



Series: When Life Breaks You Heart (Part 1)

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INTRODUCTION

Life does have a way of breaking our hearts. Whether it's a health crisis, the loss of a loved one, a broken relationship or the loss of a job, the pain could be unbearable. What do you tend to do when you are faced with such pain or brokenness? Do you cope by distracting yourself with a busy schedule, numbing the pain or blaming others for your plight?

In this 2-part series, we are going to the Book of Lamentations for answers on what we can do when faced with pain. This book is a collection of five lament poems recounting the tragic fall of Jerusalem to Babylon. Evidence outside of the bible pointed to Jeremiah as the author of the book. It may not be the most popular book in the Bible, but it is an essential part of helping us to understand an important aspect of our relationship with God – the expression of grief and distress.

DISCUSSION

What would you do to make yourself feel better when your day seems to go wrong? Do you have a self-care routine when life throws sour lemons at you?

OR

What do you usually lament¹ about? What does it tell you about your heart?

1. Read Lamentations 1-2. Make a list of the things the author cries over, and categorise them according to your own discretion.

- a. What does your list tell you about the author's heart?
- b. What does it tell you about how the author relates to God?
- c. How, then, should we relate to God?

2. Pay attention to Lamentations 2:17.

- d. Read Jeremiah 14:10-12. Why does the author confess Jerusalem's suffering as a sign of God's faithfulness?
- e. If Jerusalem's suffering is a sign of God's faithfulness, why does the author still go to God in prayer?
- f. Why might it sometimes be difficult for us to trust in God's faithfulness? What stops us from going to God in tough times?

3. Remember a time when you lamented to God.

- g. How did you hold onto Him as He saw you through? What encouraged you in the waiting?
- h. Is there someone in the group or someone you know who is going through pain, or grief, or loss? How would you encourage him or her? Pray in response.

4. Reflect on what has been discussed and shared. Why do you think God inspired the author to write the Book of Lamentations?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

"My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city." - Lamentations 2:11

"One of the commonest ways to deal with another's suffering is to make light of it, to gloss it over, to attempt shortcuts through it. Because it is so painful, we try to get to the other side quickly. Lamentations provides a structure to guarantee against that happening. It is important to pay attention to everything that God says; but it is also important to pay attention to everything that men and women feel, especially when that feeling is as full of pain and puzzlement as suffering². - Eugene H. Peterson

¹ Definition: *Noun: An expression of sadness over something, or a complaint*
 Verb: To express sadness or regret about something
 (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/lament>)

² Kaiser, W. C., Jr. (2004). *Grief and pain in the plan of God: christian assurance and the message of Lamentations* (p. 14). Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications.

The pandemic has ‘forced’ us to pause in our tracks and has given us space to go to God. Don’t waste this ‘space’. Lamentations reminds us of the importance not only of mourning over our sin but of asking the Lord for His forgiveness and mercy when we fail Him. Much of Jeremiah’s poetry concerns itself with the fallen Jerusalem. Do you see any of that destroyed city in your own life? Are you mourning over the sin that’s brought you to this point?

Would you use the space right now to express your feelings to God? The book of Lamentations invites us to pray honest prayers.

MEMORY VERSE

“My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city. - Lamentations 2:11

APPENDIX

LAMENTATIONS

	Jerusalem's Desolation	The Lord's Anger	Jeremiah's Grief	The Lord's Anger	Jeremiah's Prayer
	<i>CHAPTER 1</i>	<i>CHAPTER 2</i>	<i>CHAPTER 3</i>	<i>CHAPTER 4</i>	<i>CHAPTER 5</i>
Underlying Emotion	Lonely, groaning	Angry, exhorting	Broken, weeping	Desperate, anguished	Weary, pleading
Short Prayers	1:20–22 “See us!”	2:20–22 “Look at us!”	3:55–66 “Judge them!”	4:20 “Avenge us!”	5:21 “Restore us!”
Theme	Mourning over sin; the severity of God’s judgment; hope in His mercy				
Key Verses	1:1, 5	2:14, 17	3:16–24	4:11–12	5:5, 19–22
Christ in Lamentations	Jesus, like Jeremiah, wept over the sins of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:27–38; Luke 13:34–35).				

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For additional resources, you may refer to the following links. This gives you a great overview of the book.

- Chuck Swindoll’s “Overview of Lamentations”, <https://www.insight.org/resources/bible/the-major-prophets/lamentations>
- Watch the video “Overview: Lamentations”, <https://bibleproject.com/explore/lamentations/>