

The Book of Lamentations preserves the anguish felt by the Jews of the Babylonian Captivity as they contemplated their irrecoverable past. Jerusalem had been destroyed. That destruction was so complete that no trace of the original temple of Solomon, or the royal city's mighty walls, have been found by modern archeologists. Only a barren hill marked the site as it was last seen by those dragged off in chains to a strange land. The five acrostic dirge poems that make up this brief Old Testament book reveal a deep sense of remorse. The people realize that their homeland has been lost because of Judah's sins. The anguish is compounded by the fact that as yet the captives have been unable to recover the lost vision of a bright future for their nation. If nothing else, reading the Book of Lamentations reminds us the pleasures of sin are at best momentary, the painful consequences lasting and deep.¹

1. God's faithful loving-kindness brings hope in the midst of trials.

Lamentations 3:20-21 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

The prophet Jeremiah now makes it personal. All other 4 Lamentations are from the perspective of the children of Israel. but chapter 3 is deeply personal.

Lamentations 3:1-4 (ESV)

**I am the man who has seen affliction
under the rod of his wrath;
he has driven and brought me
into darkness without any light;
surely against me he turns his hand
again and again the whole day long.
He has made my flesh and my skin waste away;
he has broken my bones;**

**But I love how Jeremiah refuses to discount or discredit the steadfast love of the Lord!
“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:”**

Study Question:

- 1. Can you think of a time that you felt similar to the prophet Jeremiah? How did you respond compared to how Jeremiah did in our text?**
- 2. Why is it important to God for us to respond in our despair with God's hope and not by our feelings?**

¹ Lawrence O. Richards, The Bible Reader's Companion, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 479.

2. In Christ, God's mercies are new every morning.

Lamentations 3:22-24 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him."

As New Testament believers in Christ Jesus, we are the recipients of a grace that is greater than all our sin!

1 John 1:7-9 (ESV) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Hebrews 8:12 (ESV)

**For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more."**

1 John 5:7-9 and Hebrews 8:12 echo the reality that when Jesus sets us free in His salvation, we are free!!! This is the reality of what Jeremiah was convinced of and what gave him hope in his deepest despair.

Study Question:

A. Read through 1 Peter 1:3-9 and talk about the everlasting promises found in this text that give the believer hope in the midst of trials and difficult times.

1 Peter 1:3-9 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

3. Patience is a valuable fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Lamentations 3:25-26, The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

The Hebrew word “quietly” in our text conveys the characteristics of waiting patiently for the Lord to act our behalf and trusting in Him and His promises regardless of what we see.

Study Questions:

- A. With that in mind, how do Romans 5:1-5 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 speak to us as believers in Christ Jesus, and why are they important to keep in mind as we struggle with various difficulties in our lives?**

Romans 5:1-5 (ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (ESV)

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

What We Take Away:

- 1. Christ is our great hope in salvation and for all eternity!**
- 2. The grace that Christ provides through His life, death and resurrection is a grace that is greater than ALL our sin!**
- 3. The inexhaustible grace of God revealed in and through Christ Jesus should never be taken for granted!**