

LAMENTATIONS

LOOK ON MY SORROW

LAMENTATIONS 1:1-22

"HOW LONELY SITS THE CITY"

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

AT A GLANCE

We're learning what true lament is. God invites you to process all of your emotions with him, especially the hard or "ugly" ones.

SERMON SUMMARY

Pastor Joey vulnerably shared that emotions scare him. They have scared him so much he has avoided them most of his life. He lamented that because the world is broken and there is no shortage of negative emotions to feel he was afraid of letting them out because they may overtake him.

Throw in the contradicting voices we received from our families, churches, and cultural expectations around emotion; we often agree it is best to avoid the discussion altogether. Instead, it "feels" far more manageable to cope with the negative feelings with the most relevant distraction, even when we know that, eventually, those emotions may sabotage everything we hold dear.

The Bible is clear that this emotional avoidance is not from God. God makes space for all our emotions, specifically our negative ones - because in a broken world, they are to be expected. AND He would rather you process them in his presence than outside of them.

The opening poem to the book of lamentation is a testament that GOD is not afraid of our lament and knows it is a necessary step on the grief path. In fact, it's our lament that allows us to trust more fully and faithfully amid our suffering.

Pastor Joey highlighted from the text that this lament was an annual ritual for the Israelites that normalized the pain of their sins and suffering. And as we too feel grief collectively and uniquely, we must give each other space to express the confusion and doubt it introduces into our faith.

Only by allowing each other the time, space, and grace to feel what we feel without judgment will our hearts open to more naturally cling to our suffering servant Jesus, who knows what it is like to lament the effects of sin to the point of death.

Pastor Joey encouraged us to evaluate our posture towards feelings so we can all take the micro-step necessary to welcome the idea of Biblical Lament into our spiritual life and formation.



This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.

Group facilitator: you do not need to ask every question but can select the best ones for your group dynamic.

DISCUSSION

Expand Awareness

- Why do you think it is so normal to avoid negative emotions?
- What short-term effects come from avoiding negative emotions?
- What long-term effects come from avoiding negative emotions?
- What emotion have you struggled to allow yourself to feel and why?
- How would it affect your life if you learned to express negative emotions more healthily?

Explore Your Experience

Pastor Joey said we all fall into 1 of 4 different postures towards negative emotions:

1. **Emotionally Comfortable:** Able to feel emotions as they are without suppressing AND/OR being overwhelmed by them.
 2. **Emotional Avoidance:** Believing emotions are sinful and therefore ignoring their existence.
 3. **Emotional Fear:** Aware they exist but are afraid of being overwhelmed by them and thus suppress them until we can no longer hold them in.
 4. **Emotional Confusion:** Believing that if God were real, we wouldn't have these emotions, but I do have them and therefore feel stuck.
- Which of these represents what you were taught about emotions growing up at home or in church?
 - How did that approach impact your life?
 - Which one represents how you feel about emotions now?
 - How is that impacting your life now?

Extract the Truth

Read: Lamentations 1

- What jumps out to you from the text?
- Why do you believe the Israelites gathered annually to lament in this way?
- What spiritual benefits do you believe came from this process?
- What does this teach you about God and his posture towards emotion?
- Based on the list of responses we mentioned earlier (see above), which do you believe represents God's posture towards emotion? Why?
- How does this observation change how you will experience emotion in the future?

Experience Transformation

Pastor Joey said that God invites us to process our emotions with him because he would rather us do it in His presence than outside of it. He also noted that by lamenting to him, we empty out our pain to create space in our hearts for Him to fill. Therefore to start the process, we must give ourselves the space to feel without fear of judgment or exclusion from God. A process of growth could look like this:

- Knowing what you feel and why?
- Acknowledge it to God, knowing he is not surprised nor afraid of it.
- Accept yourself for feeling it and welcome it in.
- Wait for lament to take effect while pondering Christ's own lament/suffering on the cross.
- Which of these steps jumps out to you the most and why?
- What is a growth step you feel prompted to take in that area?
- How could you practically do that this week?

Prayer

Consider having everyone go around and pray for an negative emotion that are currently feeling and thanking God they can feel it with him free from fear of rejection.



**PREPARE FOR
NEXT WEEK:**

Read Lamentations 2