

Daily Worship Booklet

March 24th – March 28th, 2025

Lamentations



**GRIEVING
WITH GOD**

OUR RESPONSE

TO BROKENNESS

God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,
day after day, and the people of God were filled with joy.

Question 22: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Answer: Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ghost), in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Scripture Proofs:

Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14, 17; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26; 1 John 3:5.

Comment: What is astonishing about this question and answer is the fact that it actually happened. The eternal Son of God really did leave the glory of heaven and become a man. Take a moment to think about that.

Psalm of the Week: Psalm 141B. The words are on page 8.

Please pray for:

Mon - Evan and Kaylea, Lauren, Nash, Axl and Lennox Clarke

Tues - Lucas Coelho and Alice Coelho

Wed - Mark Cousins

Thur - Matthew DeHaan

Frid - Jordan and Doralynne, Amos, Natalie, Levi, Gabriel, Micah,
Matthias, Jonah, Isaac and Norah Dohms

Bible Questions for the week:

1. Who appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre?

Answer - Genesis 18:1

2. What did the Lord tell Abraham, and why did Sarah laugh?

Answer - Genesis 18:10, 12

Monday – Lamentations 3:22-24 - The Faithfulness of God.

The Portuguese explorer Bartholomew Dias originally named the southern tip of Africa the "Cape of Storms". He did so because the waters there have been the cause of many shipwrecks. Once the waters were learned to be navigated, the Cape of Storms was renamed "The Cape of Good Hope", for the optimism engendered by opening the trade route. In Lamentations, at least for a brief interval, we have rounded the Cape of Storms and come to the Cape of Good Hope.

As the Prophet expresses his confident hope in the midst of grief, he elevates us above sorrow and pain to plant us firmly upon the character of God. He speaks of the "steadfast love of the LORD". The word "steadfast love" is central to the Old Testament. It is difficult to find an English equivalent that adequately expresses the breadth of this small word. Very simply, it is a way of saying God is love, and God is gracious - He has a covenantal gracious love.

In these verses, there are three particular details about this gracious love.

- First, it "never ceases", nor does it ever "come to an end". Dreary and sorrowful as Jeremiah's situation was, it did not indicate a temporary cessation of the gracious love of God.
- Second, it is "new every morning". Not only does it continue forever, but it is never diminished, reduced, or weakened - you might say it never ages. There is a daily renewal of His gracious love.
- Third, it expresses His faithfulness, "great is your faithfulness". The faithfulness of God means He will do what He has promised, and this never-ending, ever-renewing gracious love to His people is a promise to which He will remain true.

That is where our hope directs itself in times of great sorrow, depression, and grief. As expressed elsewhere: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jeremiah 31:3).

Questions

1. What is God's "steadfast love"?
2. Give the three characteristics of His steadfast love.

Memory Verse

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22,23

Tuesday - Lamentations 3:25-39 - The Goodness of God.

It is not uncommon to hear people ask the question: Why do bad things happen to good people? It is a sincere and honest question as they struggle with the reality of grief, sorrow, and suffering. But it is a misguided question. The Bible never portrays us as "good" people. Rather, it says, "no one does good, not even one" (Romans 3:12). Perhaps the question should be: why do good things happen to bad people? The answer, of course, is that though we are bad, God is good.

In the first two laments and those that follow, it is emphasized that Jerusalem's destruction has been the direct result of their sin - they are bad people who have done bad, and so bad things result. Yet, for all the bad, the goodness of God could not be overthrown; He is still good to His people. That is where Jeremiah's hope directs him: "But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope ... The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him" (vv. 21, 25).

This confident expectation in God's goodness gives Jeremiah great freedom to cope and deal with his mournful circumstances. That is to say, the goodness of God allows him to patiently wait (v. 26), to bear the yoke of sorrow (v. 27), to guard his mouth with humility (vv. 28-29), and to endure injury inflicted by others (v. 30). That is because Jeremiah knows: "The Lord will not cast off forever," and it is God's goodness which will disapprove and triumph over the wickedness committed against the Prophet (vv. 34-36). Thus, he comes not only theologically, but experientially to a comforting place: "Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?"

Let us learn in our sorrow and pain to lay hold of the goodness of God: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Questions

1. Why do good things happen to bad people?
2. Why will the goodness of God overcome all things?
3. What promise does God give His children in Romans 8:28?

Memory Verse

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22,23

Wednesday - Lamentations 3:40-66 - The Forgiveness of God.

The Puritan Thomas Watson defined repentance as an inward humility and an outward reformation. These two need to always go together. It is not enough to behave well on the outside but to love sin in the heart, nor is it enough to hate sin in the heart but behave badly on the outside. True repentance is a heartfelt humility for sin that changes our actions. Of course, we cannot do that alone but need the Holy Spirit to do it in us.

There is an example of that in the Prophet. We have already seen that the sorrow of Jerusalem is because the people had sinned. God would not stop punishing them until they repented of their sin. So, Jeremiah says: "Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD! Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven". He knows that the people need to repent of their sins. They need heartfelt humility and a change of behaviour. People cannot expect God to forgive them if that does not happen.

The Bible promises us that when we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us (see 1 John 1:9). As Jeremiah repents of his sin, the Lord hears: "I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit; you heard my plea", and later "You have taken up my cause, O Lord; you have redeemed my life".

Even in the most difficult time, Jeremiah hoped in God's forgiveness. On this side of heaven, no situation is too far from God. We can feel we are in a bottomless pit of sorrow and despair, but God hears every prayer of faith, and is ready and willing to forgive. As the Psalmist sang: "If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared" (Psalm 130:3- 4).

Questions

1. Why can we not expect forgiveness if we do not repent?
2. What promise is given to those who will confess their sins?
3. What two things does true repentance include?

Memory Verse

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22,23

Thursday - Lamentations 4:1 - The Repetition of Sorrow.

The third lament resonates with covenantal hope and confidence in God. We might expect, therefore, that at last those who grieve in Zion have been given beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a faint spirit (see Isaiah 61:3). But the fourth lament shatters those expectations. Jerusalem still lies in ruin, its temple is still destroyed, and the Prophet is still exclaiming what he did in the first and second lament - "How!"

One of the difficulties in reading and studying Lamentations is its repetitive nature. Not once, not twice, but three times Jeremiah has already grieved over the destruction he sees, he has sorrowed over the cause of sin, he mourns the source of the chastisement, and he weeps his way into the presence of the Lord. And in this fourth lament, he will do it all over again. Of course, far from being vain repetition, we see the wisdom of the Spirit in this. He knows that there are some tears that only Jesus himself will be able to dry, and as long as we are on this side of heaven, our eyes flow with unceasing streams. Lamentations is repetitive because our grief and sorrow in losses and crosses is often repetitive.

This should remind us, once again, how important it is to "mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15). In our insensitivity, we sometimes want to tell people to "Get over it", or "It is time to move on". Grief needs to be worked through in Biblical and mature ways - even Jeremiah, for all his sympathy, does not avoid doing this. But we lack the sensitivity and wisdom of the Spirit if we think overcoming sorrow means drying the eyes and putting behind oneself the hurt and pain of the heart. In caring for those who are filled with grief, we need to be prepared to weep with them again and again, until Jesus himself will "wipe every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4).

Question

1. Why is Lamentations so repetitive?

Memory Verse

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22,23

Friday - Lamentations 4:1-11 - Reduced by Sin.

When our first parents sinned, they plunged all of mankind into sin and misery. It would be hard to estimate the immense loss that sin has brought. The Puritan Ralph Venning wrote: "Well-being is the life of life, and sin bears us so much ill-will, that it deprives us of our livelihood, and of that which makes it worth our while to live. Man was born to a great estate, but by sin, which was and is treason against God, he forfeited all."

As Jeremiah weeps over the destruction that sin brought, he simultaneously sees what sin had reduced the people to. The gold had grown dim (v. 1), the precious sons of Zion are regarded like earthen pots (v. 2), nurturing mothers have become cruel and negligent (vv. 3-4), the fine-dressed are covered in ashes (iv. 5), the pure and ruddy princes are black and shrivelled (vv. 7-8), and compassionate women have grotesquely boiled their children (v. 10). Men and women; young and old; noble and peasant had become a hideous sight. This is what Zion, with all her former splendour, had been reduced to on account of sin. No nation had been so honoured and privileged, and no nation - not even the city of Sodom - had lost so much.

This lament demonstrates the immeasurable loss that accompanies sin. While the things Jeremiah sees are horrific, tragic, and even stomach-turning repulsive, they are small things compared to the loss of an eternal soul because of sin. Who can measure that? Thankfully, God in Jesus Christ has found a way to "ransom my soul from the power of Sheol" (Psalm 49:15). He did so by sending His Son, who identified with our loss - the sin of man left the Son with nothing, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). He forfeited all so that in him we might gain all things.

Questions

1. What had sin done to these people?
2. What does that teach us about sin?
3. Why did Jesus give everything up?

Memory Verse

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22,23

Psalm 141B

3. When just men strike me in reproof,
Such kindness I'll accept.
I'll take it as a soothing oil,
My head will not reject.
And yet I will continually
Cry out in prayer to You
To protest all the evil deeds
That wicked people do.

4. Down from the side of rocky cliffs
Their leaders will be cast;
The pleasant words I speak to them
They then will hear at last.
As when the farmer plows the earth
And opens up the ground,
So at the grave's devouring mouth
Our scattered bones are found.

5. And so to You, O Sovereign LORD,
I look with longing eyes;
Do not leave me defenseless now;
On You my soul relies.
O keep me from the traps and snares
That wicked men have set.
While I pass safely, let them fall;
Catch them in their own net.