

Turn Quickly
Psalm 77
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Lament is more than a cry; it is a prayer. It is an honest heart-felt cry of the hurting heart. While we wrestle with the pain, we are hopeful to see the promise of God fulfilled. Hope empowers love, risk-taking and sacrifice during dark times. It is this hope in Christ that gives us a reason to lament. It stands between the gap of pain and promise.

Biblical lament follows a pattern that moves people from pain and heartbreak to promise and hope. All lament that is centered on God is a healthy emotional response to find mental and emotional health.

4 lessons on Turning to God through Lament (Psalm 77)

1) Silence will kill your soul

vv1-2 – In his trouble, the Psalmist sought the Lord by crying aloud to Him. While the he was in pain, he was not silent. To pray when our heart is in turmoil in the face of doubt and tough questions, we know not the answers to, is an act of faith. Prayerful lament is better than silence.

The worst thing to do when we are deeply affected emotionally and mentally is to go into silent despair. Doing this is a sign of unbelief and faithlessness, which leads to prayerlessness. We become removed from God and disillusioned towards Him, ourselves and the situation around us.

Lamenting helps us to bring our emotions to God in prayer and it vocalises our hurt. Cry out to God and let our prayers be heard by Him!

2) Praying may not remove your struggles

vv2b-4 – While the Psalmist prayed, it did not bring him immediate comfort. While he meditated, his spirit became weak. Yet, he did not stop seeking and turning to God. This is a picture of complete trust in God and of one whose foundation is truly God.

Lament is not meant to be a formula to get out of pain; it is the means by which we bring our pains to God and experience the sweetness of His presence. Lament is a cry of hope, believing that God will answer.

3) To lament is to question

This is the heart of lamenting. Painful circumstances surface big and troubling questions. In the Psalmist's remembrance of the past, he made a diligent search with questions (vv5-6). This led him to six rhetorical questions: will the Lord spurn forever (v7)? Will He never again be favorable (v7)? Has His steadfast love ceased (v8)? Are His promises at the end for all time (v8)? Has God forgotten to be gracious (v9)? Has His anger shut up His compassion (v9)? He had asked all these questions because he wanted to be honest with the way he felt towards God. In doing so, he drew near to God. Bring before God your honest questions and draw near to Him!

4) The gospel anchors your lament

vv11-12 – The Psalmist was bringing his thoughts to what was ultimately true. He looks back on history and reflects on what God had done for his people. In our lament, we must come to a point when we return to what is ultimately true. The Psalmist turned from honest questions to confident trust in God (v13). While we are given full permission to grieve in the Bible, we are not to grieve aimlessly and selfishly. We must learn in our lament to return to the truth of the Gospel diligently! The Psalmist anchors his pain and hurt to the one greatest redemptive event in the life of Israel: The Exodus (vv19-20). For us as Christians now, the place where we find the ultimate deliverance is the Cross of Jesus Christ.

2 Applications

#1 Ps. 91:4 – Trust and cry out to God, our ultimate refuge! He takes us under the

refuge of His wings. On the cross, Jesus became the substitute for our sins.

#2 Num. 21:8-9 – Look towards God and give Him all the attention! Lift up your eyes and turn quickly towards God!