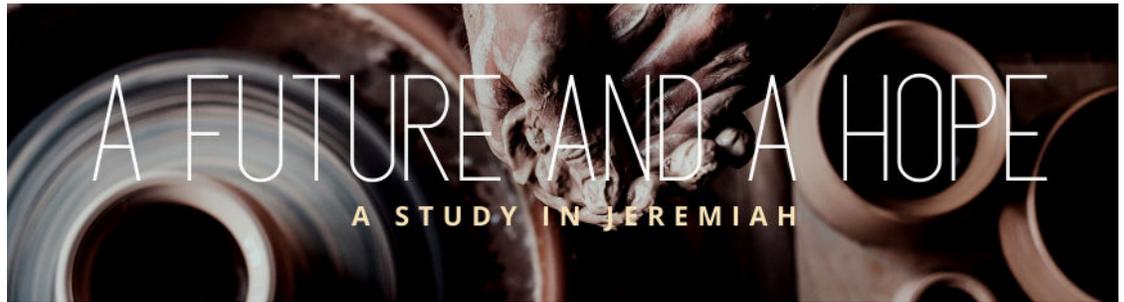


GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 13
WEEK OF SEPT 6



Growth Group Summer 2020

Great is Your Faithfulness

Week 13 – September, 2020 - Lamentations 3:19-33

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at a church. In this time of Corona19 and “social distancing” please don’t meet in person, but do continue to check in with each other. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at connect@ljpres.org. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

Setting the Context

The scene we see in Lamentations is one of destruction, loss, and grief. Reality is bleak and steps ahead seem incomprehensible. The book of Lamentations is composed of 5 poems, each written in the style of dirge poetry. Dirge poetry is most commonly used in funerals to commemorate those who have passed on. In this book we see Jeremiah mourning the loss of his beloved Jerusalem. It was written shortly after 587 BC when the Babylonians had captured Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and therefore ended the Kingdom of Judah. Jeremiah is grieving, he is writing for all that has been lost.

While we see similar writing in other parts of scripture (Psalms, Job etc...), the confessional, mournful nature of Lamentations reaches beyond individual lament. Jeremiah is confessing on behalf of his nation. There is a recognition that this judgement from God was prophesied about and could have been avoided through obedience. That is the real tragedy.

The judgement of God was promised, but it is not the final purpose for the people of God. The nation of Judah needed to return to God. In fact, that was their only hope. The generational sin and wandering from God had led them to a place of utter despair. Jeremiah recognized that, “though (the Lord) brings grief, he will show compassion” (vs. 3:32). The steadfast nature of God is true in times of judgement and in times of joy. The book of Lamentations shows us that judgement and promises often go hand in hand.

Yet, these poems do not stay in hopelessness. Through these poems, Jeremiah points us to the steadfastness of God. God is the main character of the story. In verse 3:22, Jeremiah writes, “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed.” It is this hope that allows Jeremiah to find some footing. The loving, constant nature of God allows Jeremiah to grieve, to confess, and to repent.

In this passage note how judgment and promise, grief and hope, and confession and restoration harmonize to fulfill the purposes of God.

If you want to reflect on this passage through song type this link into a phone or computer to access it: <https://immanuelspokane.bandcamp.com/track/lamentations-3-holy-saturday>



Exploring the Text

Read Lamentations 3:19-33

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. ²⁰ I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. ²¹ Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

²² Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

²⁵ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; ²⁶ it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. ²⁷ It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.

²⁸ Let him sit alone in silence, for the Lord has laid it on him. ²⁹ Let him bury his face in the dust— there may yet be hope. ³⁰ Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace.

³¹ For no one is cast off by the Lord forever. ³² Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. ³³ For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.'

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) For the past three months we have been looking at the prophetic words of Jeremiah. What is something new that you learned about Jeremiah during this sermon series?
- 2) What do you think about the idea that the same God who brings grief, also brings compassion? (see verse 32) How does God do both? situation like Jeremiah faced, where he was sinking quickly in a cistern? Has life ever felt like this for you?
- 3) Is there an area of your life, right now, where you feel as though your "soul is downcast"? Have you experienced any glimpses of God's hope in the midst of that?
- 4) What is your typical response to God when you are experiencing affliction or grief? How do you approach God during those times? Lament? Anger? Questioning? Silence?
- 5) In his sermon on Sunday, Pastor Paul referenced a quote by Nicholas Wolterstorff in Lament for a Son. "God is not only the God of the sufferers but the God who suffers...It is said of God no one can behold His face and live. I always thought this meant no one could see His splendor and live. A friend said perhaps it meant that no one could see His sorrow and live. Or perhaps His sorrow is splendor...Instead of explaining our suffering, God shares it." How do you respond to this idea of God sharing in our suffering? Do you find it helpful?
- 6) What does it look like to "wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord", in the midst of our trials? What do you think Jeremiah meant by that? What does that look like practically?
- 7) Jeremiah speaks of God's great faithfulness. Think back through the past several months and share about a time you saw God's faithfulness at work.