

The Blessing of Lament Week 3: What Do God's People Do When Their Hearts Hurt?

What are, and are not, Laments?

- Laments _____ express our raw and real self to God as modeled in the Bible.

The conversation of Bono and Eugene Peterson on the Psalms is excellent: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I40S5e90KY&t=1107s

- Laments are not the same as _____.

Complaints are _____ and not _____.

*"Suffering brings crystal clarity that we have nowhere else to go but God."
-Michael Card, Sacred Sorrow*

- Laments cry out in surrendered- dependence upon God's _____.

- Laments are a primary way God's people in the Bible engage their _____ and _____ within the disorienting and disappointing experiences of life.

Lament in the Old Testament

- _____ % of the Psalms are considered Laments.

"There is a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance." –Ecclesiastes 3:4

- What biblical characters illustrate the practice of lament in the Old Testament?

Prayer of Honesty

(compiled from the Psalms, various translations):

1. God, are you avoiding me? Where are you when I need you? Ps. 10.1
 2. How long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way? Ps. 13.1
 3. Hear me as I pray, O LORD. Be merciful and answer me! Do not turn your back on me. Ps. 27.7,9
 4. God, how long are you going to stand there doing nothing? Ps. 35.17
 5. I waited and waited and waited for God. Ps. 40.1
 6. God, for your sake, help me! Use your influence to clear me. Listen, God—I'm desperate. Don't be too busy to hear me. Ps. 54.1-2
 7. Save me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to my neck. I am exhausted from crying for help; my throat is parched. My eyes are swollen with weeping, waiting for my God to help me. Ps. 69.1,3
 8. How long are you going to sit there with your hands folded in your lap? Ps. 74.10
 9. How long, LORD God Almighty, will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears. Ps. 80.4-5
 10. Remember my sorrow and how short life is. Did you create men and women for nothing but this? Ps. 89.38-51
 11. LORD, hear my prayer! Listen to my plea! Don't turn away from me in my time of distress. Ps. 102.1-2
 12. I'm waiting for your word of hope. My eyes grow heavy watching for some sign of your promise; how long must I wait for your comfort? Ps. 119.81-82
 13. I cry out to the LORD; I plead for the LORD's mercy. I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles. Ps. 142.1-2
 14. Come quickly, LORD, and answer me, for my depression deepens. Don't turn away from me, or I will die. Ps. 143.7
-

Lament in the New Testament

Jesus and Lament

- Matt. 5:4
- John 11:35
- Matt. 26:38-3
- Luke 19:41-42
- Mark 15:34

"While most authentic, devout Christians express earnest belief in the most central [doctrine of the death and resurrection] . . . many fail to recognize the reality of this paschal pattern in their own lives. Theologically orthodox churches in North America have swallowed whole the cultural mandate to avoid loss, pain, or legitimate suffering whenever possible."

-Stanton Jones,
Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal

Paul and Lament

- *Living into the _____ (Romans 8:14-17a)*

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory."

- *Living into the _____ (Romans 8:17b, 22-25)*

"But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.²³ And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us."

- *"Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts." -Paul, Eph. 5:18-19*

For Reflection:

1. What part of today's lesson was most helpful for you?
2. What is it like for you to think of speaking honestly, from your raw self, to God like the psalmist does?
3. How does the cross of Christ compel/invite you to engage suffering in and around you?
4. What is it like for you to realize/engage the reality of living in the Already-Not Yet?