

The Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations

Lesson 24: Great Is Your Faithfulness; Restore Us, O Lord -- Lamentations

3:1-5:22

There is a moment in deep grief when a person stops crying out loud and goes quiet, not because the pain has lifted but because it has gone too deep for sound. That is where chapter three of Lamentations begins. "I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath. He has driven and brought me into darkness without any light." The poet speaks now not as a city but as a single suffering soul, walled in, weighed down, his prayer shut out. He has tasted gall and wormwood. He says, with terrible honesty, "my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is."

And then, in the very center of the book, the very middle of the darkness, something turns. It is not that the circumstances change. The ruins are still ruins. But the poet does something with his memory. "But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope." He reaches back, past the rubble, past the wrath, and lays hold of one thing he knows to be true: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." These are the most hope-filled words in one of the saddest books ever written, and they shine all the brighter because of the darkness around them.

Watch how the poet now learns to wait. "The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." This is not the giddy optimism of someone who has never suffered. It is the hard-won hope of someone who has suffered terribly and has decided, in the dark, to keep trusting the character of God. He holds together what we are tempted to tear apart: that God may wound, and yet "he does not afflict from his heart," and his compassions never fail.

By the time we reach chapter five, the lament has become a prayer for the whole community. They remember their disgrace, they confess that their fathers sinned and they have borne the weight, and then they pray the prayer this whole study has been moving toward: "Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old." The book does not end with everything fixed. It ends with empty hands lifted up and a plea for mercy. And that is exactly where faith is meant to live, leaning on a God whose steadfast love never ceases, whose mercies are new every morning, and whose fullest mercy of all would one day be revealed in His Son.

Group Discussion: In the middle of the deepest darkness, the poet deliberately calls one thing to mind: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (3:21-23). Why does he have to choose to remember this rather than simply feel it, and what does it look like to do the same when our own circumstances have not yet changed?

Personal Reflection: The poet says, “his mercies... are new every morning” (3:23). Think about the mercy that has met you in the ordinary mornings of your own life, even in hard seasons. Where have you seen God’s mercies be new for you, and how might remembering them change the way you face tomorrow?

Read Lamentations 3:1–5:22

Study Questions

1. Read 3:1–18. The poet describes affliction in unflinching terms: walled in, weighed down, his prayer shut out, his soul bereft of peace. Why does the Holy Spirit give us such honest words for the depths of suffering, and what does it tell us about God that He welcomes this kind of raw lament into His Word?
2. The poet admits, “my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is” (3:17). Have you ever reached a place where you had nearly forgotten what happiness felt like, and what did you do, or wish you had done, with God in that season?
3. Read 3:19–24. At the lowest point, the poet says, “But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope.” What is the difference between hope that depends on changed circumstances and hope grounded in the unchanging character of God, and why does this hope hold even in the ruins?
4. The poet chose to “call to mind” the Lord’s mercies rather than wait to feel them (3:21). What is one truth about God you most need to deliberately call to mind this week, and what practical step would help you remember it when your feelings run the other way?

5. Read 3:25–33. “The LORD is good to those who wait for him... It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD,” and yet “he does not afflict from his heart.” What does it mean to wait quietly for the Lord, and how does knowing He does not afflict willingly shape the way we endure hard seasons?
6. Waiting quietly for the Lord is one of the hardest disciplines of faith, especially when we want relief now. Where in your life is God calling you to wait on Him rather than force a solution, and what makes that waiting so difficult for you?
7. Read 3:40–42 and 5:21. The people say, “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD,” and pray, “Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored!” How do genuine repentance and the longing for restoration belong together, and why must we return to the Lord Himself and not merely wish our troubles away?
8. The closing prayer lifts up empty hands: “Restore us to yourself, O LORD... Renew our days as of old” (5:21). Where do you most need the Lord to restore something in your own life right now, and what would it look like to bring Him that need in honest, hopeful prayer this week?
9. Read 3:22–23 slowly: “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” How does this single verse, set in the middle of so much sorrow, hold together God’s severity and His kindness

(Romans 11:22), and how do these mercies, new every morning, point us to the fuller and final mercy revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ?

10. Look back over these three chapters, from “I am the man who has seen affliction” to “his mercies... are new every morning” to “Restore us to yourself, O LORD.” Name one specific way the Lord Jesus is using this journey through darkness toward hope to form steadfast faith, patient waiting, or honest repentance in you this week.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Romans 11:22, “Note then the kindness and the severity of God,” the very balance Lamentations holds together; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18, where the inner self is renewed day by day and light affliction works an eternal weight of glory; Psalm 30:5, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning”; Hebrews 4:14–16, the call to draw near to the throne of grace to find mercy and help in time of need; Lamentations 3:31–33, where the Lord does not cast off forever and does not afflict from His heart.

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