

Grieving With Hope

A Series Thru Lamentations — Lesson 2

Grieving

Remember that there are all kinds of losses that can cause severe grief or sorrow. These losses can be concrete or physical like the loss of a loved one or of a relationship. These losses can be abstract like lost opportunities and dreams. Everyone suffers losses and so everyone has grief. But mourning in a healthy way is a choice, and Lamentations was written to guide those persons left behind after the destruction of Jerusalem through their grieving process. There is no expiration date on grieving for when you are supposed to just be over it. We are also not in control of what triggers the memory of the hurt, even years after the event. But the issue is what we do with the hurt. To get to a point where the hurt can be managed and we can function in a healthy and responsible manner even with the hurt, we have to contemplate and assimilate the loss. That is what Lamentations 1 is about. The poem is repetitive because that is how grieving is. The loss remains “new” for a long time and the story has to be remembered and re-told to work through the loss.

1. **Acknowledging the Causes (1:8-11):** When we have guilt associated with our grief, nothing will relieve the pain until we acknowledge our guilt and any known sin. We see in this passage the consequences of Jerusalem’s sin in that it brings shame (v. 8), defilement (v. 9), desecration of the temple (4. 10), and famine (v. 11). Jerusalem must fully contemplate how her actions played a role in the current suffering.

— What consequences might result from not dealing with our guilt / sin when we mourn a loss?

— Note the repeated calls to God (vv. 9, 11) to look on Jerusalem’s affliction. Where Jerusalem had no human comforters, she could only appeal to God to acknowledge her great suffering.

— Is it important when we grieve that others acknowledge our pain?

2. **Seeing God’s Purposes (1:12-17):** The lament is repetitive but also intensifies as the text switches to the first person. Verse 12 asks those uninvolved in Jerusalem’s pain to look, listen, and compare it to anything they have ever experienced. We find 4 metaphors for their suffering: (1) fire, (2) hunter’s net, (3) yoke, and (4) winepress. But in this we see God’s purpose (v. 13) to turn His people back to Him.

— How is grief like a yoke? (v. 14)

— From Jerusalem’s position inside the pain, no one else could possibly have suffered more because Jerusalem cannot imagine greater suffering. What is the difference between being **inside the pain** and **outside the pain**?

3. **Confessions and Prayers (1:18-22):** In the closing of the first chapter we find two confessions: 1) God was just in what He did (v. 18a) and 2) Jerusalem rebelled against God’s Word (v. 18b). We find two prayers: 1) that God would witness Jerusalem’s suffering (v. 20), and 2) that God would bring justice on Jerusalem’s enemies.

— Read Matthew 5:44. Is it ok for a Christian to pray that God would deal with their enemies in this way?

4. **The Grief Inventory:** A good application of Lamentations 1 for someone grieving a loss is to create a grief inventory. Write a list of the facts of the loss, the focus of the loss, how it is affecting your life, and how you feel. For 60 days, take out the list and read it again. This is “grief work” as you raise your level of awareness to what has happened and humble yourself before God and allow Him to minister to you.