



**Series:** When Life Breaks Your Heart (Part 2)

**Speaker:** Pastor Rhordan

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is not uncommon to hear people respond to our pain by telling us to “get on with it” and “move on.” On the flipside, others might try to assure us that it is okay to stay in our pain for as long as we need it.

Scripture reveals that neither piece of advice is complete. As mentioned in the first part of this sermon series, it is essential to confront our pain and get through the process of it, rather than try to rush ourselves out of the ordeal. However, this journey of working through our pain should lead us to hope and bring us to the truth that is in the person of Christ Jesus.

In this second half of the series, we will dive into a chapter of the book of Lamentations. Hopefully, it will encourage us to recall the promises of God, as we also remember our pain.

## **DISCUSSION**

***“If God is so good, why do bad things happen in this world/to me?”***

This is a question commonly asked by sceptics of the faith, but it might very well be uttered by us from time to time. In your LifeGroup, have a crack at it and share your thoughts.

1. Read Lamentations 3:1-18.
  - a. Who is 'He' that the author is addressing? What has 'He' done?
  - b. What does this tell you about the nature of God?
  - c. As you read these verses, what do you feel about God? Have you ever felt this way about God before?
  
2. Read Lamentations 3:19-24.
  - a. Compared to the verses that came before, how has the author's attitude changed?
  - b. Why?
  
3. Linger on Lamentations 3:22. God's "great love" is an English translation from the Hebrew word **חֶסֶד** (**chesed**). This is a descriptor of the enduring love of God, and is almost impossible to be directly translated. In various versions of the Bible, you will find such attempts of translation as "faithful love," "steadfast love," "loving devotion," "lovingkindness," "mercies", and so on.

(See variations at: <https://biblehub.com/lamentations/3-22.htm>)

- a. God's steadfast lovingkindness and devotion, and Israel's downfall make for an interesting juxtaposition. Yet, they are related.
    - i. The God of love is also responsible for pain. How does this change the way we view God, suffering, and love?
    - ii. The author reacts to his pain with a reverence for God.
  
  - b. We see a similar story of pain and suffering through the crucifixion of Jesus. Despite being the son of God, Jesus chose to embrace the intense pain and shame of dying on the cross, as well as experiencing separation from the Father.  
  
Yet, Hebrews 12:2 tells us that He chose to go through the pain "for the joy set before Him".
    - i. What was this "joy"?
    - ii. Because of Jesus' act of love through a painful sacrifice, we are not only freed from sin, but we can receive full healing and freedom from our physical and emotional pain, enjoying a personal relationship with God forever. How can we respond to this truth?
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4. Reading the rest of Lamentations 3, identify and list the ways the author chooses to respond differently to the situation. What are some of the practical ways that he has done so? (Refer to Lam 3:25-30, 40-41, 49-50, 56-61)

**Changing your mind:** Consider a recent crisis or turbulent event in your life presently. How can you apply these responses to the situation at hand? If comfortable, commit to sharing these with your LifeGroup and walking in an accountability journey together.

### **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

Our narrative of life can be shaped by these three phases:

1. **Orientation:** Often at the very beginning, with a clean slate, we begin to learn about life, God, ourselves, and the people around us. This happens commonly at birth and in childhood and we often learn this from our parents and/or direct caregivers.
2. **Disorientation:** A challenge, or painful situation arises and causes a disruption to our original understanding about our surroundings. When the pain is not properly dealt with, we make certain decisions in our minds to protect ourselves from it. This can come in the form of shutting off, unforgiveness, or even distraction or delusion.
3. **Reorientation:** Pain is an inevitable part of our journey in this broken world, but the good news is that healing and restoration is possible through a relationship with Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life. When we choose to bring the painful experiences to Jesus rather than dwell in them, we allow Him to show us a richer way of life. Our faith in Him deepens as a result of this.

Where do you find yourself along these phases right now? If you have ever managed to get through the phase of reorientation, how can you partner with Jesus to help others reach this stage as well?

### **MEMORY VERSE**

“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” - Lamentations 3:22-23 (NKJV)