

O LORD, Open Our Eyes...

Lamentations 3:1-24

Introduction to Lamentations

- Jeremiah the prophet is the author of Lamentations according to church tradition.
- Five poems or "laments"

How did we get here?

- God's covenant promise to Abraham - (Gen 15:18)
- Isaac → Jacob → Joseph and 11 brothers
- Egypt → Moses leads the people out of Egypt → 40 wilderness years
- Moses' final words/warnings (~1400 BC) (Deut 28:1-14) → Blessings for obedience
- Joshua → Judges → Kings
- David's covenant (~1000 BC) (2 Samuel 7:10-13)
- Solomon's temple (~960 BC) (1 Kings 9:1-9)
- Wicked kings (~586 BC) (2 Kings 25:8-12)
- Fulfillment of Moses' warning in Deut 28:15-58 - Curses for disobedience
- Laments 1 & 2 describe the horrors and the devastation of God's judgment on Jerusalem

Who was Jeremiah?

- Born in Anathoth, 3 miles north of Jerusalem
- His Father, Hilkiah, was a priest, he never married
- He was appointed and protected by the Lord to prophesy during
 - Josiah (~626 BC) → Jerusalem destruction (587 BC) (Jer 1:1-10; 14-19)
- For 40 years he gave messages of warning and doom (Jer 7:1-15)
- His messages were rejected by the king and other Jewish leaders (Jer 36:23)
- While Jerusalem was under siege by the Babylonians as foretold by Jeremiah...
 - He was put in prison (Jer 32:1-2)
 - and beaten and thrown into a dungeon for many days (Jer 37:13-16).
- Jerusalem was ultimately destroyed (Jer 39:1-2; 8-10)...
- Afterwards he was taken to Egypt where he continued to prophesy against the Jews (Jer 43:5-7)

Lam 3:1-18 - In a dark place

Lam 3:19-21 - Coming out of the pit

- Crying out to the Lord (3:19-20)
- Changed Thinking (3:21)

Lam 3:22-23a - Christmas every day

- 25 Categories (see handout)

Lam 3:23b-24 - Praise, Faith and Hope!

Two suggested takeaways

- 1.
- 2.

Concluding Prayer - Oh LORD, Open Our Eyes (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Categories of Our Heavenly Father's Expressions of Love and Mercy

1. People (family, friends, neighbors, Christian family, co-workers, first-responders, medical workers, teachers, grocery store workers, etc.)
2. Resources (food, clothing, homes, possessions)
3. Technology (transportation, communication, medicine,
4. Creation (animals, mountains, rivers, beaches, clouds, rain, snow, trees, landscapes, the heavens)
5. Art (music, paintings, sculpture, pottery, architecture)
6. Celebrations (birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, etc)
7. Emotions (joy, peace, contentment, discontent)
8. Desires
9. Opportunities (work, education, travel, recreation, hobbies, serving others)
10. Trials (see James 1:2-4)
11. Protection (Physical, Emotional)
12. Health, Sleep, Rest, Comfort - "The very fact of awakening to a new day is in itself a renewal of God's mercy. Man has passed safely through the night..." EBC
13. Spirit (self, Himself)
14. Faith/Belief
15. Hope (no crying, no mourning, no sin, no death, no pain, peace, etc)
16. Forgiveness
17. Freedom
18. Access to Himself
19. Growth (cf. Zach's message)
20. Fruit
21. Intercession & Advocacy
22. Life, Eternal life
23. His Love
24. Truth
25. Church
- 26.
- 27.
- 28.
- 29.
- 30.

Discussion Questions

(Note to discussion leaders: Some of these questions will take quite some time to answer. You probably will want to pick and choose the ones that will be most helpful and appropriate for the time you have for small group discussion. As a suggestion you may want to consider #11 as a takeaway assignment for the people in your group.)

1. Have you ever had a disappointment that you blew out of proportion and it caused you to miss something good that someone was doing or trying to do for you? Explain what you learned, or should have learned, from that experience.
2. Read Deuteronomy 28:15-58. Make a summarized list of the curses. Then read Lamentations 1-2 and summarize what happened to Jerusalem. Compare the two summaries.
3. Read Jeremiah 1:1-10 and 1:14-19. Write down what you learn about Jeremiah and his calling from the Lord. Now compare that to what the Lord tells the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20.
4. Think of a time when you had such heartache as Jeremiah is expressing Lam 3:1-18. How did you respond? Were you able to come out of the despair and sadness? If so, how? If not, are there any insights from this study that you are willing to apply?
5. In Lamentations 3:21 we see quite a change in Jeremiah's outlook. How do you think he was able to make such a dramatic change?
6. Do you have trouble seeing the daily expressions of love and compassion towards you? If so, why? If not, how do you regularly recognize these things?
7. Add at least five categories of expressions of love and compassion from your Heavenly Father to the list I provided.
8. Jeremiah certainly recalled to his mind God's character and His promises. What are some of your favorite aspects of His character and His promises that are helpful in having a joy-filled life?
9. Are you daily filling your mind with the truth of God's Word? How do the passages in Psalm 1:1-3 and Psalm 19:7-14 encourage us in this important daily discipline?
10. If we are not daily filling our minds with the truth of God's Word, how will that affect our struggle with overcoming the challenges of life and not losing hope?
11. Take some time and write your own personal lament to God about a past or present situation. Make sure to include some truth and hope at the end.