

A dramatic landscape featuring a rainbow arching over a range of mountains. The foreground is dominated by the dark silhouette of a forest. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds, with light breaking through to create a soft glow around the rainbow. The overall mood is one of hope and redemption amidst a dark, stormy atmosphere.

DARK CLOUDS
DEEP MERCY

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS
STUDY GUIDE

10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT LAMENT & LAMENTATIONS

- » A lament is a loud cry, a howl, or a passionate expression of grief.
- » Anywhere from a third to a half of the Psalms are Psalms of Lament. They are the largest category of Psalms.
- » Laments are found throughout the Old and New Testaments—not just in Lamentations.
- » The author of Lamentations isn't named but most agree that Jeremiah wrote it (see 2 Chron. 35:25).
- » The book consists of five poems explaining the judgment—death—of Jerusalem because of her sin.
- » Each chapter is an acrostic poem built on the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, with Chapter 3 giving three verses to each letter instead of one.
- » Lamentations was likely written between 586-583 BC, either during the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 or shortly thereafter.
- » Laments can vary greatly in nature: personal or communal, confessional or imprecatory, mourning or protesting, based on God's actions or His seeming failure to act, they can be prayerful or more descriptive, and they can mourn deserved suffering (Lamentations) or undeserved suffering (Job).
- » Laments are often joined with or an avenue to praise. Lament isn't the opposite of praise but often the path to praise.
- » Lamentations emphasizes God's justice in judging and punishing sin when there is no repentance, as well as His patience in waiting to execute such justice.

RESOURCES

RELATED BOOKS

Jeremiah, Lamentations (NIV Application Commentary) by J. Andrew Dearman // This is a very readable commentary on Jeremiah and Lamentations that bridges the world of Lamentations to our world today.

Jeremiah, Lamentations: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (New American Commentary) by F. B. Huey // This commentary has less application than the one above but is helpful as it summarizes the meaning of many passages without getting too detailed.

Walking With God in Every Season: Ecclesiastes/Song of Solomon/Lamentations by Kay Arthur // This Kay Arthur study helps walk the reader through an inductive Bible study.

Rejoicing in Lament by J. Todd Billings // While the focus of this book revolves around the author's battle with cancer, it applies to anyone who has reason to lament. It's an excellent example of learning to rejoice in lament.

When the Darkness Will Not Lift by John Piper // The focus of this book is depression but it teaches an important principle for those experiencing the seeming absence of God: simultaneously pursuing joy in God and waiting on God.

Walking with God through Pain and Suffering by Tim Keller // While this book also is not about lament specifically, it does speak into how we walk with God through suffering, including in our trusting and praying.

A Sacred Sorrow by Michael Card // Musician Michael Card seeks to teach us how to lament by looking at the lives and experiences of David, Job, Jeremiah, and Jesus.

God's Battle by Sally Michael (children's book) // This children's book isn't on lament but it does teach children about the battle of faith, including key concepts showing up in Lamentations like pride, rebellion, and obedience.

RELATED PASSAGES

CORPORATE LAMENTS IN PSALMS | 12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, 123, 126, 129

INDIVIDUAL LAMENTS IN PSALMS | 3, 4, 5, 7, 9-10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 39, 40:12-17, 41, 42-43, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 70, 71, 77, 86, 120, 139, 141, 142

BACKGROUND TO LAMENTATIONS | 2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36; Jer. 37-39, 52

LAMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT | Matt. 2:18; Acts 8:2; John 11:31-33; Heb. 5:7; Matt. 27:46-50; Mark 14:36

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the sermon passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper and apply the text—but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: What's one question you have going into this series or one thing you'd like to grow in or learn during this series?

1 When hard times come, how do you typically respond? What are the first questions that come to mind? Who do you go to first? Read Psalm 77:2. What are ways we can seek God in our trouble? How can we grow in that being more of a gut-reaction than a last resort?

2 Do you find it easy to be as honest to God in your prayers as we see in the Psalms? What keeps us from speaking so honestly to God? What keeps us from lamenting?

3 Read verses 7-9. What attributes or characteristics of God are brought into question? Or, what truths about God does Asaph bring up? Why would the biblical authors protest the very things God has said about who He is and how He will act toward His people?

4 This Psalm mentions “remembering” four times. It also tells us to meditate (to pause and ponder) on God and His works. Why does recalling what God has done—in His Word or in our own lives—help us remember what is true about God? How can we catalogue and remember ways God is kind to us, answers prayers, or works on our behalf? How do we remember God in the moments where we've forgotten what is true about Him?

5 Read verses 13-20. What are some of the attributes, characteristics, or actions of God presented in these verses? What do you see about God in this section? How does meditating on who God is and who He is for His people help our thinking? How does that help our lament?

6 In this Psalm we don't see any confession of sin, which likely means Asaph isn't suffering because of sin in his life. How might lament look different when it is brought on partly by our sin versus when we might be suffering without any fault of our own (like Job)?

7 The Psalms give expression to all kinds of prayers and songs to God. How do you use the Psalms in prayer or worship? What are ways you can allow the Psalms to give shape to your prayers?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are few of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Sunday Kid's Notes" available each Sunday as another tool to encourage your children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

1 Sadness or grief (laments) are appropriate responses in a world broken because of sin. Why is it good to know we can tell God about our sadness? What are different emotions or ways we can respond to God when we pray (ex: joyful, sad, thankful, worried, etc.)?

2 Can we trust God to be true to all of His promises to us? How do we know that?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we've seen in God's Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not, please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God's Word.

During this series, we encourage you to try writing out some of your laments to God. Keep a journal or use some of the space below to write any things in your life or in your world that lead you to lament. Then spend some time honestly bringing those concerns before God.

Commit to start spending additional time each day in prayer to God. Start with a reasonable amount of time and commit to bringing your praise, lament, requests, and thanksgiving to God more intentionally over the next eight weeks. This week, we have Prayer Week opportunities to help you pray with others at College Park Church. For info: yourchurch.com/prayerweek

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the sermon passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper and apply the text—but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: What's something physical that holds special meaning to you so that you would be sad if it were destroyed?

1 Read 2 Chron. 36:5, 9, and 12. What repeated phrase described the kings of Judah and their relationship with the LORD? Notice also the length of time mentioned. What does this teach us about the state of Israel leading up to Jerusalem's destruction? Based on these verses and 36:15, what are some things we might learn about God's character, desires, and actions?

2 In 2 Chronicles we've seen years of unrepentant sin by Israel and years of God's patience, but also God's calls for repentance. How might this context help us think rightly about Jerusalem's suffering that we will see in this chapter and throughout Lamentations?

3 Why is it such a big deal that the temple is burned? What did the temple signify and why was its destruction a cause for lament?

4 The end of 2 Chronicles 36 (vv. 22-23) gives hope. What is the hope there? What can we learn about God's purposes and mercy even despite our sin?

5 Israel lived under a covenant where they were to be physically blessed when they obeyed but punished when they were disobedient. What is different for Christians living under the new covenant? Does God judge His children in the same way? What are similarities and differences between the situation of Israel and what Christians experience?

6 How can you apply a text like this to your own life this week? Do you need to take God's warnings more seriously or proactively warn others? Are there ways you can receive God's Word and speak God's Word to other believers so you continue to obey? Is there suffering in your life—no fault of your own—that you need to lament over and speak to God honestly about?

7 Have there been times in your life where you sensed God warning you or convicting you of sin? Did you listen or ignore Him? What are some of the reasons you responded the way you did? Can you think of any results in your heart or life from either obeying or disobeying God's warnings? Is there any sin in your life right now that you've been convicted of that you need to confess and repent of? How can others in the group speak truth into this situation and help you respond well?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are few of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the “Sunday Kid’s Notes” available each Sunday as another tool to encourage your children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

1 Are you ever sad? Can you tell that to God?

Give an example of how you could pray to God when you are sad.

2 Why is it dangerous to ignore God’s warnings to us when we disobey?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we’ve seen in God’s Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not, please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God’s Word.

Ask God to convict you of any areas of disobedience or unrepentant sin in your life, and ask for a soft heart that hears and obeys the Spirit’s promptings. Spend some time alone with God confessing anything He lays on your heart and then resting in the forgiveness Jesus provides for those sins. Consider reaching out to a friend in your Small Group or life who can help encourage you to continue repenting of sin and pursuing God in faith.

Write out in the space below (or in a journal) a lament-prayer for any particular sin you’ve been convicted of this week or for the sinfulness that pervades our heart and life as a whole. The goal isn’t to “beat yourself up” but to brokenly come to God, to admit that we seek our own way, to turn to God so that we follow Jesus’s lordship, and to allow His gospel promises to propel us forward in freedom from guilt and power to obey.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

We'd encourage you to read the passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper into and apply the text but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: Who was someone you looked up to and wanted to be like when you were a kid?

1 The image of God in man might be described as both an adjective (i.e. man is “like” God) and a verb (i.e. man “images” or represents God). In what way are humans similar to God? What are some ways we are different than God?

2 Did mankind retain the image of God after the fall? How was the “image of God” in us affected? Read Gen. 9:6, 1 Cor. 15:49, and James 3:8-9 for help. What do these verses help us to understand about the image of God and the dignity of each human life?

3 Read Rom 8:29, 2 Cor. 3:18, and Col. 3:9-10. Though all humans are made in the image of God, our capacity to “image” God has been distorted by the fall. What evidence do we have of this? How does God’s provision in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit restore God’s image in us?

4 If all human beings are image-bearers, what are some things we should be concerned about in our world? How can we lament over the immoral decisions of people in our world today and the tragedies from things like abortion, abuse, war, and poverty? Are there ways we can also respond in our actions? The end of 2 Chronicles 36 (22-23) gives hope. What is the hope there? What can we learn about God’s purposes and mercy even despite our sin?

5 In addition to the large tragedies in the last question, what are ways the doctrine of man being created in God’s image might affect how we relate to others in our own life? How should we treat, talk to, care for, and think of people around us in light of what we’ve heard?

6 If your life is meant to tell others or picture to others what God is like, then how should that affect how we live? What are the privileges and sobering responsibilities that come with knowing others will have their view of God affected by how we represent Him?

7 Given that God is imaged in man, in what ways have you experienced God through other people? In what ways have you imaged God to someone in your life recently? Who has God brought into your life that particularly needs to be shown the love of God?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are few of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Sunday Kid's Notes" available each Sunday as another tool to encourage your children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1** Did you know that God made all people, including you? Did you know that all people are special to God?
- 2** If other people are created by God and valued by God, how we should treat others? How could we show our neighbors that they are special to us and to God?

RESPONSE

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Talk as a group about how you can pray for, support, and/or serve a local ministry or organization that cares for image-bearers who are often underserved.

Write out in the space below (or in a journal) a lament for the sinful tragedy of abortion taking place in our country and in our world. Lament for the lack of concern of life and ask God to work in ways so that the unborn are protected and cared for.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the sermon passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper and apply the text—but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: What's a book of the Bible you feel like you know nothing or very little about?

1 As you look through Chapter 1, what are some of the various things Jerusalem is lamenting? Which of these sticks out to you as most painful? Why?

2 Repeatedly in Chron. 1 we see that Jerusalem's woes are a result of her rebellion against the LORD (vv. 5, 8, 18, 20). What woes in our world today might be linked to our collective rebellion against God? How should this cause us to be concerned with corporate or personal rebellion?

3 What do we learn about God in Chapter 1? How might that knowledge of God be for His glory and your good?

4 In verses 12 and 19, we see Jerusalem mourning because the "lovers" and "friends" she had looked to for help and satisfaction instead of God had betrayed her. What are you tempted to look to for satisfaction and security instead of looking to God? How do they fail us?

5 We see throughout this chapter the desire of the grieving city to have her grief seen and noticed by God (vv. 9, 11, 20) and by others (vv. 12, 18). When walking through painful seasons, can you identify with this feeling of isolation, as though God and others don't even notice your pain? How do you deal with this feeling of isolation?

6 How does it help knowing that Jesus also walked through pain and could identify with sorrow like that in v. 12? Why do we need to see Jesus as a "man of sorrows"?

7 In the midst of her grief, Jerusalem laments having no comfort and longs for a comforter (vv. 2, 9, 16, 17, 21). Where do you turn for comfort in the midst of pain? How does God provide comfort to the hurting?

8 In vv. 21-22, the city prays for justice – that the evildoing of others would be punished the same way its own evildoing was punished. What connections do you see between suffering and desire for justice? How can this desire be good, and how can it be distorted into sin?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are few of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the “Sunday Kid’s Notes” available each Sunday as another tool to encourage your children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1 When bad things happen or when you are sad, who can you go to for comfort?
- 2 What does it mean for God to be just? Why must God judge sin and execute justice?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we’ve seen in God’s Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not, please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God’s Word.

As you read Lamentations, highlight or make note of any of the verses that stick out to you. Share with someone in your family or in your small group what you’re seeing in Lamentations that is helpful, powerful, confusing, freeing, or that for whatever reason seems to catch your attention. Be in prayer about how God might use you to help others in your life think about and learn how to lament biblically to God.

If a trial or hardship comes your way this week—whether it’s deserved or undeserved—take time to bring your lament to God. Don’t just grumble in your heart or tell others why you’re frustrated, but honestly bring your concerns, pain, frustration, questions, and sorrow to God in prayers of lament. Use the space below or use a journal to practice writing out lament prayers to God.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the sermon passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper and apply the text—but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: Do you more easily remember “good times” or “bad times”?

- 1** How would you summarize the main idea of Lamentations 2 in a couple of sentences?
- 2** What is the reason God became like an enemy to Israel and Judah (see also Deut. 28:45-57)? How is God just in His action? How is God faithful to His Word in His action?
- 3** God’s affliction of the city of Jerusalem shows that God does not take sin lightly and He will not let His people continue in it. How should this cause you to take your sin seriously and to take God’s holiness seriously? What would that look like on a day-to-day basis?
- 4** This lament mentions a number of “hopes” that God removes from Israel: Israel’s religious hopes (v. 7), Israel’s military hopes (vv. 8–9), and Israel’s political hopes (v. 9). What is God’s purpose in removing these hopes from the nation? How does this actually serve His people? Can you remember when God stripped you of the “hopes” in your life and how that worked for your good?
- 5** It is really important to see that, even though God was the one afflicting Israel (v. 17), they still cry out to him (vv. 18–20). Why is it important to keep going to God in prayer even in the midst of affliction? Is there anything you’re experiencing in life now where this reminder is helpful?
- 6** Have you ever felt like God was an adversary against you? Have you ever felt like God was completely absent from your life? What are some ways that you responded? Do you think that you responded correctly or not?
- 7** Why is it important to have a theology of suffering before we suffer? Why do we need a “long view” of things and God’s promises when suffering?
- 8** What are some ways that your Small Group can help each other in the midst of our lamenting?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

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- 1** How do you respond when something bad happens in your life? Does your response change whether you deserve this bad thing or not?
- 2** Why is God right to punish sin? Why would it be wrong if God didn’t punish sin?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we’ve seen in God’s Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not, please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God’s Word.

This week, as you either observe suffering or encounter suffering in your own life, meditate upon Luke 13:1–5 and use suffering as a reminder to turn from your sin and trust in Christ.

The laments are community laments, and we know from the rest of the Bible that we are to gather around those who are hurting or suffering. Ask God to help you be attuned to those going through difficulties or challenges right now and then enter into their world. Sit with them, weep with them, listen to them, pray with them, and remind them of God’s truth. Pray for the discernment of when to just listen and when to speak.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the sermon passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper and apply the text—but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: What Bible verse(s) has greatly impacted you or has been important in your life?

1 What do you notice about the personal nature of Jeremiah's writing? As a believer, do you feel the freedom to be this honest about what grieves you? Why or why not?

2 In chapter 3:8, Jeremiah feels that God doesn't hear his prayer. If Jeremiah continues to lament to God even though at times he feels like God doesn't hear, how might that be instructive for us?

3 Starting at verse 21, a transition takes place. What changes so that Jeremiah moves from being without hope (v. 18) to possessing hope (v. 21)? What are some things Jeremiah reminds himself about God in vv. 22-33? How is the knowledge of God such a ground of hope and comfort?

4 Pick a verse or phrase from vv. 22-33 that applies to your life right now. What do you need to remind yourself of or to remember about God? How does coming back to a right understanding of God re-center you or help you in whatever you're walking through this week?

5 In verses 25-30, Jeremiah refers to some of the ways we might need to respond when suffering or going through hardships—whether they are deserved or undeserved. What are some of the possible responses Jeremiah puts forward? Do you struggle to respond in any of those ways?

6 Jeremiah has been taunted, wronged, and abused by many enemies. In verses 58-66, he says that the Lord “has taken up my cause,” and he rests on God being the one who brings about justice and vengeance. When we are wronged, hurt, or mistreated by others, how do we give that to God?

7 Read 3:31-33 again. Jeremiah's grieving and remembrance lead him to pray. It has been said that God's holiness must first be afflicting before it can be comforting. Do you see this principle in Jeremiah's prayer? How have you seen this to be true in your life?

8 Lamentations can be a dark book, and at times, hope seems absent, but Chapter 3 provides some very hopeful reminders and promises for us. What from this chapter gave you hope or was an encouragement in the midst of all the lament? How does this chapter help us read the other chapters with a right mindset?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are few of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the “Sunday Kid’s Notes” available each Sunday as another tool to encourage your children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

1 Do you ever feel alone and sad? Describe how that feels.

2 Even when we feel like no one is there, we need to remember God is there and He loves you. The Bible calls His love “steadfast.” What do you think that means? Look it up in a dictionary.

RESPONSE

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“Remembering” is a key concept, and we need to remember what the Lord has done for us. Keep a journal or write out below a list ways and instances God has been faithful to you personally. Perhaps you could do this as a family activity. Refer to this journal in times of grieving or despair to bring hope as you remember He is faithful.

Lamentations 3:22-24 are maybe the most well-known verses in the book, and they are worth memorizing. Consider memorizing these verses— if you already have them memorized, add in 31-33—and then meditate on God’s steadfast love, unwavering faithfulness, and unending mercies. Rehearse them in the morning and think of one way God is faithful or merciful today. Or, share them with a friend who might need to hear them.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the sermon passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper and apply the text—but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: What is a national or world tragedy that occurred in your lifetime that you still remember? Why was it so memorable and how did it affect things?

1 In Chapter 3, there was so much hope and it seemed like a corner was turned, but now in Chapter 4 the situation still seems dismal and the people are helpless. Why is it important to see that not every book of the Bible ends on a positive note or with things fixed? How is this true to life where we do have hope and yet live in a very broken world?

2 What are some verses in Chapter 4 that refer to the actions of God? What do these verses tell us about God? Do you see evidences of God's grace and/or mercy in this passage?

3 In verse 6, the author tells us that Jerusalem's punishment was greater than that of Sodom. Why do you think the punishment was greater? Are we held to a higher standard than others if God has revealed Himself to us? What passages might you consider to make your case?

4 In verse 11, it says the that Lord poured out His wrath on Zion, but we know it was the Babylonians who are laying siege to the city (Jer. 52:4;12-13). How do we reconcile the goodness of God and the horrible things that happened to His people at the hands of their enemies? Is God just in punishing His people in this way? Do we need to be scared of God's punishment if we sin? Why or why not?

5 How does the failure of Israel's prophets, priests, and kings throughout the Old Testament point us to the need for and the coming of Jesus? In what ways has Jesus fulfilled the duties of these offices that Israelite leaders could not fulfill? See Heb. 4:14-16, 7:26-28 for help?

6 In this chapter and book, we see that God will not spare those guilty of their sin but also that justice will be accomplished or completed (4:22). How does the gospel of Jesus Christ relate to this and apply to us? If Jesus was not spared and fully took our punishment, what does that mean for us? Why do Christians get the embrace of God rather than exile from God?

7 Much of Lamentations is similar. Is there anything new this week in light of the text or the sermon that you need to apply? How are you growing in learning to lament? As you've tried to lament to God, what has been helpful, what's been easy or hard about it, and what questions have come up?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are few of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the “Sunday Kid’s Notes” available each Sunday as another tool to encourage your children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

1 What is pride? Why does God get angry when we are prideful? What do our actions say to God when we are prideful? What should we do when we notice that we are being prideful? The opposite of pride is humility. How can we be humble like Jesus was humble?

2 What happens when we try to hide our sin or try to make up for it without talking to God? When we sin, who should we run to for help? Why don’t we have to be afraid of God when we sin?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we’ve seen in God’s Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not, please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God’s Word.

Jeremiah was able to petition God based upon God’s promises and God’s revelation of Himself. This reminds us that we need to know God and His Word to lament well rather than just complain. Come up with a game plan to study God’s Word. Ask someone in your Small Group to join you in your reading plan or walk alongside you for encouragement and accountability.

Lamentations mentions several times the importance of leaders. The failure of the leaders of Israel often led the people down the wrong path. Take some time this week to evaluate how you lead in your different contexts (family, work, friendships). Do you trust in your own ability? When things go bad, do you look for help outside of God? When people see you lead, do they talk about how great you are or how great the God you trust is? Take the steps to learn what true spiritual leadership looks like from Scripture. In what areas do you need to improve your leadership, and how do you plan on addressing those issues?

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the sermon passage again as you get started. Use these questions as a tool to help you dive deeper and apply the text—but give room to discuss important points and applications from the sermon.

ICEBREAKER: What was one new thing you learned or one helpful thing from this series?

- 1** Israel had been warned many times (and generations) leading up to this and were given ample opportunity to repent and turn to the Lord before this judgment took place. How might this chapter prompt us to not ignore God’s warnings in our lives? How might it spur us to warn others?
- 2** The fall of Jerusalem, because of their repetitive and unrepentant sin remained a teaching moment for Israel and something they looked back on to learn from. How can we learn from and grow from our failures, our sins, and times where we have not obeyed?
- 3** In 5:19, we see the author again return to the bedrock of God’s sovereignty, permanence, and steadfastness. Why do you think those are so important during times of suffering or catastrophe?
- 4** What is the great hope for the person experiencing God’s seeming absence in their life (5:21)? Why do you think the author asked for restoration and renewal rather than just the reversal of the predicaments expressed earlier in the chapter?
- 5** In light of Lamentations, how would you explain the difference between biblical lament and unbiblical grumbling and complaining? What are some helpful “guardrails,” if any, to lament?
- 6** What is something you learned during this series on lament or ways this series has helped you? What’s something that remains unclear to you, confusing, or is just hard to live out? How have you grown in knowing how to lament before the Lord during this series? What’s something you’d like to continue to do or take away moving forward?
- 7** Is there anything you are experiencing or walking through right now that your group can pray with you about?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

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- 1** When we disobey God, what does He want us to do? How can we know God will forgive us and give us joy again when we turn to Him?
- 2** What did you learn about lamenting or about God over the past two months?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we’ve seen in God’s Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not, please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God’s Word.

Write out in the space below (or in a journal) two or three of the top lessons you’ve learned from the Lamentations series. Include after that or within it a couple of ways you’ve learned to lament that you want to continue doing, practicing, or applying moving forward. Consider reading a book from the additional resources page to continue processing lament or suffering in our lives.

Pray for an opportunity to share some of what you’ve learned during this series with other people in your life. Then look for specific ways you can encourage others or lament with others. If any of the sermons might help someone walking through a trial, you can send them a link to our sermon page. If you memorized parts of Lamentations, include those verses in a note or in conversation and share how they helped you.



#DarkCloudsDeepMercy



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