus quotes on the cross. It would be a mistake to isolate the one passage, because we learn that several portions of the passage are ultimately fulfilled by Christ on the cross. Therefore, we need to understand the overall point.
- David feels abandoned. He feels as though God is not answering his call for help unlike times in the past when He answered the fathers of Israel. He expressed how his enemies taunted him. He asks the Lord to be near him. He describes how his life is being threatened and how he's at the point of death. Again, he asks for help. Then the Psalm shifts to praising God because he knows God has not hidden His face or closed His ears. He will praise God in the midst of the congregation. Those who fear God will be satisfied.
- Allow me to read these passages. Understand they first applied to the feelings and life of David, but were ultimately fulfilled and felt in the life of Jesus, in particular, His end on the cross.
- This is our Lord. He suffered. He grieved. He lamented. He pointed others, ultimately, to trust the Father.
- *(And to be clear and fair: Did you know the Father laments as well? It's especially clear in the Prophets. God mourns His people and the break in their relationship. He'll go down memory lane and even ask, "Where did I go wrong? What happened to us? Why did you turn to other gods?)*

But it's not just the Lord who does this. David did it over and over again. Women and men in the Bible are seen grieving over and over again. In my studies I also looked at Lamentations. I found myself asking, "Why is this book in the Bible? What role does it play? What's its significance?" We think the author is Jeremiah, but either way - **what does Lamenting over Israel's captivity change? What does lamenting change in your life?** I wanted to take note of a few principles. I believe you'll relate, principally, to this book of Lamentation as well.

- **1:1** Lamenting will cause you to look at what once was - it forces you to confront emotions.
- **Psalm 137:1** By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.
- **1:20-21** Many times intense sorrow affects the body. Many times we feel as though no one is present to help us. Lamenting doesn't shy away from articulating what may seem obvious. We need not shy away from telling the Lord what is obvious. "Lord, I don't feel good and am feeling alone. I don't feel like there's anyone around me who can help or cares to really pay attention to the depth of sorrow I'm feeling."
- **2:11-12** Not only do we discuss the turmoil in our own lives, but we can talk to the Lord about what we're seeing around us and the helplessness we feel. This could be what you're seeing in the life of a loved one, for example, but you feel helpless to help them. You're dealing with the realities of life which can be absolutely brutal. In this author's life - he knew of women who devoured their own due to a lack of food (**4:10**).
- **3:1-9** We are forced to deal with our feelings and hurt and abandonment. The Lord already knows how you feel - do you think it's better to not deal with it with Him?

- Vs. 40-45 shows an interesting reality: what Jerusalem was guilty of and how God punished them thoroughly. This is important to remember when grief is felt because of sin. Listen, the process of getting through the results of sin is dealing with the reality. Wasn't it Jesus who said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4).
- 3:55-60 Lamenting is ultimately pointing us towards the Lord. It's about putting our faith in Him while we're in the midst of pain. This is the common trend behind psalms or passages of lamentation. **It may not be what you want to hear at the moment, but it's where you need to get.**
- Caution: This is a process. You'll take note of something in such passages: the authors will go back and forth proclaiming their faith in the Lord, while looking around and wondering where He is, then back to their faith in the Lord, and then again describing the horror around them. It's not clean - it's messy. It's people.

This was a good week, but it also challenged me. I know I personally had a much needed moment of Lament not long ago. It was a conversation that was long overdue. It's very easy to underestimate these kind of conversations. Sometimes you don't realize how much you've needed to "vent" until you do. You may find you've been upset with the Lord. You may find you've been trying to fix things on your own. You may find that a conversation with your Father is long overdue. My plea is that we continue to learn how to lament so that we draw closer to our God and that He become like a Father to us all.