

**The Blessing of Lament:
Learning to receive and practice the blessing of lament.**

Syllabus

9/11 - 11/11, 2020
Wednesdays, 5:30pm - 6:30pm

Teachers:

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Class Description:

Have you experienced loss this year? Are you wrestling with hard emotions? Why does Jesus say that it is a blessing to lament (Matthew 5:4)? In this class, we are learning to receive and practice the blessing of lament. Drawing from the books of Job, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes and Lamentations, this 10-week survey course on lament will equip you to better steward the pain within and around you.

The brokenness of the world can illicit feelings such as anger, frustration, broken heartedness, confusion, abandonment and conviction. Feeling the heaviness of these emotions can drive us to turn away from God, but what if it is supposed to be the opposite? What if God actually uses these times of stress to draw us closer to Himself? Come learn how to walk closer with God when your world feels upside down.

Structure of Class:

Part 1 (30-45 mins):

Each participant will sign in to our all-class 30-45 minute video call using the video conference platform, GoTo Meeting. This is where the main teaching is delivered each week. Check your email for unique login credentials every week.

Part 2 (20-30 mins):

Immediately following the all-class connection and teaching (Part 1), each participant signs off of the all-class call and joins their small group in a new video call for small group discussion, prayer and fellowship. A leader for each small group is identified to lead this time. Small groups are responsible to lead and manage their own small group video call.

How to Join a Small Group:

For information on how to join a small group, please navigate to page 3.

Course Teaching Schedule:**Class Reading:**

Week 1	Who is God? (A study of the <i>hesed</i> of God) Taught by: Michael Thornton (September 9)	(Psalm 136)
Week 2	Why does my heart hurt? Taught by: Mark and Leigh Ann Looyenga (September 16)	(Genesis 1:26-28)
Week 3	What do God's people do when their hearts hurt? Taught by: Mark and Leigh Ann Looyenga (September 23)	
Week 4	How do I talk to God when my heart hurts? (Model of the Psalms) Taught by: Mark and Leigh Ann Looyenga (September 30)	
Week 5	When we feel like all is lost and there is no comfort Taught by: John Goodale (October 7)	(Lam. 1&2)
Week 6	When we feel broken hearted or abandoned Taught by: Michael Thornton (October 14)	(Ps. 6 / Ps. 88)
Week 7	When we feel confused or convicted Taught by: Michael Thornton (October 21)	(Ecc. 1&2 / Ps. 51)
Week 8	When we feel frustrated or angry Taught by: John Goodale (October 28)	(Job 3, 16 / Ps. 109)
Week 9	Sharing Your Psalm Taught by: 100% small group night led by each small group leader (November 4)	
Week 10	Christian Hope Taught by: Michael Thornton (November 11)	(Lam. 3:19-33)

How to Join a Small Group:

A shared group document has been created where you have the opportunity to sign up for a small group, either as a small group facilitator or small group participant. To grow the most through this course, everyone is expected to participate in a small group. The shared group document lives on the internet and the privacy settings are set to “link only” access with the password, “lament.” Please do not redistribute this link or the personal information therein beyond this class.

Step 1: Navigate to: https://firstprescolosprings-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/mthornton_firstprescos_org/ETG89_AmZ1pIu27u1dhy8lUBrjUAk-Zk_KRULS4kyR_xzA?e=PymkhH

Step 2: Password: lament

Step 3: Sign up to be a small group leader or small group participant

Step 4: Provide your first name, last name and email address

Information for Small Group Facilitators:

Thank you for volunteering to lead your small group! As the small group facilitator, you establish your own separate video call. Although you can choose your own parameters, the assumption is that most groups will meet for 20-30 minutes immediately after the all-class video call ends. You will be provided with a list of discussion questions prior to each session.

Step 1: Determine what platform you prefer to use to facilitate your small group

Step 2: Create a group email thread using the information for your small group on the all-class online shared document. Send an initial email greeting to your group. In this email, recommend your platform of choice and ask the group if everyone is comfortable using that platform. Confirm the platform, time, duration and frequency.

Step 3: Lead the successful launch and facilitation of your small group week-to-week (this can mean simply identifying a sub for any evening you need to miss)

Recommended Additional Reading on Lament and Suffering:

Card, Michael. *A Sacred Sorrow*, Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005.

Groothuis, Douglas. *Walking Through Twilight*, Downers Grove, 2017.

Keller, Timothy. *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, New York: Penguin Books, 2015.

Vroegop, Mark. *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2019.

Waltke, Bruce and James Houston and Erika Moore. *The Psalms as Christian Lament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.