



WEEK 1

LAMENTATIONS

FALL READING GUIDE

LAMENTATIONS

GOD MEETS US IN OUR SUFFERING



WEEK 1

SEPTEMBER 5, 2022



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

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EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

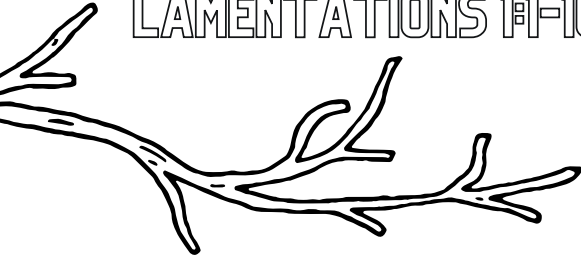
... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.

WEEK 1

LAMENTATIONS 1:1-10



DAY 1

LAMENTING LONLINESS

P.5

DAY 2

LAMENTING CONSEQUENCE

P.7

DAY 3

LAMENTING BROKENNESS

P.9

DAY 4

LAMENTING LOSS

P.11

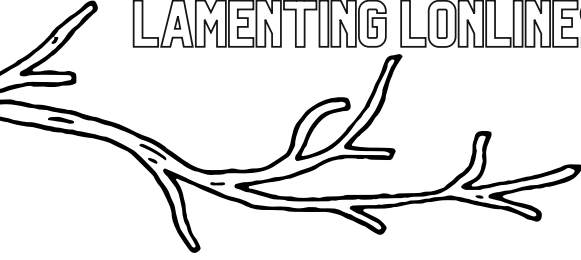
DAY 5

LAMENTING SHAME

P.13

DAY 1

LAMENTING LONLINESS

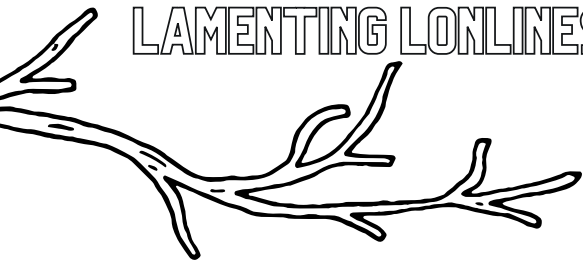


First read **Lamentations 1:1-2.**

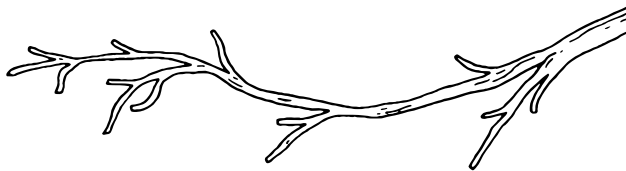
Lamentations is a collection of five poems. The first poem begins with a weighty word which gives us a clear sense of the book's theme. In most English translations it's how. But it's perhaps best understood as Alas! ... a gasp of grief and perplexity. The word is borrowed from an ancient derge. It's a "bitter declaration that death has ocured," write scholars Kathleen O'Connor and Naomi Seidman. Biblically, death is all about separation. In particular separation from God (see Genesis 3:22-24). Because of her sin Jerusalem is a city that feels like death because she is separated from the people, prestige, and joy with which she was so familiar (vv.1-2). Sin and death make us lonely.

DAY 1

LAMENTING LONELINESS



1. What do you think God thinks about your sin?
2. Not all loneliness is caused by sin. But all sin causes loneliness. How has sin caused you loneliness?
3. How does the cross bring us comfort and community?



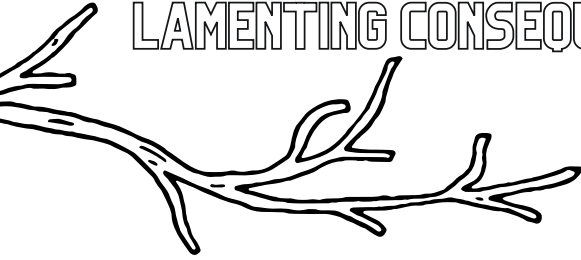
Heavenly Father ...

Loneliness is not your plan. You've made us for relationship--with you and others. Yet our sin causes isolation, separation, and grief. Forgive us. Comfort us. Give us a heart of lament in response to sin so we can rightly embrace fellowship in Christ.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 2

LAMENTING CONSEQUENCE

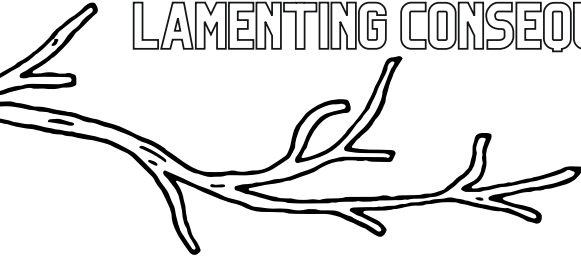


First read **Lamentations 1:3-4**.

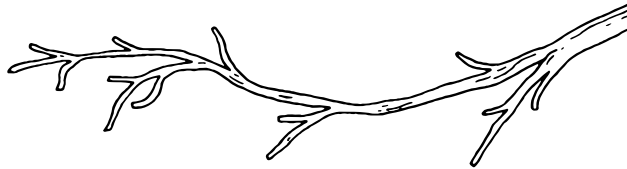
Life is hard for God’s people. She “has gone into exile” and “suffers bitterly” (vv.3,4). Now, life can be hard for many reasons--the world is broken, people hurt us, God is making us holy, and so on. But life is also hard because we sin. Both natural and supernatural consequences lay burdens on people as a result of their sin. That’s what consequence is ... the burdens and costs of sin. Israel has sinned against God. So her lament is not circumstantial, it’s a grief of sin. Lamenting sin is a unique mark of God’s people. English Bible teacher, Arthur Pink explains, “It is not the absence of sin but the grieving over it which distinguishes the child of God from empty professors.” Sin and death should cause us to lament.

DAY 2

LAMENTING CONSEQUENCE



1. Why do you think God cares if we sin? Why does he give consequence?
2. Are you grieved by your sin? Why or why not?
3. How ought lament and consequence lead you to the cross of Christ?



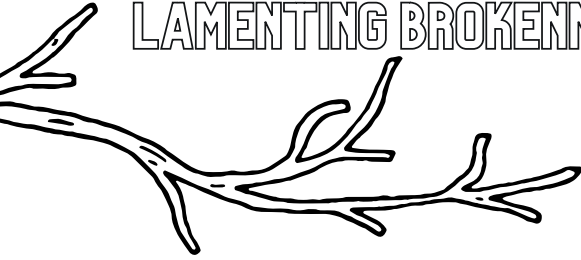
Heavenly Father ...

You're really good and truly holy. You hate sin--it destroys and corrupts your good world. And so as I experience the cost and feel the grief of sin renew me. Make me more like your Son. Make me love your love, be present in your presence, and trust your truth.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 3

LAMENTING BROKENNESS

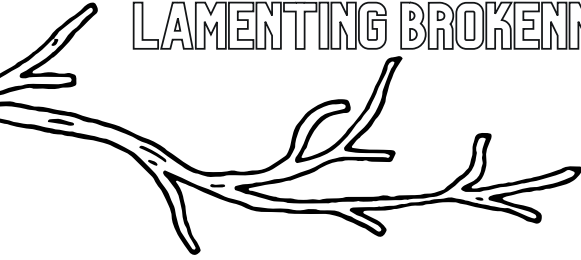


First read **Lamentations 1:5-6**.

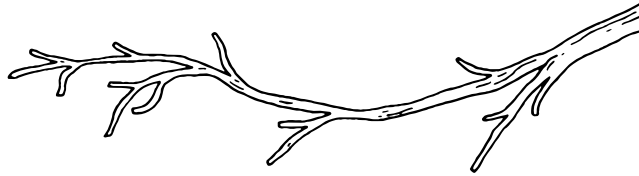
God's people had suffered catastrophic loss. Among other things they have endured large-scale deportations to Baylonia. "The ache of such a loss cuts savagely across the grain of a long-settled community," explains Leslie Allen. Their impulse to turn to God in their dislocation is more than complicated. You see, it's the Lord who has "afflicted" his people for "the multitude of her transgressions" (v.5). This is perhaps why the word "sits" is repeated so often (i.e. v.1). All she can do, and perhaps what she must do before anything else, is sit in and lament her brokenness.

DAY 3

LAMENTING BROKENNESS



1. What does God give consequences?
2. What brokenness or loss or consequence do you need to “sit in” for a while?
3. How does Jesus meet us in our brokenness?



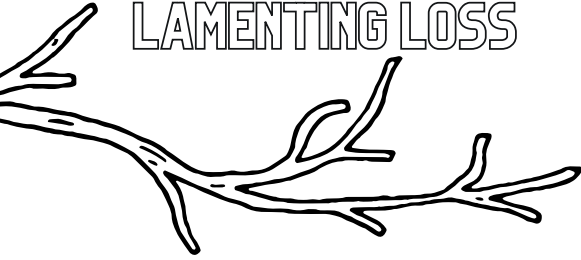
Heavenly Father ...

This world is broken. The systems, structures, purposes, and people are not as they should be. I'm prone to consider this brokenness quickly, and move on. Pause my hurry. Cause me to lament the things that are not as you have designed. Draw my heart to long for your forgiveness and healing, through your Son and by your Spirit.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 4

LAMENTING LOSS

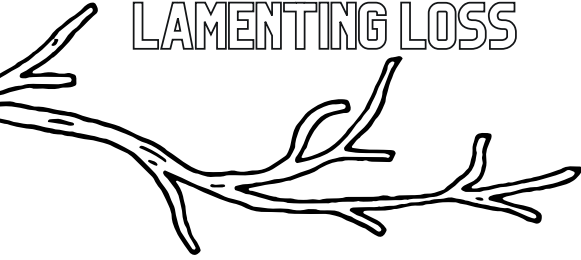


First read **Lamentations 1:7**.

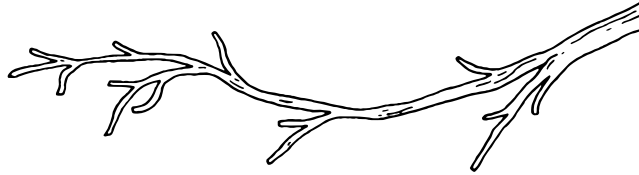
Jereusalem has suffered great physical and material losses. Yet perhaps more excruciating, God’s people have suffered emotional and mental trauma. Amidst her pain, she “remembers in the days of her affiliation and wandering all the precious things that were hers from days of old” (v.7a). She looks backward, recalling the beauty of her former life. But also she keeps replaying the traumatic event, “when her people fell ... and there was none to help” (v.7b). To live in trauma is to replay the nightmare over and over again in our minds. It’s a mental prison locked with the past memories and present loss. Here we see the deep cost of sin: the loss of a hopeful future outlook.

DAY 4

LAMENTING LOSS



1. Why do you think God took so much from Israel?
2. What have you lost because of sin?
3. How does the cross free us from this prison of hopelessness?



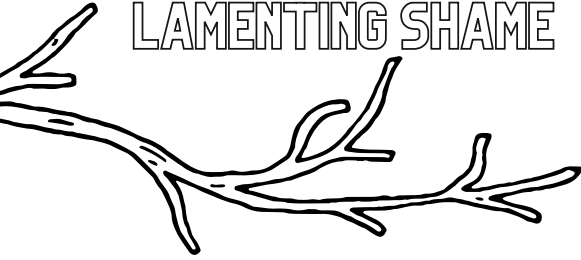
Heavenly Father ...

You are holy and righteous. You are all about justice and truth. Forgive my sin. As I recount what sin has taken, give me a hope and future in your Son, who has reclaimed all that has been lost and will restore all that has been broken.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 5

LAMENTING SHAME

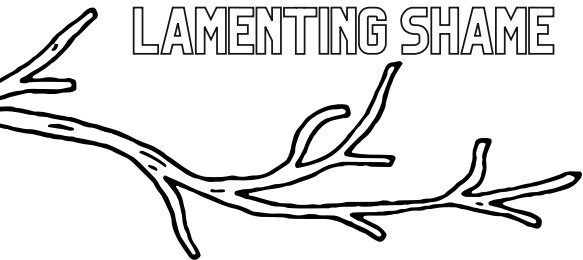


First read **Lamentations 1:8-10**.

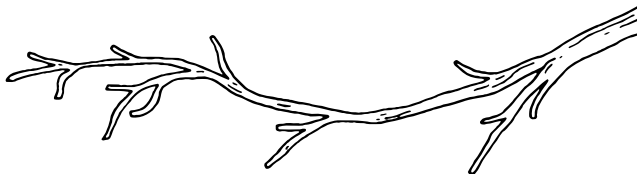
As researcher Brene Brown has said, “Shame is a focus on self ... Shame is ‘I am bad.’” Sin often brings such thoughts of shame. The poet here says, Jerusalem “became filthy” and those used to honor her, now “despise her” (v.8a). In an honor-shame culture, being overtaken by your enemies was particularly shameful (vv.9-10). But perhaps most telling, “she turns her face away;” a universal embodiment of shame (v.8b). Lament is not merely an emotional practice of contrition. It’s an embodiment of sin’s consequence. Hebrews tells us that Jesus, “endured the cross, despising the shame” (Hebrews 12:2). Though the city laments, one day Jesus would take all shame on his body and nail it to the cross.

DAY 5

LAMENTING SHAME



1. Why do you think the Lord isn't responding to the poet's overtures for comfort and relief?
2. How have you experienced shame?
3. How does the cross confront and correct the accusations of shame?



Heavenly Father ...

Some days all I can hear is shame's story; "I am bad." Yet, I know in you I'm a new creation--forgiven, clean, and loved. While I lament and feel the weight of sin's consequence, keep my mind stayed on the truth about who I am in Christ.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

GOD IS WITH US
IN SUFFERING.

