



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Jeremiah; Lamentations Sermon Series
Supports Session 13: Good
Sermon Title: "How to Process Your Pain"
Passage: Lamentations 3:19-33

Connection to Lesson 13

In Lamentations, Jeremiah lamented the fall of Jerusalem. We can learn from Jeremiah how to lament the painful experiences we face as well.

Opening/Introduction

Most of us can point to an experience that brought pain and challenged our belief in people in general. In those times, we are forced to deal with our pain. Most of us are not familiar with lament and how it helps us heal.

Jeremiah appears as one of the most emotionally mature persons in Scripture. In Lamentations, Jeremiah laments the severity of Jerusalem's fall (Lam. 1), names the Lord as the source of the fall (Lam. 2), hopes for salvation from it (Lam. 3), rehearses its social consequences (Lam. 4), and prays for return and restoration from it. We find the point of Lamentations in a prayer that shows us how to lament.

Outline

- 1. L: Level with God, others, and yourself about how painful things are.**
 - a. Jeremiah admitted, "Remember my *affliction* and my *homelessness*, the *wormwood* and the *poison*. I *continually* remember them and have become *depressed*" (3:19-21, emphasis added).
 - b. The starting point for handling pain in a mature way is to admit that the pain is really bad.

- 2. A: Accept that the pain may be from the Lord.**
 - a. Jeremiah acknowledges that the fall of Jerusalem was an act of the Lord (Lam 2). He counseled young men, "It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is still young. Let him sit alone and be silent for God has disciplined him" (3:27-28).
 - b. To deal with pain in a way that strengthens our faith in God, we must start by asking the Lord, "What is your goal in this?" and to wait patiently for His answer (Lam 3:24-28).

- 3. M: Magnify the goodness of God.**
 - a. Jeremiah forgot his pain long enough to magnify God's goodness (3:22-32).

- b. Pain can bully us and coerce us into thinking only about the pain and to the point we ignore God's goodness. When pain is all we think of, something is off. God's goodness should permeate our minds, too (Phil. 4:8). In pain, disciplined thinking of God's goodness is needed.

4. E: Encourage other sufferers to keep you accountable.

- a. Jeremiah instructed young men in pain, "Let him offer his cheek to the one who would strike him" (3:30). David wrote, "Let the righteous one strike me—it is an act of faithful love; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let me not refuse it" (Ps. 141:5).
- b. When we are emotional, we need accountability. Sometimes emotions overwhelm us and all we can think about is finding relief "no matter what." In times like these, we need fellow sufferers to hold us accountable.

5. N: Name the certainties, the things that will not change.

- a. Despite pain, Jeremiah named some certainties. He did this with the use of the word "hope" (3:18,21,24,29). Jeremiah was certain the Lord would listen (v. 19), that He was highly motivated ("faithful love") to meet Jeremiah's need (v. 22), and that He would faithfully restock the supply of hope and certainty each morning (v. 23).

6. T: Turn to God with honest prayers.

- a. Jeremiah prayed, but he prayed prayers of a special nature. He prayed real prayers. These include, "Remember my affliction and my homelessness, the wormwood and the poison. I continually remember them and have become depressed. . . . I called on your name, LORD, from the depths of the pit" (3:19,55).
- b. While we should pray right prayers (e.g., the Lord's prayer), we can pray real prayers when we suffer. In Scripture, we read of God's people who prayed from their souls, telling the Lord of their pain and desire for retribution. David is a prime example (Pss. 5:10; 6:10; 7:6,9; 9:19; 10:2,12; 12:3). David could execute all those who opposed him, but often he filtered his desires through prayer and left most of his enemies with the Lord.

Conclusion

Some things deserve lament. Jesus looked at unbelieving, unsaved Jerusalem and lamented (Matt. 23:37-38; Luke 19:41). Paul had great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart that many of his Jewish friends did not trust Christ (Rom. 9:1-3). James said "Be miserable, mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you" (Jas. 4:9-10).

If we do not have faith in the cross and resurrection of Christ, we have something over which to lament. Nevertheless, God has been good enough to send Jesus to stand in as our substitute on the cross. Now that Jesus is risen, it is certain He will save anyone who calls on Him (Rom. 10:13). Now we need to be honest with God, admit we are not right with Him, and ask Him to eliminate our guilt and independence from Him.

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