

# INTRO TO PSALMS OF LAMENT



## SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, we started a new series on the Psalms of lament. The Psalms is full of different themes and different emphases. The Psalms of Lament actually make up 1/3 of the psalms, which is the most out of any category. When we consider the songs that we sing and the general sentiment we are expected to have when coming to church, we realize that there is a great imbalance when comparing songs of celebration with songs of lament. It makes us wonder whether we have to "fake it" when we are going through tragedy and can't properly express our emotions. As we consider Psalms of Lament, we realize that this is a very integral part of the Biblical story. Pastor Peter touched on two of the reasons for psalms of lament.

The first is that it restores our disoriented relationship with God. In the places we have experienced disappointment and grief, the psalms of lament gives us wisdom, language, and permission to be honest before the Lord about the disorientation that we are in.

The second is that it restores our compassion towards disoriented people. We become more aware of those in need of compassion and not judgment.

Finally, perhaps there is a missional aspect to the psalms of lament - that in the address to God, it used "Elohim" instead of "YHWH" because these psalms of lament were not just for Jewish people, but for all of humanity to have a way of expression in their grief and sorrow to God.



## 3 THEMES TO REMEMBER

### 1 RESTORING DISORIENTED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

At times, we experience disappointment and grief from God. Not that God does anything intentionally to hurt us, but when we have high expectations left unfulfilled by God, we become disoriented in our relationship with Him. We lack the language to reorient ourselves to bring us back to "equilibrium" in our relationship with God. The Psalms of Lament give us the language and permission to be honest before the Lord about that disorientation.

### 2 RESTORING COMPASSION TOWARDS THE DISORIENTED

In our church settings, we can have an imbalance of praise over lament, and inadvertently, the praise of the "Haves" can dominate over the lament of the "Have-Nots." From that place, the temptation is to simply desire that our circumstances change rather than our life before God to be changed.

### 3 GENERAL FLOW OF PSALMS OF LAMENT

1. Address to God - Calling Out to Him (not about Him)
2. Description of the Complaint
3. Request for God's Help
4. Expression of Trust in God



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Icebreaker: What is the first "song of lament" that you've sang in a church setting that comes to mind?

2

How do you deal with the disappointment and grief that you have when it comes to expectations you have in your relationship with God.

3

When we encounter disappointment, do we ask God to simply change our circumstances (give me a job, give me a spouse, give me a child) over a desire for us to be transformed?

4

Is lament difficult/uncomfortable for you? If so, why do you think that's the case?

5

How do you think lament can help us grow in compassion towards the disoriented, the disenfranchised, the marginalized?

6

Spend some time in prayer and practice/form a prayer of lament over something that you are struggling with personally.



## BIG IDEA

As we go through the Psalms of Lament - we are reminded that we are not merely intellectual beings, but people of emotions as well. Psalms of Lament give us wisdom, language, and the permission to express our feelings of disorientation before God. It restores the compassion that we have towards the disoriented, and it gives us a framework to come before God with our sorrow, grief, and complaint in a right manner.