

Talk 4 (Lamentations 4 and 5)

Move from lament to prayer

Brief comments on Lamentations 4

Reflections on grief and prayer

5:1-18 Remember and See our Disgrace

⁵ Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us;
look, and see our disgrace! [cf. Psalm 89:50]

² Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,
our homes to foreigners.

³ We have become orphans, fatherless;
our mothers are like widows.

⁴ We must pay for the water we drink;
the wood we get must be bought. [cf. Joshua 9:27]

⁵ Our pursuers are at our necks;
we are weary; we are given no rest.

⁶ We have given the hand to Egypt, and to Assyria,
to get bread enough.

⁷ Our fathers sinned, and are no more;
and we bear their iniquities. [Exodus 20:5; note 5:16]

⁸ Slaves rule over us; [cf. Prov. 19:10; 30:22]
there is none to deliver us from their hand.

⁹ We get our bread at the peril of our lives,
because of the sword in the wilderness.

¹⁰ Our skin is hot as an oven
with the burning heat of famine.

¹¹ Women are raped in Zion,
young women in the towns of Judah.

¹² Princes are hung up by their hands;
no respect is shown to the elders.

¹³ Young men are compelled to grind at the mill,
and boys stagger under loads of wood.

¹⁴ The old men have left the city gate,
the young men their music.

¹⁵ The joy of our hearts has ceased;
our dancing has been turned to mourning. [cf. Jer. 16:9]

¹⁶ The crown has fallen from our head;
woe to us, for we have sinned!

¹⁷ For this our heart has become sick,
for these things our eyes have grown dim,

¹⁸ for Mount Zion which lies desolate;
jackals prowl over it.

5:19-22 Remember and Restore us

¹⁹But you, O LORD, reign forever;
your throne endures to all generations.

²⁰Why do you forget us forever,
why do you forsake us for so many days?

²¹Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored!
Renew our days as of old—

²²unless you have utterly rejected us,
and you remain exceedingly angry with us.

Responding to Lamentations 5

Ponder the calling of the church

Genesis 1:28 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it . . . '

Genesis 2:15 'to work it and keep it'

Genesis 12:3 'in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'

Romans 8:19 'For the creation waits with eager longing for the revelation of the sons of God.'

1 Corinthians 6:2 'do you not know that the saints will judge the world?'

Summing up our responses to Lamentations

1. The favour and presence of God matter above all things
Romans 5:12
2. The wages of sin is death
Romans 6:23
3. Worldly sorrow leads to death, so offer the world the gospel in their sorrows
Ecclesiastes 4:1
2 Corinthians 7:10
Luke 13:1-5
4. Take heart because Christ has become the curse for us
Galatians 3:10-14
5. The church suffers both with Christ and as the Father's discipline. So learn repentance in corporate sorrows
Romans 8:17
Colossians 1:24
1 Peter 1:7
Hebrews 12:3-11
6. Christians suffer both with Christ and as the Father's discipline. So learn repentance in personal sorrows
7. Lament takes time before prayer emerges and crystallises