

Lamentation 5

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[0 : 0 0] don't remember lamentations is Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel that should help you find it as you maybe locate some of those larger books and flip through lamentations there in the middle Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel we're continuing our series that started on Sunday nights and was interrupted in many ways by COVID and Lord willing we're finishing the book of lamentations today so chapter 5 we're reading the entire chapter verses 1 through 22 remember oh Lord what has befallen us look and see our disgrace our inheritance has been turned over to strangers our homes to foreigners we have become orphans fatherless our mothers are like widows we must pay for the water we drink the wood we get must be bought our pursuers are at our nets we are weary we are given no rest we have given the hand to Egypt and to Syria to get bread enough our fathers sinned and are no more and we bear their iniquities slaves rule over us there is none to deliver us from their hand we get our bread the peril of our lives because of the sword in the wilderness our skin is hot as an oven with the burning heat of famine women are raped in Zion young women in the towns of Judah princes are hung up by their hands no respect is shown to the elders young men are compelled to grind at the mill and boys stagger on the load of wood the old men have left the city gate the young men their music the joy of our hearts has ceased our dancing has been turned to mourning the crown has fallen from our head woe to us for we have sinned for this our heart has become sick for these things our eyes have grown dim for mount Zion which lies desolate jackals prowl over it but you oh lord reign forever your throne endures to all generations why do you forget us forever why do you forsake us for so many days restore us to yourself oh lord that we may be restored renew our days as of old unless you have utterly rejected us and you remain exceedingly angry with us let's pray together oh lord we thank you for your word and though this situation is far removed from us we pray that you would help us to understand it help it to relate to our situation show us christ in it we pray you'd be glorified in preaching of your word in christ's name amen i want to remind you that just a little review of what's going on in the book of lamentations lamentations is a communal or national lament it's a lament not for one event in one person's life but for all the community in many ways it's similar to what we saw happen with 9 11 here in the united states where there would be many people who would write poems or songs about the devastation that took place they're lamenting crying out because of what happened and we can understand as well that our sin as a nation may one day maybe even now lead us to such lament we may suffer in a similar way but this is for the nation in the historical background we could find in second kings 25 1 through 21 there we read about in 587 bc jerusalem was destroyed by babylon the city walls were torn down the palace and all the great houses were burned even the temple was

plundered and burned and all but the poorest of the inhabitants were carried off into exile and the book of lamentation records the utter despair that Judah felt at this momentous time it expresses the pain at the realization that it was ultimately God who had done this and not Babylon that had brought this on them God was responsible and Lamentations is anonymous there's no byline here with the book but it's generally attributed to Jeremiah it fits nicely with his book and seems to be in a style that he wrote and seems likely that he was the one who wrote it and it would have been written during the 70 years of exile in Babylon likely in the early period of those 70 years so somewhat early on in the 70 years this book was written and the purpose is to acknowledge God's judgment against Jerusalem and move God if we can use such language to intercede for and restore his people it's crying out to God to restore what had been lost and then secondly a purpose is to produce hope in God for the people in exile those far off from their homeland to encourage them to hope in God we talked a little bit about this or maybe a lot about this along the way but I argued that the book is structured as a chiasm and what that means is that the focal point of the whole book is in the center of the book there's five chapters and uh they're mostly all in acrostics of 22 verses or multiples of 22 uh this one's chapter five's not in acrostic there's a reason probably for that people have argued that as you get to chapter five the structure of acrostic is lost to symbolize the chaos that's going on in the land but either way we see the center of the book as the main point chapter two and chapter four relating chapter one and chapter five relating to one another but the it's way different than how we write in English we almost always finish with the point at the end right we build to the point and here we see a crescendo and then it goes back down again afterwards and so chapter three is the center of the book and in chapter three we read in verses 22 through 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 so the middle of this uh book about lamentation of the destruction of Jerusalem is hope the Lord is my portion therefore I will hope in him and so again a point an emphasis of the book is to encourage us to hope in God in the midst of calamity and uh suffering lamentation hardship uh O'Pomert Robertson in his book The Christ of Wisdom argues that the message of the book he says four points that I've used throughout the study he says number one calamity has come number two sin has caused it three God has ordered it or ordained it and fourth yet there's hope and so I want to as we finish the book go back to that structure and say how do we see those things in this last chapter and then how does that apply to us so first to see that calamity has come that is pretty easy to demonstrate from this chapter almost every verse deals with something along those lines I'm going to run through this very quickly I'll try not to go back and reread all the things just summarize what we see verse two their land and inheritance has been lost in Leviticus 20:24 it says but I have said to you you shall inherit their land and I will give it to you to possess the land flowing with milk and honey this is the promised land that God had given to them and now we see in verse two that they've lost it our inheritance has been turned over to strangers our homes to foreigners so there's questions even here God's given the promised land to be our

inheritance forever now we've lost it what does that mean in terms of our relationship with god in the covenant what's going on here they've lost the promised land that god has given to them secondly they have lost husbands fathers parents we see in verse three there are orphans widows widows in the land maybe even symbolizing protection and care that they would have had is gone now families are destroyed separated many have died verse four we see that they have to buy water and bread and since they're occupied by our foreign country it seems to be implied even if you're gonna get water you don't go very far for water do you and so at least while they were in the land they were probably buying water from their own wells now maybe in babylon something similar they're having to pay for water i find that interesting in a society where we buy bottled water even though we have it on tap right we still buy bottled water that this is considered one of the evidences of how bad things are they have to go buy their water but if you understand from a well normally could draw for free now you have to buy it i assume the same is true for wood you could collect it for free but now they're having to buy the wood and a related point in verse nine is that they risk their lives in seeking out food we get our bread at the peril of our lives because of the sword in the wilderness so as they go searching for food there are people who are there seeking to kill them there's no longer that protection maybe because of the government being destroyed or the distance they're having to travel but they have to put their life on the line to warm their family or to heat their food in verse five it says it shows that they are oppressed and pursued it speaks of the neck our pursuers are at our necks we are weary we are given no rest and that's difficult for us to understand that idiom it's hypothesized that that probably means you've seen uh the idea that a conquered people the the conqueror will put his shoe on the neck of the person to show subjugation i've defeated you i've conquered you you've got no power and maybe something like that it may be the way that they handled them but either way they're being pursued they're being oppressed mistreated and they're given no rest and weary they're weary from being pursued we see in verse six they are forced to seek help from foreign enemies this is probably even to get food we have given the hand to egypt and to syria to get bread enough and so uh egypt we're reading in the book of exodus how the israelites left egypt and now they're having to turn back to egypt and seek help from egypt and assyria you may remember that assyria is the nation that conquered the kingdom of israel and so judas all that left assyria has destroyed all their maybe extended family and now we're going to them begging them for bread going to our enemies and asking for help again that may be one of the problems of why they're in danger in the wilderness because they're having to travel such distances to get food they have been reduced to a position lower than a slave as we see in verse eight slaves rule over us there's none to deliver us from their hand so even the slaves are in a higher position babylonian slaves are our masters we're in worse position than them there's no help no deliverance a related point in verse 13 even the strongest the young men are compelled to grind at the mill that would be a job that would normally be below them or something that they would not be engaged in maybe a job for slaves and then boys stagger under loads of wood that's a job for a beast of burden this is something a mule might do or donkey and they're making the young men the men of vigor the men of strength to carry around the wood until they're exhausted they stagger under it

verse 10 is a little difficult our skin is hot as an oven with the burning heat of famine how does famine cause the skin to be hot i kind of summarized this and said their starvation is showing physical effects i'm not quite sure what those physical effects may be it may be that because of lack of food and starvation their skin has gotten dry and cracking parched it may be that there's fever inflammation from malnourishment but for some reason they're feeling the heat on their skin or it's used as an expression of just how bad off they are in the famine verse 11 speaks of the women being raped in zion young women in the towns of judah this would imply all throughout the land this is going on this is what the babylonians have done to them the leaders are ridiculed and disrespected in verse 12 they're hung up by their hands apparently to death they hang there until they die no respect is shown to the elders this points to a breakdown in government and leadership the structure of society has been demolished it's gone and so along with that normal life has ceased as we see in verse 14 and everyone is displaced the old man the old men have left the city gate they would normally the elders would meet at the gate to decide matters it'd basically be like a courtroom you could come there and talk to them they'll discuss politics they'll decide court issues they're gone there there's nowhere to go with your problems there's no help being offered those men in those positions are gone but it also says the young men have left their music so everything about normal life is gone whatever used to be normal in life is no longer happening and so with that we see really verses 15 through 17 point to the fact that life for them is full of sadness and mourning the joy of our hearts has ceased our dancing has been turned to mourning the crown has fallen from our head woe to us for we have sinned for this our heart has become sick for these things our eyes have grown dim and so we see joy is gone where they once used to dance in joy now all they have is mourning there's no cause for joy for them verse 16 said the crown has fallen this could be a literal expression because we see back in chapter 4 verse 20 we know that the king has been carried off into exile so the king is gone literally their crown has fallen but i think there's probably much more that's intended their glory is gone what they used to boast in it's fallen from their head they have nothing to be proud of or rejoicing anymore even to the point that it says their heart has become sick and their eyes go dim likely from sorrow maybe from crying for staying up late at night for weeping but their heart is sick their eyes dim in verse 18 we see jerusalem mount zion is described as desolate and that jackals prowl over it wild animals inhabit it jackals are animals that most of the time avoid humans they don't like to be around people and so for jackals to be prowling around the city even highlights further the desolation of jerusalem there's no one there there's no people there so now the animals have taken over and then in verse 20 we see an expression of how they feel for god and by god why do you forget us forever why do you forsake us for so many days and so we get an understanding of the calamity that has come in each chapter we've seen a bit of this now i want to look at how sin has caused it again we've seen this throughout the book but again here in chapter five verse seven our fathers sinned and are no more and we bear their iniquities now if we're not careful verse seven can sound like an excuse it can sound like they're saying

we're innocent it's our father's fault i'm not responsible we're getting the results of their iniquities i don't think that's the case as we're going to see later jeremiah prays for their sin all of their sin i think what's being dim or what's being pointed to here is the idea that it's a generational problem it's a continual problem generation after generation after generation has sinned against god and now they're facing the consequences of that i even think where it says we bear their iniquities it may imply that we sin in ways like they did maybe even in worse ways let me read a parallel passage from jeremiah chapter 16 verses 10 through 13 god speaking to jeremiah and when you tell these people all these words and they say to you why has the lord pronounced all this great evil against us what is our iniquity what is the sin that we have committed against the lord our god then you shall say to them because your fathers have forsaken me declares the lord and have gone after other gods and have served and worshiped them and have forsaken me and have not kept my law and because you have done worse than your fathers for behold every one of you follows his stubborn evil will refusing to listen to me therefore i will hurl you out of the land into a land that neither you nor your fathers have known and there you shall serve other gods day and night for i will show you no favor so they receive prophetically what's coming and why it's coming and god says to jeremiah when the people say what iniquity have we done what have we done we haven't done anything wrong tell them about what their fathers have done and then he says point out to them and you've done worse you've inherited their sin you've lived out their sin and you've added more to it including idolatry and so what does god do much like the book of romans god gives them over to their idolatry you worship false gods therefore i'll send you into a foreign land where you'll worship false gods and again just to point to the fact that this isn't a claim of innocence look at verse 16 the crown has fallen from our heads woe to us for we have sinned so there's an acknowledgement of their sin corporately we have sinned and even woe to us i've said before but woe is a pronouncement of punishment and so jeremiah's acknowledging punishment is deserved woe to us judge us for what has happened but i would acknowledge as well with both of these i think we see an expression of repentance they're acknowledging that we have sinned we're receiving the just punishment and now they're crying out to god for help thirdly god ordained it even in all this god continues to reign look at verse 19 but you oh lord reign forever your throne endures to all generations they've lost their king they've been carried in exile but god's still on the throne he's still sovereign he's still in control of all this i think of maybe the church in america over the last two and a half years with everything that happened with covid and i think in a much less worse situation i think many in the church forgot this that god's still sovereign that god still reigns that no matter what he's in control and so that ought to encourage us if god has ordained it if god's sovereign over this where do we go for hope where our hope remains in the lord look at verse 21 he alone can restore us restore us to yourself oh lord that we may be restored renew our days as of old and so that really moves us to our last point yet there's hope and we see a bit of that hope there god can restore us which is why jeremiah cries out to god restore us i would point out to you as well maybe you guys notice this but this entire chapter is prayer we see

[20:19] verse 1 and verses 21 and 22 at the beginning and the end of the chapter are clearly prayer and everything in between look at verse 1 remember oh lord what has befallen us look and see our disgrace and from there on out we see he's recounting the situation but he's speaking to god it's much like augustine's confessions this is our peeking into jeremiah's prayer and he's praying for the people corporately we are we see those plural pronouns he's praying for all the people to god remember restore oh lord what has befallen us and if you look at verse 21 and 22 restore us to yourself oh lord that we may be restored renew our days as of old unless you have utterly rejected us and you remain exceedingly angry with us so again this whole section is one prayer saturated beginning ending with addressing god but throughout it all a prayer to god and as i said it's a communal prayer he's praying for all the people because god reigns as we saw in verse 19 we can cry out to him we can pray to god because he's still sovereign he's still in control and so i see here jeremiah responding the way all of us ought to respond in such situations when we face suffering what should we do here's what james 5:13 says is anyone among you suffering let him pray let him pray it's what jeremiah is doing here he's praying to god he's crying out to god in light of this maybe another example psalm 121 verses 1 and 2 i lift up my eyes to the hills from where does my help come my help comes from the lord who made heaven and earth the creator is the one who is our help where do we go in suffering we must go to the lord and so too we're encouraged that we must pray in times of calamity matthew henry says as it is a great comfort to us so it ought to be a sufficient one in our troubles that god sees and considers and remembers all that has come upon us and in our prayers we need only to recommend our case to his gracious and compassionate consideration that really leads to what we see in verse one where it says remember oh lord what has befallen us has god forgotten has the omniscient god forgotten what's taking place no that's not what jeremiah is saying god you seem to have forgotten this he's bringing it bringing it before the lord he's placing it in right in front of him to say lord we're desperate we need your help i would even say it may seem to him and to others that have been carried in that style that god has forgotten them i think in verse 22 i want to be careful because i don't believe jeremiah believes this but the people are probably struggling with this question unless you have utterly rejected us and you remain exceedingly angry with us so by the time he's writing this they're in exile they've been there some time 10 15 20 years maybe 30 years there's no sight of restoration has god utterly rejected us what would it mean for god to utterly reject them this is god's covenant people if he utterly rejects them they're cut off he's done with them there will be no salvation there will be no returning to the land there will be no more communion with god there will be no messiah promised since the fall he's going to come from this line but if you've utterly rejected us there's no hope even of a messiah will christ even come have you reject are you still angry with us after decades and so again i think a little bit rhetorical questions but he's probably addressing the very questions that people uh there in babylon the uh those from judah are actually asking 70 years is a long time to wait just imagine for any of you this room 70 years of exile just

imagine i said to you look in 70 years i'm going to give you something if you just wait for it 70 years most of us are never going to see it maybe a few of you in this room i won't make it probably nope it won't make it that long so i won't be here to give it to you it's a one generation is going to pass away they're never knowing the land never knowing zion never knowing jerusalem never worshiping at the temple so it's a long time to break to wait but we understand god will not break his covenant god's covenant promises cannot and will not be broken there will be a remnant who will remain faithful to god in babylon who will eventually be restored as we saw in the book of ezra and nehemiah and so we see in verse 21 it's god who can restore and renew them restore us to yourself oh lord that we may be restored again our hope is in the lord after 70 years he does renew their days as of old like in verse 21 renew our days as of old he restores them to the land and renews the days and so god is faithful so how does this apply to us as we close out this book what does it mean for us i want to encourage you first of all they lost the promised land but they didn't lose the promised land god restored them to it god's covenant promises remain faithful god is faithful we can trust him in fact we talked about already that genesis i'm sorry um the center of the book here the steadfast love of the lord never ceases his mercies never come to an end they are new every morning great is your faithfulness great is your faithfulness the god we serve is faithful and so we too can trust his promises and so one application that may be though we may lose anything everything in life even our very life we cannot lose our heavenly inheritance god has promised us that when we die we will be in his presence forever he's promised us that christ is returning there will be a new earth and a new heavens no weapon formed against us can take that away from us nothing that we face no trial no suffering could ever take that away think about to verse 16 the crown has fallen from our head every earthly crown will fall from our head everything that we prize everything that we are so proud of we one day will lose either by our death or sometime long before the things that we grasp to the things we cling to in this life have no lasting value moth and rust and thief will break in and steal and kill and destroy what hope is there for us well our hope is not in the things of this world our hope is in the lord matthew henry says it is the happiness of all god's spiritual israel that the heavenly canaan is an inheritance that cannot be seized from them that shall never be turned over to strangers we're never going to lose our heavenly inheritance first peter 1 3 through 5 blessed be the god and father of our lord jesus christ according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope a living hope even in the midst of suffering 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 being guarded through fate for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time so we have great hope why through the resurrection of jesus christ he has been brought back to life we can trust that one day we will be given

new life and what does that mean for us well it means receiving an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled unfading kept in heaven for you who's keeping it god is god's protecting your inheritance it cannot be uh it's imperishable it cannot be defiled it will not fade what happened to zion will never happen to our heavenly inheritance and that ought to be of great encouragement to us and so paul or we can say with paul that we can count all the things of this world all that we may lose in this life is rubbish compared to knowing christ jesus our lord that's where our hope is found in knowing christ secondly christ christ has taken upon himself our calamity suffering and hardship should drive us to the cross at the cross jesus took upon himself our sin and the suffering and the calamity that we deserve the eternal death that we deserve christ has born for us and so that ought to encourage us that we can go to christ for help we go to him for forgiveness of sins and just as we know that we will never lose that heavenly inheritance we can know as well that we will never be utterly forsaken because of christ i'll go back to first peter one uh verse five who um who speaking of us by god's power or being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time it's not just an inheritance that's being guarded it's us because there's a salvation that awaits us that we have not yet realized the consummation of the salvation that christ has bought for us still awaits us and it cannot be taken away so just as our inheritance cannot be taken away neither can our salvation neither can we ever be utterly forsaken because of christ thirdly this ought to encourage us to confess our sin individually and corporately my guess is that we rarely ever do this corporately we can know that we can come to our gracious lord who is full of steadfast love as we saw in chapter three but do we grieve over the state of the church or our nation do we cry out in prayer to god lord forgive us as a nation forgive us as a church we're encouraged here that that's what we do that's what we can do we are to pray that god hears and answers those prayers fourthly the problem in judah was a relational problem it wasn't just a sin problem oftentimes we focus upon sin but look at verse 21 restore us to yourself restore us to yourself not restore our fortunes not restore our house not even restore the temple not foremost restore the walls of jerusalem not restore my car or my bank account restore us to yourself and so again i think this points to a relational problem foremost we need to be restored to the lord our relationship with the lord is of foremost importance and so they're ultimately leaving the land not primarily because of sin but because they've neglected the lord they've gone after foreign gods which is a sin but they've done so because they've neglected the lord who should have been their first love so are you distant from god do you feel a distance between you and god james 4 8 through 10 says draw near to god and he will draw near to you which points to the fact that god never is pulling away from us it's because of our pulling away from him but draw near to god and he will draw near to you cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double-minded be wretched and mourn and weep let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom humble yourselves before the lord and he will exalt you in jeremiah 29 13 through 14 we read you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart

i will be found by you declares the lord and i will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where i have driven you declares the lord and i will bring you back to the place from which i sent you in exile so here jeremiah prophetically god speaking through jeremiah is telling the people though you're going in that cell you'll be restored to the land when will that happen you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart i will be found by you i will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and the places where you've been driven and so i think we're encouraged as well seek the lord with all your heart i want to be careful even as pastor thompson is preaching through the book of job not all suffering is a direct result of sin sometimes we don't know the reason why god's bringing upon us what he's doing but i also want to be careful to say that doesn't mean that sometimes our suffering is a result of sin it is sometimes and so when we find ourselves in suffering what ought we to do well we should confess our sins and i think we need to seek out relationship with god ask yourself have we wandered from god have we neglected our times in communion with god we should seek that out and restore it and then finally as i close this chapter and as i close the book i want to encourage you by the central theme of the book even when life seems to be falling completely apart here's god's word to you the focus point i think of the whole book the steadfast love of the lord never ceases never ceases his mercies never come to an end there will be days when it seems like his mercy has ceased instead of us love has ceased but what it tells us is they are new every morning great is your faithfulness the lord is my portion says my soul therefore i will hope in him we should be encouraged in the midst of suffering hardship calamity to go to god to find hope in him for him to be our portion not the things of this world but for god to be our portion and as we consider this fact the steadfast of the love love of the lord never ceases his mercies never come to an end where do we know this most completely where have we known that the steadfast love of the lord never ceases and his mercies never come to an end i think the primary place that god has demonstrated this to us is at the cross of jesus christ and so in just a few minutes we're going to take of the lord's table as we do so we ought to see this as a moment to celebrate that christ has demonstrated to us the steadfast love of the lord his mercy that never fades even when we sin even when we're far off from god he's still merciful every morning new mercy every morning new mercy that steadfast love never ceases because of his son jesus christ let's go to god in prayer in his name dear heavenly father we thank you that you have lord been for us or through christ you have paid the price for our sins you have reconciled us to yourself you have restored the relationship that we have broken through our sin and lord we pray that our trust our hope would be in you in your steadfast love and mercy that never ceases never ends is new every morning and lord as we think of those things we pray that we think upon our savior jesus christ who has secured that for us may we delight in these truths in his name amen before we come to the table tonight let's sing the words of 472 come ye sinners poor and wretched 472

that shit to stand for you they get old and wretched region we get old and sick and so wrong not akan so they're Han to stay the same as we can Awry songs of 482 six as we pray that he's got the same to stand and pray we get over the remind us of as we stand in His name in our name and hope hasalo's when theyohen bandwari's■-wari on tai shelter in the of my church with same people who have greatest immediate references we are Savior, full of beauty, joined with love.

[37 : 24] He is able, he is able, he is able, he is willing, God no more.

He is willing, God no more. We need all that power, God's without him glorified.

We need that to repentance, every grace that brings you life. Without money, without money, without money.

Come to Jesus Christ and God. Come to Jesus Christ and God.

You'll be weary, heavy laden, who's been broken by the floor.

[38 : 44] If you take me to your pattern, you will never come at home.

Not the righteous, not the righteous, not the righteous. Sinners, Jesus came to call.

Sinners, Jesus came to call. Sinners, Jesus came to call.

All the witness He required Is to feel your need of Him As He gives you As He gives you
As He gives you His love's spirit guiding me His love's spirit guiding me Who in the
moment I stand He's the merit of His love Fenture on Him, venture holy Let no other trust
in truth Come by Jesus, come by Jesus

Come by Jesus Can you help me see His good Can you help me see His good This time
I'd like to invite the men who are serving at the table for it Come by Jesus