



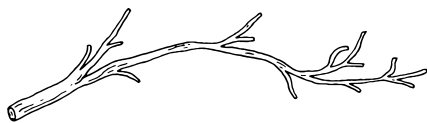
WEEK 8

LAMENTATIONS

FALL READING GUIDE

LAMENTATIONS

GOD MEETS US IN OUR SUFFERING



WEEK 8

OCTOBER 24, 2022



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

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EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

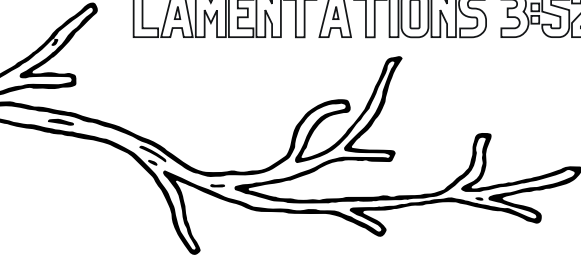
... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.

WEEK 8

LAMENTATIONS 3:52-66



DAY 1

YOU KNOW I'M LOST

P.5

DAY 2

YOU HEARD MY CRY

P.7

DAY 3

YOU REDEEM MY LIFE

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DAY 4

YOU HEARD THEM

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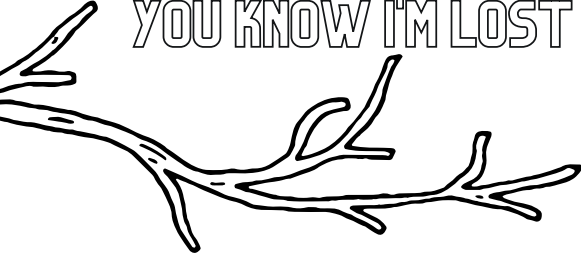
DAY 5

YOU WILL REPAY THEM

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DAY 1

YOU KNOW I'M LOST

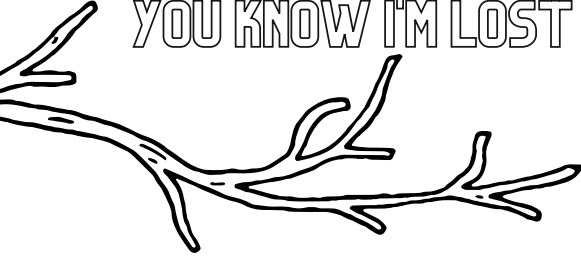


First read **Lamentations 3:52-54.**

Everyone has felt the sting of unjust treatment. Whether on the playground or in the courtroom, eventually we all learn what it's like to be hurt **“without cause”** (v.52). That's what the poet is describing. In the middle of suffering and hope, he identifies the agents of God's grief (see v.32). He calls them his enemies. The apparent ease with which Jeremiah casts people as enemies assaults our modern manners and tolerant dispositions. It seems harsh and unkind to say such a thing. After all, few of us have **“been hunted like a bird”** or **“flung alive into the pit”** or had **“water closed over [our] head”** by someone (vv.52,53,54). However, Jeremiah is speaking metaphorically. Therefore we can find common ground with his experience. We may not identify another person as our enemy, but we are told, **“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”** (1 Peter 5:8). The devil is our enemy. The good news, of course, is that he is a vanquished foe. Jesus defeated our adversary. Though his pestering persists, his power is limited. In his victory over the devil Jesus endured this sting of injustice. He was **“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted”** (Isaiah 53:4). You see, that's how Jesus defeated Satan ... by enduring unjust treatment.

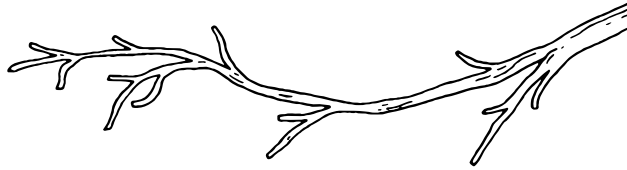
DAY 1

YOU KNOW I'M LOST



1. How was Jesus unjustly treated?
2. How have you been unjustly treated?
3. What hope can we find in the gospel when we are mistreated?

Heavenly Father ...

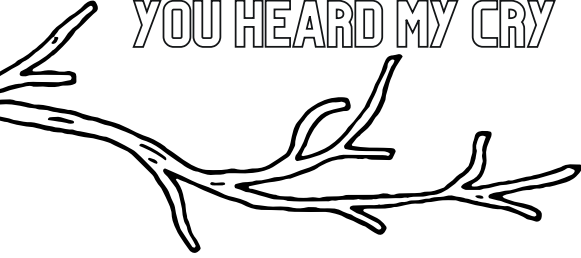


Sometimes I wonder if you see me and hear me. I feel lost and hurt and don't know whether or not you know or care. Thank you for the reminder today, not only do you see me but your Son knows exactly what it's like to be mistreated. That's really hopeful and comforting.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 2

YOU HEARD MY CRY

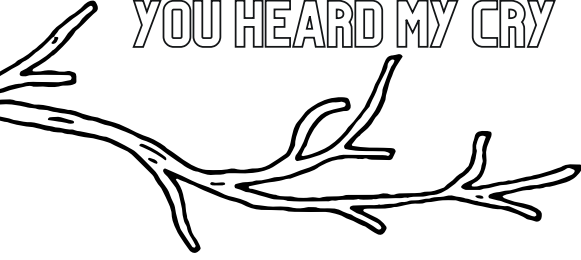


First read **Lamentations 3:55-57.**

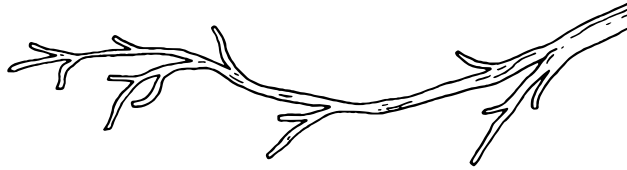
Jeremiah is telling a story. He's sharing an experience of suffering in order to encourage his readers in their suffering. He offers his lament as a model to them, and by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to us. What's the model? Well, first he calls the name of the Lord, **"from the depths of the pit"** (v.55). Then God hears his plea to hear his **"cry for help"** (v.56). Finally, God draws near to him and says, **"Do not fear"** (v.57). Jeremiah calls God. God hears. God comes. God speaks. Prayer is a primary way we call to God in our time of need. In fact, as Tim Keller notes, "Prayer is how God gives us so many of the unimaginable things he has for us" (Prayer, 18). And it seems amidst unjust suffering God wants to give us love ... after all **"perfect love drives out fear"** and God himself is love (see 1 John 4:8,18). He himself draws near. He says, do not fear. Of course, suffering may not end immediately. That's not Jeremiah's message. That's not the message of the Bible. The lesson is that God hears and responds. Specifically, he draws near. Jesus drew near us and said, **"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world"** (John 16:33). Suffering may not end for us, but in Christ suffering will not end us.

DAY 2

YOU HEARD MY CRY



1. What does this passage reveal about God?
2. What does it reveal about you?
3. How does it point you to the cross of Christ?



Heavenly Father ...

Thank you that in Christ you hear me when I call, you draw near, you're with me, and you speak love to me in my suffering. Give me faith and trust in you.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 3

YOU REDEEM MY LIFE



First read **Lamentations 3:58-60**.

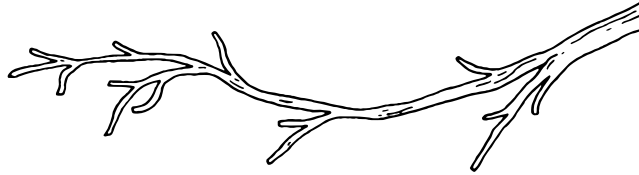
Redemption is about deliverance. Jeremiah says that God **“redeemed my life”** because he delivered him from great trouble (v.58b). He saved him. And now he wants to anchor himself in that experience and truth in order to endure a new challenge. God instructs his people to remember all the time. What’s more, he tells them to remember some of the most obvious and fundamental truths of their story. In Deuteronomy God’s people are even instructed to **“remember the Lord your God”** (Deuteronomy 8:18). *Now, how could God’s people possibly forget God?* Well, in Hebrew consciousness remembering was about a lot more than just recalling information. Remember was about living in light of something. Remembering is not about memories, it’s about trust and worship. Jeremiah thinks about God’s previous redemption so that he will live with trust and peace in this new situation. He wants to remember. He then has confidence that God has “seen the wrong done to me” and has **“seen all their vengeance”** (vv.59,60). In other words, Jeremiah reminds himself that God does not forget him (see Hebrews 13:7-8).

DAY 3

YOU REDEEM MY LIFE



1. How have you seen God redeem your life?
2. How should what he has done give you trust and hope as you look to the next challenge?
3. Why is the gospel the most important truth for us to “remember”?



Heavenly Father ...

Thank you for never forgetting me. Thank you for seeing me and loving me. Thank you for Jesus. Help me to remember you this week.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 4

YOU HAVE HEARD THEM

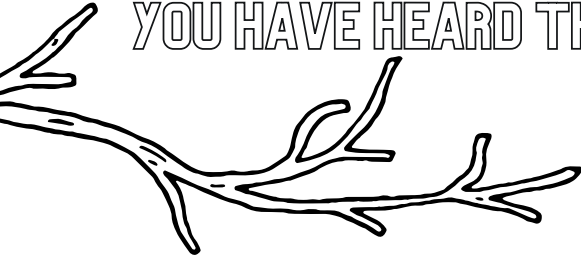


First read **Lamentations 3:61-63**.

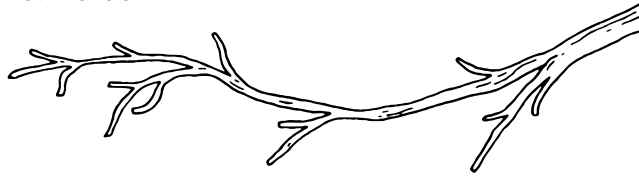
Words are powerful. The Apostle James explains the oversized influence of words through three illustrations. He equates our words with the bit of a horse, the rudder of the ship, and a spark in a forest. He writes, **“the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things”** (James 3:5). What we say matters. What people say to us and about us matters. People seek to harm Jeremiah with their words, **“the lips and thoughts of my assailants are against me”** (v.62). He says, **“I am the object of their taunts”** (v.63). Taunting communicates a motivation of shame and disgrace. Words seek to sully Jeremiah’s reputation, provoke him to anger, and draw him away from faithfulness. We must learn to **“tame the tongue”** and we ought to lament hurtful words and the pain they cause (James 3:8). In our lament we find great comfort remembering that the Lord hears every taunt and Jesus knows the sting of ridicule and mockery (v.61 and Matthew 20:19). Jesus is uniquely equipped to not only heal us from hurtful words but replace those words with the love and truth of his Word.

DAY 4

YOU HAVE HEARD THEM



1. What does the fact that God hears what is said about us tell about his love for us?
2. What words have hurt you recently? What hurtful words have you spoken recently?
3. How does the gospel empower us to seek and give forgiveness for sinful words?



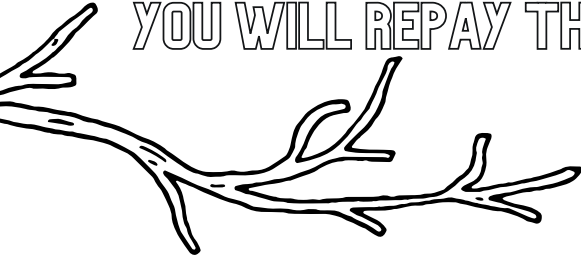
Heavenly Father ...

What you speak is always good, healing, and loving. Forgive me for the words I've recently spoken out of fear, anger, and mockery. Heal me from the sting of taunts and remind me of the truth about you and about me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 5

YOU WILL REPAY THEM

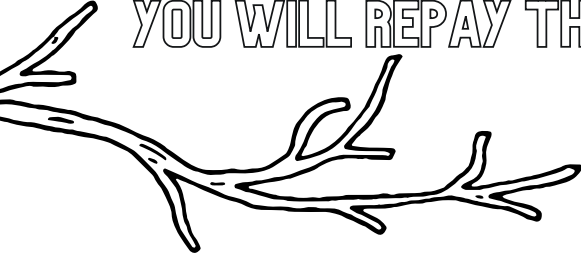


First read **Lamentations 3:64-66**.

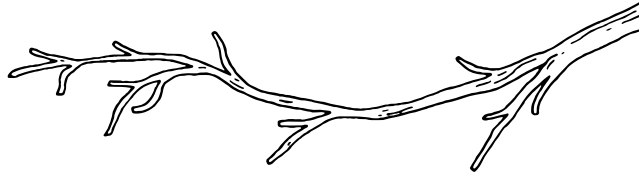
God does not just hear the taunts of enemies. He responds with justice. Jeremiah knows the Lord **“will repay”** his naysayers for what they have said and done (v.64). He speaks with confidence and specificity, God **“will give them dullness of heart ... will pursue them in anger and destroy them”** (vv.65,66). Remember, much of Lamentations 3 is about giving Israel a model for lament. While lament offers no solutions, lament is not without assurances. Remembering that God speaks, hears, redeems, and repays cultivates a patient trust as we wait for him to set things to rights. And when justice comes, lament will go. Scholar N.T. Wright imagines the promise of a kingdom--and all that comes with it--as a faint voice in the beginning of his book, *Simply Christian*. “It’s as though we can hear, not perhaps a voice itself,” Wright explains, “but the echo of a voice: a voice speaking with calm, healing authority, speaking about justice, about things being put to rights, about peace and hope and prosperity for all. The voice continues to echo in our imagination, our subconscious ... calling us, beckoning us, luring us to think that there might be such a thing as justice, as the world being put to rights, even though we find it so elusive” (3-4). One day that voice will be clear as day. God’s justice will lead to a united heaven and earth (see Revelations 21:1-5). And lament will be no more.

DAY 5

YOU WILL REPAY THEM



1. What wrong are you eager for God to make right?
2. What injustice in your heart needs confession, healing, or liberation?
3. How has the cross secured eternal justice?



Heavenly Father ...

Thank you that lament and suffering do not rob you of justice. You will repay. You will have justice. Humble me in the meantime. Help me to trust, hope, and work for the justice that will one day be fully expressed.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

GOD IS WITH US
IN SUFFERING.

