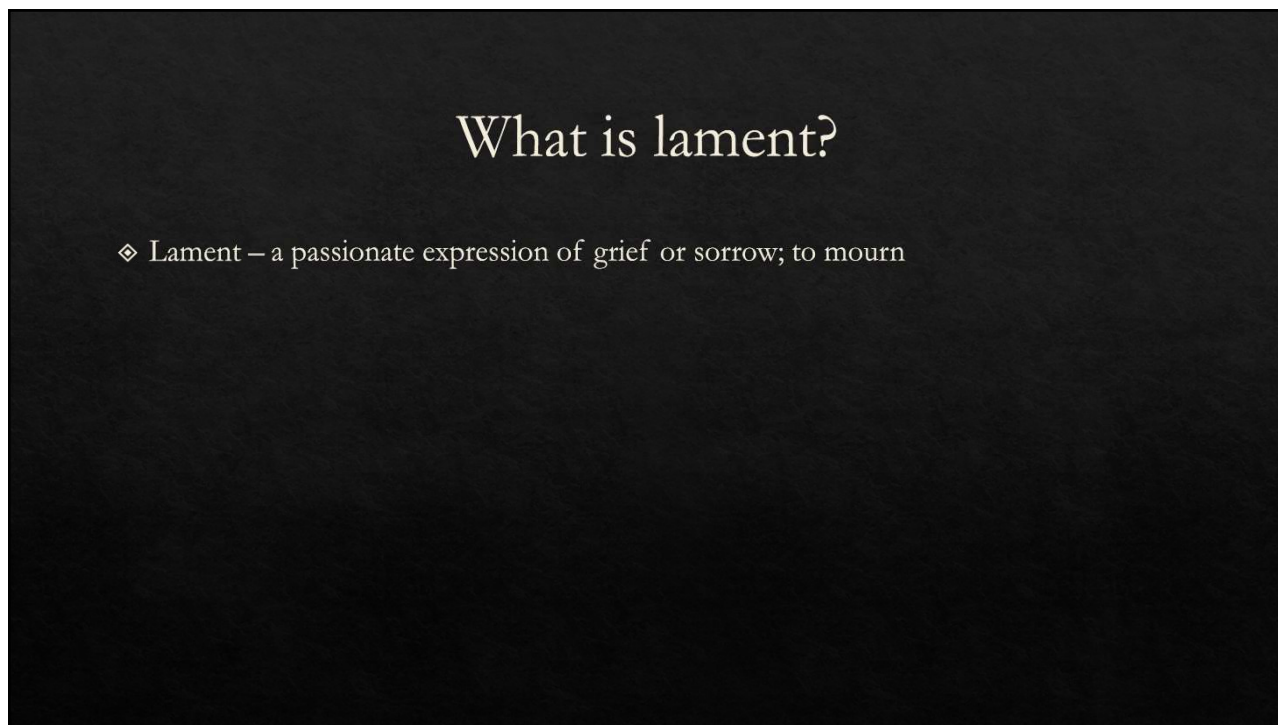


60



61

Psalm 13

1. How long, O LORD? will you forget me for ever? * how long will you hide your face from me?
2. How long shall I have perplexity in my mind, and grief in my heart, day after day? * how long shall my enemy triumph over me?
3. Look upon me and answer me, O LORD my God; * give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death;
4. Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," * and my foes rejoice that I have fallen.
5. But I put my trust in your mercy; * my heart is joyful because of your saving help.
6. I will sing to the LORD, for he has dealt with me richly; * I will praise the Name of the Lord Most High.

62

- ◇ What do we see?
 - ◇ There is movement: Lament to Praise.
 - ◇ How long? → Trust, rejoice, sing
 - ◇ Climax, Resolution, Denouement
 - ◇ Israel
 - ◇ Jesus: Good Friday to Easter

63

◇ Application

- ◇ Life of Faith and experience of God's love. God answers prayers and delivers his people.
- ◇ Praise is not apart from but also linked to the Psalm
- ◇ But Praise does not negate or supplant the significance of the lament. We do not rush through the lament but walk through it at the appropriate pace.
 - ◇ HOLY WEEK!!! We don't get to skip Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday any more than Jesus did.
 - ◇ Life is more than the happy ending. A good book is about building the tension so that the climax is appropriate to the release. Resolution too soon makes the tension seem contrived or insignificant.

64

Psalm 31

1. In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; * deliver me in your righteousness.
2. Incline your ear to me; * make haste to deliver me.
3. Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; * for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
4. Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, * for you are my tower of strength.
5. Into your hands I commend my spirit, * for you have redeemed me, O LORD, O God of truth.
6. I hate those who cling to worthless idols, * and I put my trust in the LORD.
7. I will rejoice and be glad because of your mercy; * for you have seen my affliction; you know my distress.

65

8. You have not shut me up in the power of the enemy; * you have set my feet in an open place.
9. Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; * my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.
10. For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing; * my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.

19. How great is your goodness, O LORD! which you have laid up for those who fear you; * which you have done in the sight of all for those who put their trust in you.
20. You hide them in the covert of your presence from those who slander them; * you keep them in your shelter from the strife of tongues.
21. Blessed be the LORD! * for he has shown me the wonders of his love in a besieged city.

66

- ◇ What do we see?
 - ◇ Alternating movement: Lament to Praise to Lament to Praise ...
 - ◇ Deliver me (1-2) → Rejoice and be glad (7-8) → Distress and grief (9-10+) → Goodness and blessed (19-21)
 - ◇ Israel in the time of:
 - ◇ Judges
 - ◇ Kingdom
 - ◇ In general

67

◇ Application

- ◇ Long road to the final conclusion.
 - ◇ Some move faster, slower
 - ◇ Forwards then backwards.
- ◇ Not very satisfying. We like to think there's a quick fix.
- ◇ Faith life patterns:
 - ◇ Sin and reconciliation to sin and reconciliation.
 - ◇ Cycle of grace (know we need it, forget we need it, know we need it)
- ◇ We are not always ok, and that is ok. Life is a process, and we are a work in progress. That acknowledgement welcomes grace as we struggle and as we heal.
- ◇ Sometimes walking through one door, one situation's resolution, only leads to a new set of circumstances to live into and overcome by grace.

68

Psalm 12

1. Help me, LORD, for there is no godly one left; * the faithful have vanished from among us.
2. Everyone speaks falsely with his neighbor; * with a smooth tongue they speak from a double heart.
3. Oh, that the LORD would cut off all smooth tongues, * and close the lips that utter proud boasts!
4. Those who say, "With our tongue will we prevail; * our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"
5. "Because the needy are oppressed, and the poor cry out in misery, * I will rise up," says the LORD, "and give them the help they long for."
6. The words of the LORD are pure words, * like silver refined from ore and purified seven times in the fire.

69

7. O LORD, watch over us * and save us from this generation for ever.
8. The wicked prowl on every side, * and that which is worthless is highly prized by everyone.

◇ What do we see?

◇ Lament with an interlude of Praise

◇ Help (1), plunder (5a) → I will now arise (5b) → wicked, vile (8)

◇ Israel:

◇ Kings amidst adversaries

◇ Life of the Prophets

◇ Much of the religious establishment in Jesus day

70

◇ Application

◇ Shift from lament to praise has divine origins (5b)

◇ Saving help (aside from the eternal) is sometimes short-lived, and sometimes not fully achieved. Those under affliction are sometimes given a respite of hope in the midst of trouble, a buoy in the sea of trials to keep one's head above water.

◇ Answers can lead to more questions that we couldn't see or understand when we first began. God's infinite knowledge and wisdom are beyond our comprehension, and so we may have to live into tension because he is God and we are not, and that's ok

71

Psalm 9

1. I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; * I will tell of all your marvelous works.
2. I will be glad and rejoice in you; * I will sing to your Name, O Most High.

18. For the needy shall not always be forgotten, * and the hope of the poor shall not perish for ever.
19. Rise up, O LORD, let not the ungodly have the upper hand; * let them be judged before you.
20. Put fear upon them, O LORD; * let the ungodly know they are but mortal.

72

Psalm 10

1. Why do you stand so far off, O LORD, * and hide yourself in time of trouble?
2. The wicked arrogantly persecute the poor, * but they are trapped in the schemes they have devised.

16. Break the power of the wicked and evil; * search out their wickedness until you find none.
17. The LORD is King for ever and ever; * the ungodly shall perish from his land.
18. The LORD will hear the desire of the humble; * you will strengthen their heart and your ears shall hear;
19. To give justice to the orphan and oppressed, * so that mere mortals may strike terror no more

73

- ◇ What do we see?
 - ◇ Reminder: 9-10 were likely written either as a single Psalm or as a pair
 - ◇ From Praise to Lament (with a little hope at the end).
 - ◇ Give thanks → Petition (19-20) → Lament (Ps. 10)
 - ◇ Beginning of troubles:
 - ◇ David and Absalom
 - ◇ 1st Generation of exiles as they look back on Jerusalem behind them in rubble and burning

74

- ◇ Application
 - ◇ Life does not always move in the direction we want or think it should
 - ◇ Things get worse after we pray.
 - ◇ People get more sick and die after we anoint and lay on hands.
 - ◇ Good people lose to bad. Good businesses fail.
 - ◇ Look to the Martyrs. Instead of salvation and deliverance there is destruction, chaos, loss, and death
 - ◇ Perhaps more than the other laments, this form reminds Christians that it is ok to mourn, grieve, lament.
 - ◇ God is still God, even when the answer is no, when everything goes wrong. We bring the whole of our lives to him, including the brokenness, suffering, and failure.
 - ◇ It is not the final word, but it is a poetic expression of the struggle in the midst of it

75

Psalm 88

1. O LORD, my God, my Savior, * by day and night I cry to you.
2. Let my prayer enter into your presence; * incline your ear to my lamentation.
3. For I am full of trouble; * my life is at the brink of the grave.
4. I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; * I have become like one who has no strength;
5. Lost among the dead, * like the slain who lie in the grave,
6. Whom you remember no more, * for they are cut off from your hand.
7. You have laid me in the depths of the Pit, * in dark places, and in the abyss.
8. Your anger weighs upon me heavily, * and all your great waves overwhelm me.

76

9. You have put my friends far from me; you have made me to be abhorred by them; * I am in prison and cannot get free.
10. My sight has failed me because of trouble; * LORD, I have called upon you daily; I have stretched out my hands to you.
11. Do you work wonders for the dead? * will those who have died stand up and give you thanks?
12. Will your loving-kindness be declared in the grave? * your faithfulness in the land of destruction?
13. Will your wonders be known in the dark? * or your righteousness in the country where all is forgotten?
14. But as for me, O LORD, I cry to you for help; * in the morning my prayer comes before you.
15. LORD, why have you rejected me? * why have you hidden your face from me?

77

16. Ever since my youth, I have been wretched and at the point of death; * I have borne your terrors with a troubled mind.
17. Your blazing anger has swept over me; * your terrors have destroyed me;
18. They surround me all day long like a flood; * they encompass me on every side.
19. My friend and my neighbor you have put away from me, * and darkness is my only companion.

◇ What do we see?

- ◇ Lack of movement. Simply Lament.
- ◇ No petition or plea. No resolution
- ◇ Israel
 - ◇ People in Egypt or Exile
 - ◇ David at the death of Absalom

78

We need laments

- ◇ Lament – a passionate expression of grief or sorrow; to mourn
- ◇ Christianity has, in many ways, become a happy, fun time religion, where there is only room for positive emotions and affirmative answers to prayers.
 - ◇ But what about unresolved situations? Unanswered prayers? When God says no or nothing? When we take one step forward and two steps backward?
 - ◇ Avoidance of terms like sin and judgment
 - ◇ Prosperity Gospel
 - ◇ Liturgical movement away from black to white, requiem/funerals to celebrations of life
- ◇ We must make room for good lament. When we do, we must remember that movement is not always tangible or immediate (remember Ps. 88), nor is it always in one direction only, from bad to good.

79