



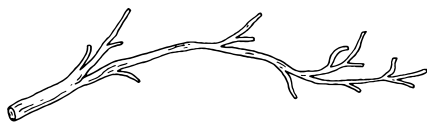
WEEK 11

LAMENTATIONS

FALL READING GUIDE

LAMENTATIONS

GOD MEETS US IN OUR SUFFERING



WEEK 11

NOVEMBER 14, 2022



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

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EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

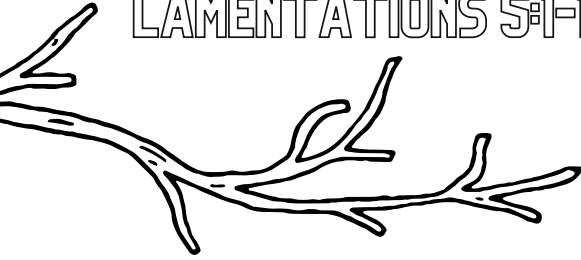
... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.

WEEK 11

LAMENTATIONS 5:1-10



DAY 1

REMEMBER OUR DISGRACE
P.5

DAY 2

REMEMBER OUR INSECURITY
P.7

DAY 3

REMEMBER OUR WEARINESS
P.9

DAY 4

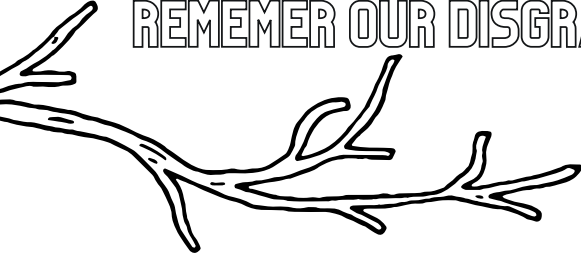
REMEMBER OUR CHAOS
P.11

DAY 5

REMEMBER OUR BODIES
P.13

DAY 1

REMEMER OUR DISGRACE

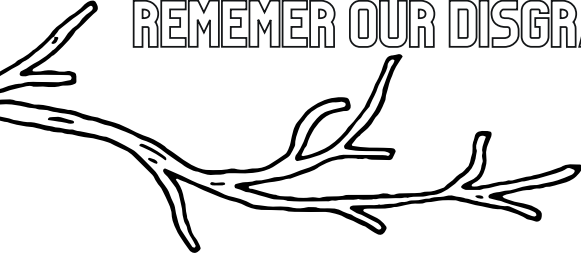


First read **Lamentations 5:1-2**.

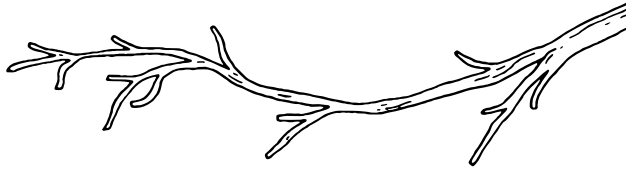
The last of five poems begins with a profound petition, **“Remember, O Lord”** (v.1a). It’s a prayer, rehearsing “just how bad things were when Israel sought to do their own thing and walk their own way” (*Exalting Jesus in Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 298). Of course, God has not forgotten all his people have done or failed to do. Asking the Lord to remember is asking God to take action. It’s a request for compassion. It’s a plea for help. It’s surrender. With one voice Israel asks God to remember their disgrace, specifically that **“our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners”** (v.2). They’re praying that God be mindful of all they’ve lost and who has taken it from them. Sin always steals from us. Hope is pushing through and pointing us to an enduring truth of God: God reclaims what sin steals. When we seek forgiveness and repent, **“the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you”** (Deuteronomy 30:3). Ultimate restoration is a work of Christ. On the cross, Jesus reclaims all the fortunes sin and death have stolen. Jesus said, **“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly”** (John 10:10). Sin steals. God recalims.

DAY 1

REMEMBER OUR DISGRACE



1. What does God's willingness to remember his people and their story reveal about his character?
2. What has sin stolen from you?
3. How has Jesus already reclaimed what sin has stolen from you? What will he reclaim when he returns?



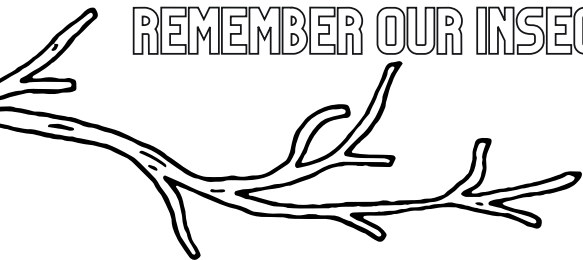
Heavenly Father ...

Remember us. Graciously respond to the brokenness within and around us. Forgive our sin and reclaim all that has been lost ... for your glory and our good.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 2

REMEMBER OUR INSECURITY

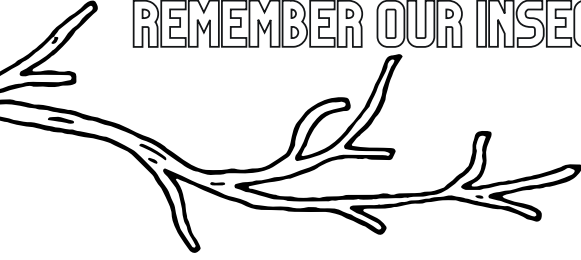


First read **Lamentations 5:3-4.**

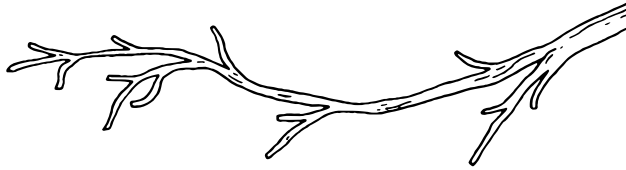
Israel continues asking God to remember. Beneath the surface of the collapse of the family and the challenges of meeting their own basic needs, the feebleness of their humanity is exposed. Professor Soong Chan-Rah explains that their lament “reflects a deep sense of insecurity brought upon them” by all that has been stolen by sin (*Prophetic Lament*, 181). They’re asking God to reclaim what has been lost. Sin exposes us. When we wander from God and his will, we’re vulnerable to the destructive elements of the physical and spiritual realms. Through Christ, God covers us. You see, even though sin and suffering make all of us orphans and widows, God is, **“Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation”** (Psalm 68:5). Paul writes, **“in love [God] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will”** (Ephesians 1:4-5). Later in that same letter to Ephesus Paul explains that by grace we’re also wed to Christ as his holy and spotless Bride (see Ephesians 5:22-33). Israel asks God to remember. In Christ, God never forgets his people.

DAY 2

REMEMBER OUR INSECURITY



1. What does it mean that God is our Father?
2. What insecurities do you have? How does sin heighten those insecurities?
3. How does the work of Christ 'cover' you where you feel most vulnerable?



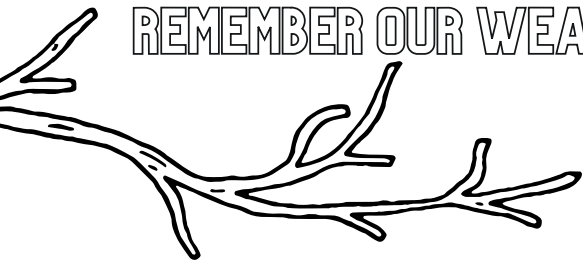
Heavenly Father ...

I know I'm loved. I know I'm your child. I know, with the Church, I'm part of the Bride of Christ. Yet, regularly I feel uncertain, unsettled, exposed, and vulnerable. Drive our fear with your love and empower me to live as one who is covered in your love.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 3

REMEMBER OUR WEARINESS

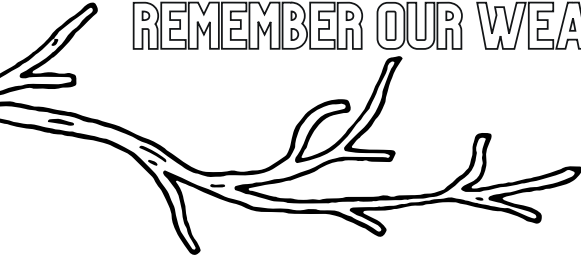


First read **Lamentations 5:5-6.**

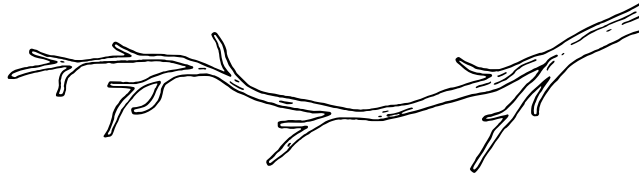
A request for rest is a request for mercy. Israel asks God to remember, **“we are weary; we are given no rest”** (v.5). They’re exhausted, in part, because they foolishly made deals with Egypt and Assyria to secure food (v.6). Rays of hope have been limited in Lamentations, but they’ve always been illuminated by divine mercy. Despite their suffering, God’s people know, **“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end”** (3:22). Mercy is the reprieve of righteous consequence. It’s not getting what by our sin we deserve. Suffering often steals peace, physically and spiritually. Suffering makes us tired. The Lord knows this and mercifully, invites us to rest in him. Jesus said, **“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:28). That’s mercy. It’s the reprieve of suffering through the establishment of peace. That doesn’t mean all the tension will immediately be dispelled. After all, true rest is not the absence of conflict ... it’s the presence of peace. And Jesus **“himself is our peace”** (Ephesians 2:14). Paradoxically, in Christ we can always be at rest no matter what’s happening to us. Because in him we always have mercy.

DAY 3

REMEMBER OUR WEARINESS



1. How have you experienced the peace of Christ in your life?
2. What's causing you physical and spiritual weariness this week?
3. How might Jesus be inviting you to rest, trust, and find peace in him?



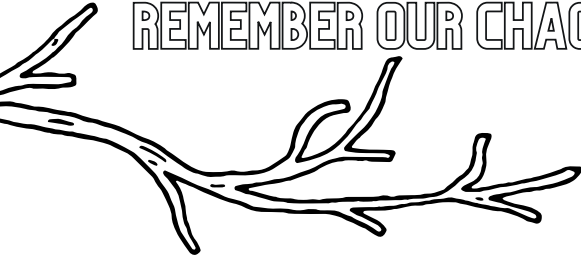
Heavenly Father ...

Fear, exhaustion, sin, and suffering seek to steal my peace. But in you, I know my peace is secure. Your love never ceases. You always see my weariness. Help me to rest in you. Help me to trust you. Settle my soul in your mercy.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 4

REMEMBER OUR CHAOS

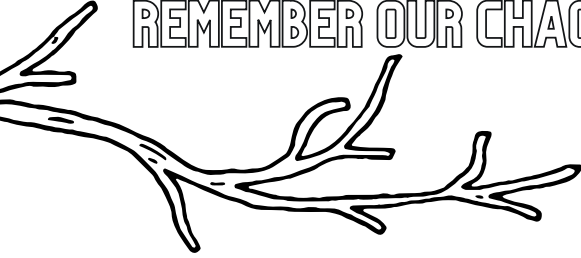


First read **Lamentations 5:7-8.**

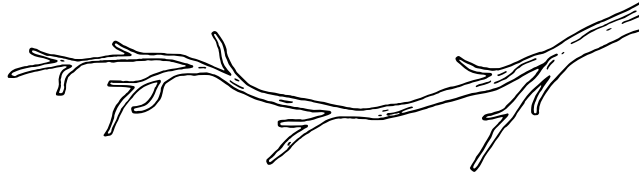
The writer of Proverbs speaks of chaos. **“Under three things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up,”** he says two of those things are, **“a slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is filled with food”** (Proverbs 30:21,22). A slave is unprepared to rule over an entire kingdom. A fool will completely forget about everyone else if his basic needs are met. That’s precisely what’s happened in Jerusalem. **“Slaves rule over us; there is none to deliver us from their hand,”** the people lament (v.8). Society unravels under inexperienced and incompetent leadership (as we’ll see through the rest of the poem). It’s chaos. The family is in peril too. Children continue to repeat the sins of their fathers (v.7). It’s chaos. Sin creates chaos. That’s why Paul reminds the extremely disordered church in first-century Corinth, **“For God is not a God of confusion”** (1 Corinthians 14:33). God is the God of order. Order leads to human flourishing. Humanity trembles without order. Humanity can’t bear up under chaos. Jesus sets things right. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus does not merely redeem sinners, he redeems the cosmos (see Colossians 1:15-20). He orders the disordered--he is King (see Isaiah 9:6). He calms the chaos--he is Peace (see Ephesians 2:14). All that sin confuses, Jesus clarifies.

DAY 4

REMEMBER OUR CHAOS



1. How has God brought order to your life?
2. What still feels disordered or chaotic in your story?
3. How might the gospel bring clarity and healing to these unsettled areas of your life?



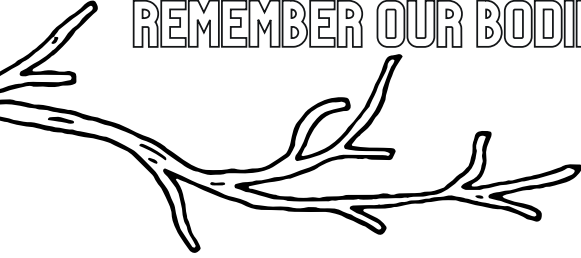
Heavenly Father ...

Many things are not as they should be. Bring clarity and healing to _____ and _____ . I trust you and worship you knowing that you alone bring order and peace to human hearts and the entire universe.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 5

REMEMBER OUR BODIES

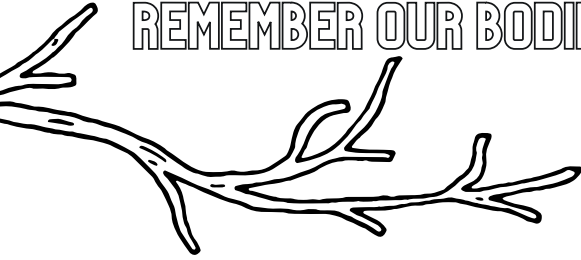


First read **Lamentations 5:9-10**.

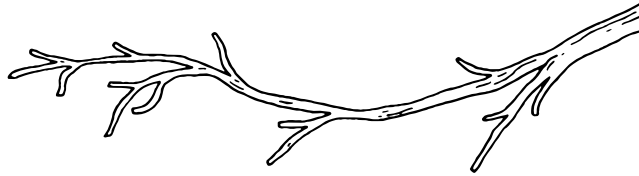
The collapse of familial and social order leads to famine. Bodies are breaking down. “This agricultural hazard discouraged harvesting, which caused scarcity of food, which led to lowering of immunity and so ill health, especially an outbreak of fever” (*A Liturgy of Grief*, 156). God’s people ask the Lord to remember the painful toll his wrath has taken on their bodies. They lament, **“Our skin is hot as an oven with the burning heat of famine”** (v.10). This is not a metaphor. God has created us in such a way that our interior well-being has a direct effect on our physical well-being (and vice versa). For instance, in his book, *Together*, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy explains that an epidemic of loneliness comes with a higher risk of cardiovascular illness, dementia, and sleep disturbance. Sin destroys our bodies. Our physical bodies are part of our spiritual formation. After all, in the fullness of grace and truth, **“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”** (John 1:14). The invisible God becomes a physical man. Through his incarnation Jesus both dignifies our bodies and makes himself a candidate for physical suffering. Therefore his physical and spiritual suffering on the cross brings hope to our broken souls and our broken bodies. Sin destroys but Jesus heals.

DAY 5

REMEMBER OUR BODIES



1. How have you seen the healing power of God?
2. What shame do you feel about your body? What pain do you feel in your body?
3. How does Jesus heal your shame and pain?



Heavenly Father ...

You are the Creator and Healer of our physical bodies. Remember our shame. Remember our pain. Thank you for Jesus. His incarnation gives us hope that you do cover us, you do heal us, and you do see us.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

GOD IS WITH US
IN SUFFERING.

