



“The Hope: God is Faithful” Lamentations 3

Ok, I know what you’re thinking, “Why is he wearing shorts?” I’m pretty smart. I can pick up on these things! Let me give a little backdrop. Last year, I got back into running. I had tried to strengthen my knees so that I could handle running. I was thoroughly enjoying. It provided great time with Tracy – and even Samuel got involved. It was so nice to get out and enjoy the outdoors with my family, while also knowing it was helping develop discipline and even work towards better health. I was running about 4 miles each run and then as we were approaching our family vacation, I decided I was going to spring for new running shoes – good running shoes that would help support my feet. I didn’t want to damage my body. So, I went to a special shoe store. They checked my arches. They recommended a certain kind of shoe. I ran. The next day, I was in pain. I thought it was a fluke. I ran another time. More pain. I took a break. Ran again. Pain. By mid-August, I knew I couldn’t run because sometimes I could barely walk without pain. I went to a chiropractor. Then, I went to physical therapy. But that didn’t seem to help. I then had an X-ray. Nothing. I had an MRI. Nothing. The doctor gave a guess, but said maybe time will heal it. Back to a chiropractor – and the pain still exists and it’s basically constant. I mean, sometimes I can walk better than at other times. But my left knee always bothers me. In addition to feeling minimal cushion between the bones, I get crazy nerve feelings like numbness and prickly feelings. So, wearing pants can almost drive me mad. When I get home, I go downstairs, put on shorts, and then I can at least move without feeling much of the nerve pain. But some of the things that sadden me are that I can’t get on my knees and play with my kids on the floor. I can’t move quickly through the house to help with various things. I have pain while preaching. And even sitting is bothersome. Walking up and down stairs takes me double the time.

So, this is a little backdrop, but you’re still wondering, “Why are you wearing shorts here?!” Well, it’s not just so that my leg can feel better while I’m preaching. You know, sometimes there are seasons in our lives when God brings temporary difficulty. You might stress, but then you get back in the Word, pray and focus your mind. You move forward and the situation leaves. You feel you’ve learned a lesson, and everything’s back to normal. Phew! But there are other seasons in life where normal doesn’t seem to come back. Not only that, but it seems like God is refusing to give “normal” back and he’s the One actively maintaining the pain. That’s the season I’ve been feeling I’m in. “God, why? Why can’t I play with my kids on the floor? You know I love to wrestle! Why can’t I move quickly? Why does it hurt most steps? Why doesn’t it seem like it can be fixed?” Not only that, but there are situations I’ve been in by God’s obvious sovereignty where running was talked about and emphasized and it was like God saying, “See what I have taken from you!”

I’m not going to say that over the last several months I’ve been perfect, but I’ve been able to focus back in the Word, pray and then proclaim God’s promises to my soul. This past week, though, was a breaking point. Got out of bed. Hurt. Moved around. Hurt. Tried to get socks for the kids. Hurts. Driving in the car. Hurts. Finally, I just broke down. I couldn’t hold in the tears.

As I say all of this, I want you to please know that I know that my pain doesn't even come close to certain pains others of you are experiencing here (or have experienced). I also know my pain isn't anywhere close to horrors of the pains of the people in Jerusalem. I simply am talking about me because I do believe what I'm saying here is going to help in setting the stage for the sermon this morning. And, I hope me being transparent while also talking about what I've been learning about lament, encourages you to see how lament can apply in your worship of God daily and also for us corporately.

So, last week I broke down. I wept. I asked "why?" On Wednesday morning, I felt like the description of Lady Zion in chapter 2. I knew I needed to pray to the Lord, but I was groaning. I know God's my only hope, but I was confused. And, I hadn't taken time to really lay my burdens at God's feet. How could I expect to praise him if I was still holding on my questions? But as I began to lay out my questions, my burdens, my frustrations. Even as I began to open a vent for my soul to cry, I started to learn some things through the experience:

First, God brings about these seasons to reveal more of himself to us. Does God bring grief just to give us some *thing* better? That's how I hear counsel. God doesn't take away that he doesn't give more. But the focus is still on things. The goal of God is always to show us more of his glory. He doesn't simply want us to feel happy or find equilibrium. God may not want to give us normal back. But if we are his children, and we are going through pain, he's taking us through deeper valleys to show us the greater heights of himself. And, while painful, his glory is worth it. But will we believe it? Practically, would I rather have my leg pain gone and back to normal than have more of God? Through lament (if we allow lament to actually happen in our lives), we can begin to say "goodbye" to the things lost, or desired, and then begin to appreciate and value God more. **Second, there is a way to lament that is still respectful of God.** The book of Lamentations gives dignity to human sorrow. And God wants us to take our burdens, pains, questions and frustrations to him. Sometimes I think Christians think of lament as a God-allowed sinful activity. But God doesn't approve of sin. There is a way to lament and it be godly. It's not simply tolerable, but God gives dignity to it in Lamentations and the psalms. Lament is deep struggle and pain and also wanting to come to God's conclusions – no matter how painful. John Calvin, after teaching on Lamentations said,

The faithful, even when they bear their evils and submit to God's scourges, do yet familiarly deposit their complaints in his bosom, and thus unburden themselves. . . . Let us, then, know that though the faithful sometimes take this liberty of expostulating with God, they yet do not put off reverence, modesty, submission or humility (as quot. in Dearman, p. 435).

In essence, cast your cares, but don't cast off reverence of God. As the lead pastor here, I believe it's no coincidence that God is teaching me this during this series. I don't usually preach the way I'm going to preach this morning – using personal illustration heavily. But God's providence seems to be aligning my life and study together. I hope I'm faithful to the text and that this strengthens all of us as we study what lament entails.

I'm going to be doing even more of a fly-over on this chapter because of the sheer "bigness" of the chapter. But if you've been here the last two weeks, there are many points in this chapter that were stated in previous chapters. Chapter 3 is the central poem. And in the middle of this middle poem comes

a statement about God that functions like an oasis in the desert of lament: **31 For the Lord will not cast off forever, 32 but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; 33 for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.**¹ The Babylonians came and caused immense suffering for the people. And their pain continued. In addition, God left the temple and wasn't speaking with them. They're lost, alone, confused and rejected. Then we find these middle verses. I do not believe this is a coincidence. The Poet is very wise in his writing – and while the whole book is surrounded by pain, grief, confession, turmoil – the center of the book is that the Lord will have compassion. Is God just and compassionate? The answer to the book's question is found at the center of the central poem. But, this doesn't mean that lament ceases. In my studies on this chapter this past week, I found that some people want to ignore these central verses and focus on the pain. Other people will ignore all the lament and say, "We just need to move away from sorrow and be joyful!" But Lamentations puts both suffering and God's faithfulness together. In fact, in this chapter, the Poet says that you can have hope while also having a sense of hopelessness.

How can this be? Well, let's travel through this chapter. In this chapter we see all the essential components to lament. So, the question I'm looking at answering today is **"What is involved in lament?"** Now, please hear me. Lamentations 3 is more than a poem to simply help us lament our problems. There's a bigger, grander story for this book that I hope I declare today. But I also know that this book was later used by Jews in their worship to remind them that lament is essential for corporate worship. And the psalms remind us that it's necessary for corporate and individual worship as well. Lament has to be applied to the life. So, the first thing we see in these verses are to:

1. Admit the depth of pain (vv. 1-20).

Verses 1-3 start off differently than the previous poems. Instead of beginning asking God how he could do what he's done, the Poet speaks. Some think chapter 3 is an imaginary "strong man" representing Jerusalem like "Lady Zion" represents Jerusalem. But I tend to think that this is the Poet representing himself on behalf of Jerusalem. So, he speaks from personal experience, but he also speaks on behalf of all the people. In verses 1-3, he says, **"3 I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; 2 he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; 3 surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long."**² At the end of chapter 2, the poem speaks of God's anger and wrath on Jerusalem. This third poem connects with that poem, but the man speaks from personal experience. The word for "man" here can also be translated as "strong man." He had vitality and strength until God afflicted him.

In verses 19-20, the poet says, **"19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! 20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me."**³ In the ESV, it looks like the poet is praying. But it's more probable that this should be translated, "I remember my afflictions." And, as a result of him looking upon his pain, his soul is completely wearied. It's like Proverbs 17:22, which says, **"22 A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."**⁴

Part of lament is admitting the pain. But it's not simply admitting that there is pain. It's admitting its depths. In these first 20 verses, what you find is the Poet also confessing that God is the ultimate source

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:31–33.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:1–3.

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:19–20.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Pr 17:22.

of the pain. This is where some of you may do a double-take. “What?! God wouldn’t bring this about!” Even in our pains in life, we think, “No, God isn’t bringing this on. It’s Satan or someone else.” But do you remember what Joseph said to his brothers after 20 years of being apart because they sold him into slavery? Joseph’s recorded words in Genesis 50:20 are: “²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. . .”⁵ His brothers meant evil. And God meant all the circumstances, too, but for good.

This is the great tension we ought to feel in Scripture and in our lives at times. But it’s a glorious truth, too. God is sovereign over all circumstances, even our pain. If God is not over all the pain, then there’s no point to it. So, in some way beyond what I can understand, God controls all events while also remaining pure and sinless himself. And, with the people of Jerusalem and Judah, God can hate what Nebuchadnezzar is doing while at the same time he is orchestrating all the events as a judgment against Jerusalem.

We have to be able to admit this because the whole point of life is to know God. And, if we ignore who God is, we will not grow in loving him. So, even in lament, we’re faced with more of who God is. We’re faced with the fact that many times we love what we have more than we love God. For Jerusalem, they loved their way of living and their rituals. For me, I love walking freely without pain. What is it for you? Will we love a God this powerful, this *big*, this glorious? Will we love the God who has grander designs than we can see? Will we love God more than the temporal things we can see? Or, will we spurn him? For the Poet, God took everything away from him. He turned him from being strong to weak.

Verses 4-6 are descriptions of pain and weakness to the body, and the Poet then describes them in relationship to the city of Jerusalem being besieged. And the Poet says God has done this. He’s led the people to starvation. But there are other pains the Poet feels. In verses 1-3, he uses terminology similar to shepherding. A rod was meant as a protection against the animals that would attack sheep. But now, the Poet says that God is using his rod on the sheep. God’s hand is against him and the hand that once guided now spurns.

The Poet moves into another illustration. God has turned against them in such a way that he’s imprisoned them. Verses 6-9 say, “⁶**he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago.** ⁷**He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has made my chains heavy;** ⁸**though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer;** ⁹**he has blocked my ways with blocks of stones; he has made my paths crooked.**”⁶ The man pictures himself in a prison cell that he can’t escape through. Not only can’t he escape, but no one hears his cries. He’s alone like a slave – and God has made this the situation. He won’t listen. And, verse 9 says that no matter what the man tries to do, God has made it so that his path is crooked. In other words, the Poet is guaranteed to fail.

But the Poet isn’t done lamenting and admitting the pain. He goes on in verses 10-11 to say that God is like a devouring animal. Verses 12-13 say God is like a successful archer. Like a bear or lion, God has tore him to pieces. And, like a successful archer, God aimed and sunk the arrow as a death shot. Finally, in verse 16, the Poet says that God has forced him to the dust. The Poet, and Jerusalem, essentially is eating gravel, forced to lay in the ashes.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 50:20.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:6–9.

So, the Poet says in verses 17-18: ¹⁷ **my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is;** ¹⁸ **so I say, “My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord.”** ⁷ No wonder he is cast down in his soul. There is no peace because God seems to be at war with him. Now, at this moment, you could be thinking, “But Pastor Timothy, God doesn’t treat *us* this way, right? I mean, I’m a Christian.” Let me set your heart at ease at this point. If you have trusted in Jesus, God will *never* set his wrath on you *ever*. Jesus took the wrath in your place. So, now you have God’s eternal love set on you.

But, that does not mean that you will only experience a bed of roses and no pain. All but one of Jesus’ apostles were killed for following him. And, so, while we don’t fear God’s wrath, we can still wonder how God can *love us* and ordain for us to go through such pain. Endurance can feel zapped from us and we can feel like we have no more hope in God. We’re exhausted. And God can seem to be against us. Why else does Paul encourage people that God is *not* against us. Or, in Galatians 6, he tells them not to grow weary in doing well because our tendency is to feel wearied. So while we don’t have God’s wrath on us, we can experience his discipline or we can experience different things we simply don’t know how to define, but it doesn’t *feel* loving.

I said this in the first sermon on Lamentations, but in our culture, we’re so quick to try to make each other “happy” that we can’t be sad. We’re so afraid that if we’re sad, we’re going to get stuck in sadness. That’s only true if we don’t take our sorrows to God. And some do that. They just love to focus on their sorrows without talking to God about them. But when we take our sorrows to the Lord, he will show himself the Savior of even our laments! In fact, we must bring our sorrows and pains to light in order to see God as the One who is greater. So, going back to my own leg – there have even been very specific scenarios where it was like God saying, “See! I won’t let you run.” The scenarios are so painful, they’re almost laughable. But they’re painful. And I can go to God, as his child, and say, “God, why? What’s going on?” I can in fullness of belief that God is good also say, “God brought this about in my life.” And, it’s in the midst of this, that we can then finally see God as our trust and not simply the gifts he gives as our prize.

And so, with this Poet, he admits God is sovereign over all and he admits the painfulness of this. And then, in an amazing turn of events, he trusts. This is another part of lament. We saw it vaguely in chapter 2. But we see it clearly here:

2. Trust God’s character (vv. 21-39).

Verse 21 says, ²¹ **But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. . .** ⁸ This is very intriguing because in verse 18, he says that his hope from the LORD has died. And yet here in verse 21, he says that he has hope. How can you feel hopeless and also have hope? That can only come from the LORD. And notice, the word he uses for LORD in verse 18. It’s the word referring to God being the covenant-keeping God.

Somehow, in the midst of all the pain and turmoil and even knowing God is sovereign over all, the Poet says, “But God is greater than what I can perceive! I know who Yahweh, the LORD, is!” And this knowledge of who God is supersedes his despair. Read verses 22-39 together with me:

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:17–18.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:21.

²² The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” ²⁵ The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. ²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. ²⁷ It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. ²⁸ Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; ²⁹ let him put his mouth in the dust—there may yet be hope; ³⁰ let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. ³¹ For the Lord will not cast off forever, ³² but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; ³³ for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men. ³⁴ To crush underfoot all the prisoners of the earth, ³⁵ to deny a man justice in the presence of the Most High, ³⁶ to subvert a man in his lawsuit, the Lord does not approve. ³⁷ Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? ³⁸ Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? ³⁹ Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins? ⁹

In remembering Yahweh, the Poet goes back to God’s definition of himself in Exodus 34:6 – **“The Lord, the Lord, [the compassionate and gracious God], slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands. . . .”**¹⁰ This is who God is. This Hebrew word for love was a love that went beyond a kindness required by law. It was a sacrificial love in spite of the sinfulness of people. The word for “compassion” refers to a parental love because this word is also related to the womb. Therefore, the author says that God is great in his faithfulness. And the Lord is his portion. To be a portion means that God himself is his inheritance. God is his passion and prize.

How can the Poet say this? I thought he just confessed God’s sovereignty over the pain in his life! Yes, but he believes that over it all, God’s faithfulness will be greater than his anger.

What about you? Are you there? Can you say, “The Lord is your prize?” Even if God doesn’t give you those other things you want, is God greater? I look at myself up here and think, “Even if God makes it so my knee is painful the rest of my life and I can’t play with my kids like I would love to, can I still praise God?” Yes, because he is my portion. He satisfies me. My knee can’t.

Now, in saying this, it doesn’t mean that everything is better, but it does stabilize us through the difficulties. We must know who God is and believe it. The author does say God’s sovereign over the pain, but he also says that God will have compassion because of his steadfast love, and in verse 33, we’re told that God punishment is not “from the heart.” In other words, it pains him. Even in the situation of Judah, when all this is come upon them because of their sin, we’re still told God’s punishment pains him.

So, we should heed what the poet says. In our lament, it’s good **to wait in silence, bear the yoke, put your mouth in the dust and even accept the circumstances no matter how painful. And lay yourself before God, trusting he is who he says he is.** This doesn’t take away the pain, but remember, Lamentations calls us to bridge the gap of our pain with trust in the Lord. While we may not understand all, we can trust.

⁹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:22–39.

¹⁰ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ex 34:6–7.

And so in this trust, the Poet moves along and believes that God is going to punish those who have been evil against Jerusalem – the people of Babylon. God is going to bring justice because he is compassionate. And God is just in order to shine forth his compassion.

It's at this point that the Poet transitions into the next aspect of lament. In verses 37-39, he affirms God's control over all things (while, by the way, maintaining that God himself doesn't sin). The point is what I said earlier. If God is not over all, then there's no point to my suffering. But if he is, then I can believe it can matter for eternity. But then the Poet admits here that his suffering is a result of the sin of Judah. Verse 39 says why should a living man complain about the punishment of his sins? This is a third aspect to lament:

3. Confess your sin (vv. 40-51).

Read verses 40-51 with me:

⁴⁰ Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord! ⁴¹ Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven: ⁴² "We have transgressed and rebelled, and you have not forgiven. ⁴³ "You have wrapped yourself with anger and pursued us, killing without pity; ⁴⁴ you have wrapped yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through. ⁴⁵ You have made us scum and garbage among the peoples. ⁴⁶ "All our enemies open their mouths against us; ⁴⁷ panic and pitfall have come upon us, devastation and destruction; ⁴⁸ my eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. ⁴⁹ "My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, ⁵⁰ until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees; ⁵¹ my eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the daughters of my city. ¹¹

The apostle James, when writing to Christians who have been taking sin tritely, calls them to lament and weep and mourn over their sin. Confessing sin should involve *lament*. It's where we agree with God regarding how sinful we have acted and behaved. Verse 40 of this lament calls us to examine our ways and return to the Lord. To lift up our hands means that we need him to fill them with his kindness. Then he says in verse 42 that they transgressed and rebelled, but God has not forgiven. Wait, what? I thought God forgives whenever we confess! I personally believe the Poet is speaking about what's probably taking place currently. Not all the people have confessed their sinfulness. Therefore, God's forgiveness is not experienced. Again, the Poet describes what God has done. Even in confession of sin, we see lament. And in this confession, it's to help see how sinful sin is.

But, in this confession, you also see the "enemy" being brought up. We see the author is differentiating between God punishing (and being righteous doing so), and the nations killing (and they are unrighteous for doing so). This is something we don't fully understand, but it's a tension we embrace because God is greater and bigger than what our minds can fully understand.

In this confession of sin, the Poet says that he can't stop crying and he won't *until* the Lord looks down and sees. Notice the word "until." That means he has hope in the despair. He believes God will do this.

¹¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:40–51.

So, he looks to the Lord. But how does this apply to us as Christians? Well, first, let me say that not all pain is a direct result of a specific personal sin. When you're sick at home throwing up this winter season, don't assume it's because you sinned the day before.

Job went through horrific trials and it wasn't so much because of sin but because of his great reliance on God that he was tested. That said, God did teach Job through it and Job was humbled to realize that he had acted in arrogance even in the pain. So, at the end of Job, he repents. In seasons of pain, God is always drawing us closer to him and even causing us to see our own sin. For me, I see areas of selfishness and pride as I think about wanting a free knee. When someone said, "God's bringing this about in your life so you can have greater compassion on others in physical pain," I thought to myself, "I don't care. I want my knee back." That's selfish of me. So, God's always working at cleansing us. But he shows us our sin so that we can confess and then grow in trusting him. So that we can say "until" like the Poet.

But that said, there can be times when God uses hardships to bring us back to him. And, even if we're not going through a season of difficulty, we still should lament over our sins as Christians. We don't fear God's wrath, but we should see how lamentable sin is, how pathetic and heinous it is in the sight of God. We should be appalled that we, God's children, his people who are called to be holy, acted in such sinful ways against him. This is right and good. And we know that even in the confession, we have a great promise that God has forgiven our sins because of Jesus! And this takes me to the next point on lament.

4. Remember God's past faithfulness (vv. 52-66).

In these verses the Poet talks in past tense about some situation where he was hurt and in a hopeless situation. Then he called out to the Lord (see verse 55). And then the Lord answered and rescued. Verse 57 says: ⁵⁷**You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!'** ¹²

In the first sermon, I said that God never speaks in this entire book. This is the closest to God speaking. These are recorded words from a previous situation. So, we need to pay attention to these words. Do not fear. Did you know that this is the most often repeated command of God in the entire Bible? These words mean that God is full of steadfast love, compassion and faithfulness. These words mean that God is in control even though everything seems like chaos. These words means that God cares for and loves. And the Poet is saying, "If God has acted this way in the past, why would he not act this way again? After all, his love is steadfast; so, his love will remain and continue despite what's happening currently."

Ventura, look to the past faithfulness of God! And where can we look? Yes, we can look in our daily lives, but there is a past faithfulness of God that goes beyond any of our experiences. We find God's steadfast love and faithfulness, his justice and his mercy, on clear display in the cross of Jesus. In reading through this lament, I saw so many phrases that actually described Jesus' sacrifice for us. Whereas the people of Judah may have thought they were experiences the fullness of God's anger, they were only experiencing small tastes. But Jesus experienced all. He cried out to God on the cross and wasn't heard. He was pierced and killed. He was a laughingstock and was mocked. He had to drink gall. **All his splendor was sacrificed by coming to earth in the form of humans. He wept bitterly before going to the cross. He experienced God's wrath in all its fullness for myriads of people on the cross receiving the justice we deserved so we could have the steadfast love of God. And in that death, Isaiah says God was "pleased to crush him."** Why? So that God could be just and compassionate to sinners like us. So that when we

¹² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), La 3:57.

cry out, we will be heard and receive mercy. Therefore, where we feel we've been rejected by God, that's not reality. He is our portion – our eternal life. And, he is with us always, even to the end of the age. We're never alone.

Is God just and compassionate? Absolutely. We see it in Jesus. Does he have steadfast love and faithfulness toward us? No doubt about it. So, when you are lamenting, whether it's over my knee or other different kinds of painful experiences in life, I can say, "Lord, you can give me daily pain, but if you are the One who's given it to me, then I know even this works together for good!"

Rehearse the past and it fuels us in the present. The Poet then moves into the present tense in verse 58 and is talking about the turmoil of the captivity. And the Poet is confessing that God will punish them. God redeemed the man. God sees the wrong. God is just! Therefore, God's punishment will come on the Babylonians and other enemies. And in their punishment, Judah will find rescue. God is faithful to his promises. A Messiah must come through Judah. And even though it looks like God's forsaken his promises, he never will!

What we see in these components of lament is God being seen more clearly and fully by the Poet. Instead of having a flat or stilted picture of God, the Poet is able to see more of God's magnificence and then truly trust him in the midst of confusion. Ventura, when was the last time you lamented? This isn't something you can force, but lament does come at times living in a fallen world, and I praise God that he gives us the freedom to weep in his arms because in the weeping, there is greater comfort than you can ever imagine – **a comfort that strengthens your joy in God and your love for Jesus. May the Spirit give us this ability to lay all of ourselves, both our joys and our laments, before him and trust him as our portion.**

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