

OPEN

Who are you able to share your troubles/struggles with? What is it about this person that makes it possible to talk about your difficulties?

STUDY

This week's message focused on the idea that we can come to God not only with prayers of worship, praise or thanksgiving, but also during times of distress, disappointment and despair. God hears and accepts our prayers when life is going well, but also during seasons in the desert. Such prayers are described as lament prayers. Lament prayers may be rooted in grief, frustration, confusion...even feelings of abandonment. Such prayers are all over the Bible, and thus should be considered a normal aspect of our prayer life.

The laments in Scripture do more than just voice painful emotions. The psalms of lament, in particular, go further than just releasing pent-up emotions. They are more than mere catharsis. Within themselves, these psalms are a theology, a doxology, a form of worship. They are reminders of truth. They are exercises in faith. They are transformative for the believer. And there is much we can learn from them.

1) Have you ever been at a place where you felt confused by what God was doing in your life? (Or, maybe the confusion came from what you sensed He was *not* doing.)

2) Find a dictionary and come up with a definition or two for the word "lament."

3) Look up the John 11:17-37 and try and identify the sources of pain, frustration or sadness that produced several expressions of lament.

4) How did Jesus express lament according to Matthew 26:36-46? How about Matthew 27:46?

5) Browse through the book of Psalms and find 3 psalms that you would categorize as a Psalm of Lament (Don't worry, there are plenty of them!). In each case, what is the lament of the Psalmist's heart?

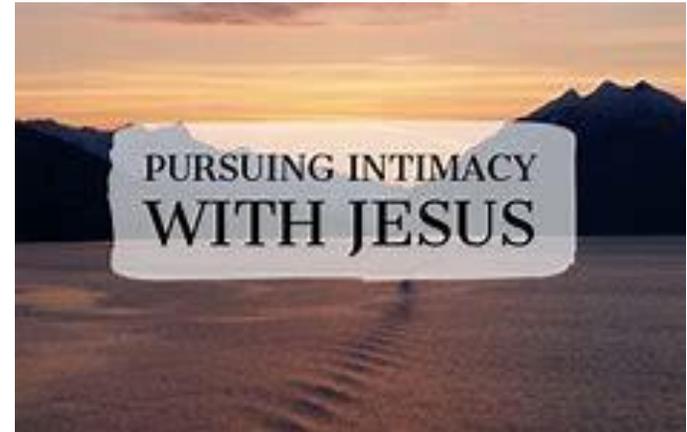
APPLY

Why might a person be a bit fearful of bringing a prayer of lament to God? Why does it take courage and faith to come before God with our frustration and confusion?

What types of things would be proper for us to lament about? What types of things should break our heart?

What might we expect God to do for us when we come to him with expressions of pain, sadness and disillusionment? Is God just a dumping ground for these things, or is He able to work in the midst of them?

Some would say that a prayer of lament shows a lack of faith. What say you?



MESSAGE GUIDE

March 15th, 2020
Pastor Kurt Staeuble