

“A Turn Toward Hope”

Learning to Lament Series - Pt. 2

Jan 16-17, 2021

Psalm 13, 43, 61

Introduction

- Last week recap
 - We learned: **God Made a Way to Move Forward**
 - One of the ways that we move forward is through the spiritual discipline of lament. We defined lament as **A Prayer Path to Process Our Emotions**.
 - Full lament walks us through 4 phases:
 1. **Raw and Honest** Personal Revelation to God
 2. **Realignment with Reality** – Seeing God again
 3. **Personal Contact** – Sitting in the Mess with the Lord
 4. **Restoration** – Letting the Holy Spirit knit us back together.
 - **The Importance of Emotional Healing** – Some of our personalities are not comfortable or equipped to deal with our emotions and we tend to avoid them or stuff them. Some others of us feel things so intensely that we can't handle the brutality of it and hide from them. Either way they are crippling or stifling us. God is not content with us being hampered. **He has done too much to set us free, to be content with shackles on His child's wrists.**
 - **Walking Back into It (the hurt) to Walk Fully Free (forward)** – When something hurts bad enough for us to shove it away, the last thing we want to do is open it back up again. But that is exactly what some of us need to do. It's festering in the dark and not only is it not healing, but it's getting worse.
 - **The Need to Open Up**

Hidden Hurts Rarely HEAL

Lesson

Getting a Context of David's Struggle

- **David revealed two primary struggles in his writings (i.e. Psalms):**
 1. Judgment/Discipline from God = disconnection from God
 2. Literal, Physical Danger
- **Our Struggles may be:** loss, grief, fear, anxiety, worry, job loss, mental illness, physical pain, relational challenges, disease, etc.
 - **But the underlying emotions and processing is very similar (Hermeneutics)** – there is one meaning intended by the author, but multiple applications. We are reading about the Psalmists struggles and how he was processing and although our context may be different (literal meaning), we can apply the truths and principles to our lives (application).
 - **As you hear the Psalmist's distress, put in your distress.**
 - **Resource Page** – bridgeway.church/lament – how to pray through The Lament Psalms and make them personal.

A Progression of Healing – I’m going to lead us through **3 Lament Psalms** together today and show you a progression of the Psalmists walking through healing. At no point have their circumstances changed yet, but their perspective does.

- **We left off last week** reading a Lament Psalm that was primarily a raw and honest dumping of heart and cries of desperation that ended abruptly with no real solutions. It was like reading a personal diary or journal of the hurting.
- **Those are rare.** More commonly we see the ones we are covering today. Let’s take a look.
- **Step 1 - Overwhelmed by Circumstance with a Hint of Hope**
 - Ps 13:1–6 (David) – *“How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? ²How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? ³Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, ⁴lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. ⁵But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. ⁶I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.”¹*
 - **Why we Legitimately Have Hope** – this is not an imaginary process or wishful thinking. This is a process that leads to freedom and health that’s Scripturally based. **For a Christian, Hope is absolute, the only question is timing.**
 - **That truth is founded on 3 realities: What God did, is doing and will do.**
 - **1.) What God Did** – The Bible says that God’s love was so intense that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to die for the sins of His people so that they may be transformed and reconnected with their God. When Jesus said, ‘it is finished’, it was full and complete. For those who have given their lives over to King Jesus and traded their broken lives, for His whole one, there is full forgiveness and cleansing and we are positionally perfect before God.
 - **What That Means in our Distress** – what that means is that the most important part of us, our spiritual reality has been perfected by our Savior and we are now connected to God so that His healing and purpose can flow into us and through us. It means that anything that hurts us today pales in comparison to the greater healing we have already received, so we are dealing with the lesser, not the greater pain.
 - **2.) What God is Doing** – Now that we are cleansed and connected to God, the Holy Spirit can indwell us thereby being a constant companion in the mess of our lives and be a coach and transformative agent shaping us into the image of Jesus Christ.
 - **What that Means in Our Distress** – It means that we are never alone in our distress. It means that God is always near us and actively involved in our lives. It means that He can do anything, at any time. It means that Heaven has now come to earth for us and we are not only dealing with

¹ Another Great Example of this type is Psalm 6, 42, 130, 142

the limitations of this existence, but now have access to the next, concurrently. It means that for the Christian, nothing is wasted, not even in our sin and harm. God is a God of redemption and knows how to turn things around for our good and make us stronger than before. It means that our suffering has purpose on it.

- **3.) What God will Do** – Unlike the Old Testament saints we have read the Book of Revelation, we understand the prophecies of the prophets, we know the end of the story. We know that God will shut down the enemy and along with him, God will eliminate sin, disease, death, pain, sorrow and all that hurts our hearts. Everything will be made right, that's a guarantee.
 - Re 21:1–5 – *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,...² And I saw the holy city,...coming down out of heaven from God,...³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new..."*
 - **What This Means in Our Distress** – All suffering for a believer is only temporary. The Question is never left at why but shifted to How Long. Eventually your disease will be gone, your pain will be removed, your heartache will be replaced with joy, your enemies will be either defeated or transformed into friends, your loss will be filled, your distress will be soothed and your sickness will be healed. It's only a matter of time.
- **Overlapping Worlds** - Our suffering and God's Victory are not existing in two different worlds. They are overlapping and simultaneous.
 - **Mary & Martha struggled with this** – When Lazarus died (their brother) they both chastised Jesus when He arrived by saying, "if you were here, this never would have happened." But the reality is that it did happen and Jesus was right in the middle of it. Bigger things were at play and Christ was instituting a far more powerful reality. The same is true for us. One day God will make it right, but even until then, He is working with our pain and making it into something glorious.
- **Step 2 - I'm Still in It But I'm not a Victim, I'm a Prayer Warrior**
 - Ps 43:1–5 – *"Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! ²For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? ³Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! ⁴Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. ⁵Why are you cast*

down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.”²

- **Joseph (Old Testament saint) was a victim but didn't live as a victim.** He was bullied. He was rejected. He was sold into slavery by his own family. He was imprisoned for a rape he didn't commit. He was the epitome of the innocent, good guy, who was victimized. But you don't see any of that in how he lived his life. He kept his eyes on the Lord and walked through the valley of death trusting that his Lord will see him through. He ends up on top in the end. Does he struggle and want to lash out? Of course, he's human, but it didn't define him.
- **We all have pain in process** – No one is walking around unscathed from life. Our power lies in our decisions on how to deal with it. Most of our wounds we are carrying are emotional and mental. Very few of us are physically wounded from prior assaults. What that suggests is that most of us have more power to let the redemption of God transform ALL our pain into victory and strength. Whatever we have lost can be recovered by our Almighty God.
- **Why Prayer Matters** – I've taught a lot on prayer so I'm not going to rehash that here. I will say, God created a system whereby we can pray and engage God and utilize His power here on earth. **Prayer Matters, because God made it matter.** Our prayers alter reality through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore **we are not helpless we are empowered to overcome.**
- **Step 3 - It's Here, but I've Moved On**
 - **Ps 61:1–8 (David)** – “Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; ²from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, ³for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. ⁴Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah ⁵For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. ⁶Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations! ⁷May he be enthroned forever before God; appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him! ⁸So will I ever sing praises to your name, as I perform my vows day after day.”³
 - **It's Still There** – It's important to note that at the end of Lament, the problem is still there. It didn't immediately resolve. We changed and our approach changed. All of our problems are not solved, but we are better suited to deal with them. With any distress there are multiple layers. **Lament heals the underlying layers so we can deal with the actual problem at hand.**
 - **What Moving on Really Means** – moving on doesn't mean it doesn't hurt or impact us, it means that it no longer rules our lives. For some of us our suffering is the most important thing about us. It's what we wake up and go to sleep thinking about. When we communicate it influences every conversation. **Our identity cannot be founded on anything but the reality of Christ and being God's child. Moving on is**

² Another Great Example of this type is Psalm 3, 55, 69, 86

³ Another Great example of this type of Psalm is 71, 118, 138

lifting our eyes and looking beyond our distress and living in light of God instead of circumstance.

Conclusion

- **God Made a Way to Move Forward – freedom is real and possible.** The answer will always be found in connecting to Christ and letting the Holy Spirit do the heavy lifting.
- **Next Week** – Pastor Matt will talk about:
 - **“Never-ending” Cycle** - the ways that God sets us free when we feel like we are stuck in a never-ending cycle and can’t get out.
 - **Group Lament** - What it means to Lament as a group, community and society.
- **Remind you of Resources** – Bridgeway.church/Lament
 - **Short audio devotionals**, including one with Bono btw
 - **Instructions** on how to integrate this into your life **personally**.
 - How to Pray through a **Lament Psalm**
- **Our Prayer Team** is going to be up here to enter into challenges with you. You are not alone in your struggles.
- **Let’s close with a few minutes with the Holy Spirit** ministering to us and we’ll wrap up – **For our online community**, Kidsway TV is coming up right after we sign off so get ready.