

“GOD. I’M HURTING - BUT IT’S MY FAULT”
LIFEGROUP STUDY
Feb. 14, 2021
LEADER NOTES

Welcome to our two-part series, “God. I’m Hurting!” In part one of our series, we explored the place and power of lament. We learned that lament is a passionate expression of sorrow or grief found throughout the Scriptures. For part 2, we’ll focus on this truth – the answer to every lament is found in Jesus. Lamenting is a necessary part of how we process hurt, but there is a direction we should pursue, an outcome we are designed to experience – the love of Jesus. Today, let’s journey together to understand more of the place and power of lament, and how we can move forward intentionally with Jesus as our destination.

ICEBREAKER: Road Trip!

What road trip have you been on that has been particularly memorable for you? Did you have every part of that journey planned before you left home, or did you leave parts of it up to what you might discover along the way? Share your memorable road trip adventure with the group.

STUDY:

- On Sunday, Pete talked about how we can lament even from a place a guilt. We can lament even when the suffering and pain we feel is self-inflicted or the natural consequence of our sin. **What do you think of this idea?**

For our study time, we’re going to read some words penned by Jeremiah the prophet as he laments the destruction of his nation, Israel. **What can we learn from Jeremiah about the place and power of lamenting? How can we, like him, find hope on the other side?** These are questions to keep in mind as we journey together through lament.

READ: Lamentations 3:1-24

- In this chapter, Jeremiah uses some descriptive imagery to express his hurt and the hurting he sees all around him. Go back through verses 1-20 and write or speak out the imagery you find there. **Why is this imagery so powerful? How might using imagery help you in forming your own lament?**

LEADER NOTE: Each verse contains imagery. The rod of God’s anger (vs. 1) darkness (vs. 2), opposition from God (vs. 3) broken body (vs. 4), besieged and surrounded (vs. 5), buried and left for dead (vs. 6), imprisoned (vs. 7), not heard by God (vs. 8), way blocked (vs. 9), attacked by God (vs. 10-13), laughed at by others (vs. 14), filled with bitterness (vs. 15) face in the dirt

(vs. 16), no peace (vs. 17), no hope (vs. 18), suffering and homelessness (vs. 19) can't forget the hurt (vs. 20). This imagery is powerful because it speaks to the depths of the sorrow, depression, anxiety and loss Jeremiah is experiencing. The images give words to his lament. Using imagery can help us form our own lament. Your group members could use Jeremiah's imagery, or they could come up with their own. This takes some work, but it is worth it because it helps us express our hurt.

- In his lament, Jeremiah expresses that some of the hurt he is experiencing is a direct punishment from God. **How might I know if my hurt is a natural consequence of living in a broken world, or a direct result of my sin? How might my response change if I feel my hurt is a direct result of my sin?**

LEADER NOTE: God had warned Israel again and again to turn from their sin and follow Him. Finally, after their ongoing refusal to obey, God punished them by allowing Babylon to conquer them. The hurt they experienced was a direct result of their sin. Jeremiah acknowledges this when he says, "But it is the LORD who did just as he planned. He has fulfilled the promises of disaster he made long ago." Lamentations 2:17 NLT. Most often we will not know if the hurt we experience is a direct result of our sin or natural consequences of living in a broken world. God wants us to confess our sins to him (1 John 1:9), turn from them (Colossians 3:8-9) and live for Him (Colossians 3:10). This is how we can avoid suffering the results of ongoing sinful behaviour in our lives.

- In vs. 21-24 Jeremiah comes to a new point in his journey of lamenting. **What key words or ideas does Jeremiah use to express this part of his journey?**

LEADER NOTE: Key words and ideas he uses include "hope", "remember" "the LORD's faithful love" "new mercies every morning", "the LORD is my inheritance". There are some key actions Jeremiah takes. He hopes. He remembers God's love and mercy. He worships God. He speaks to himself and reminds himself of who the LORD is to him. These words and actions can be a powerful guide for us to turn a corner in our lament and dare to hope.

- **What is a key takeaway for you about lamenting from this section of Lamentations 3?**

JESUS – The Answer to our Lament

In our seasons of hurting, as we lament, we can rest in the truths we find in Scripture about Jesus. You are not alone. Jesus is with you as you lament. He has a glorious future prepared for you. Here are some truths we find in Scripture that can guide us to experience Jesus, the Answer to our lament.

- i. We lament, but we never give up.

READ: 2 Corinthians 4:14-18

- **In verse 14, what does Paul say we know?**

LEADER NOTE: We know that just as God raised Jesus from the dead, He will also raise us up from the dead and present us to Him as his glorious bride. We never give up because we know this to be true.

- Paul was well acquainted with hurting and lament, yet he has a unique perspective. He says, “For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long.” vs. 17 NLT **How can he say that?**

LEADER NOTE: Paul says our times of hurting will ultimately produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! (vs. 17). If we put our hurting on one side of a scale, and glory on the other, the glory is going to tip the scales! Having this perspective helps us to never give up.

- **What does Paul mean when he says we should “... fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen.”?** (vs. 18)

LEADER NOTE: To fix our gaze on what we cannot see is all about faith. We look beyond our current season of hurting and focus on God’s promise of future glory. In doing this, we don’t downplay the reality of our hurt, but we see beyond it and look to Jesus. We lament, but we never give up because we know that Jesus is the Answer to our lament.

- ii. We lament, but we hold on to our hope.

READ: Romans 8:24-26

- **What do these verses teach us about holding on to hope?**

LEADER NOTE: Holding on to hope is about believing God has a glorious future prepared for us - release from our hurt and receiving all we have been promised in Christ, including our new, glorified bodies. Holding onto this hope is about waiting patiently and confidently for Jesus’ promises to us to be fulfilled (vs. 25).

- iii. We lament, but we don’t lose our joy.

READ: 1 Peter 1:3-7

- **Why is it important to hang onto joy in our seasons of hurting?**

LEADER NOTE: Hanging onto joy is not about keeping a stiff upper lip or having a “grin and bear it” attitude. Hanging onto joy is about faith – remembering our inheritance in Jesus. Peter reminds us we must endure trials “for a little while”. Our season of hurting may seem to go on a long time, but in light of eternity, it is short and will be over soon. This was the attitude of Jesus. In Hebrews we read that we can keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who, for the *joy* set before Him, endured the cross ... (12:2) Hanging onto joy is important because it helps us look beyond our trials to our inheritance in Christ.

- iv. We lament from a place of victory.

READ: 1 Corinthians 15:55

“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

- **How can lamenting from a place of victory change our perspective?**

LEADER NOTE: Our season of hurt can feel defeating. We can feel overwhelmed and beaten down by our circumstances. In that season it is important to remember the truth. Sin and death, our brokenness and trials, may seem overwhelming at the time, but they will not win. Paul writes, "But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57 NLT. This truth should change our perspective. We lament, not from a place of defeat, but from a place of victory.

v. We lament, but we anticipate glory.

READ: Romans 8:18

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." NIV

- **What does it look like to anticipate glory, even in our time of lamenting?**

LEADER NOTE: In Romans 8 we read that we, along with all creation, groan as we await our future glory. We long for and eagerly await to be released from our present suffering and to receive our new, glorified bodies, the fulfillment of Jesus' promise and work in us. While we groan, we await, we hope, we anticipate the glory that is beyond our present suffering. As God's people, we can remind each other of these truths.

NEXT STEPS:

Here are some websites and resources that can help you take a next step in processing hurt in your life.

Celebrate Recovery <https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/celebrate-recovery/>

Creekside Cares <https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/care/>

The Coping Centre <https://www.copingcentre.com/>

PRAYER:

This week let's pray for our high school and young adult ministries at Creekside.

- Please pray for our high school student's transition back to in-person learning, that God would guide them and keep them safe as they make this transition.
- Please pray for our young adult's mental health during this lockdown. Ask God to focus their hearts and minds on Him and his truths for their lives.

