**God in our suffering – Lam. 3:41 – 57**

**Focal Truth: Holy lament leads the sufferer to God in prayer**

How should you pray when you are suffering?

What are characteristics of suffering prayer?

**Observations**

1. **Returning to God in suffering leads to prayer to God 3:40 -41**

*Let us examine and probe our ways, and let us return to the Lord. We lift up our heart and hands toward God in heaven*

1. Holy suffering returns to God with lamenting prayer by personal repentance

Self – examination in suffering includes: Search and probing the emotions, will & desires

1. Lamenting prayer seeks mercy & help from the God of faithful lovingkindness & compassion

*We lift our hearts and our hands toward God in heaven*

Jer. 14:21 – *do not despise us, for your own name’s sake, do not disgrace the throne of your glory, remember and do not annul your covenant with us*

What is the lifting of the heart to God in prayer?

1. It is expressing genuine feelings to God about suffering
2. It is offering the suffering condition back to God as a sacrifice
3. It is focusing on God as the giver of mercy & grace in time of need
4. It is appealing to God in our helplessness in suffering

Heb. 4:16 – *let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*

1. **Lamenting prayer is confession of God’s discipline in suffering 3:42 – 47**

*We have transgressed and rebelled, You have not pardoned*

*You have covered Yourself with anger and pursued us,*

*You have slain and have not spared.*

*You have covered Yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through*

*You have made us mere offscouring and refuse in the midst of the peoples*

*All our enemies have opened their mouths against us*

*Panic and pitfall have befallen us, devastation & destruction*

1. Confession of God’s discipline reveals acceptance of suffering

Jeremiah confesses **God’s displeasure** for the sinfulness of Israel

Jer. 5:7 – *why should I pardon you? Your sons have forsaken Me and sworn by those who are not gods. When I had fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the harlot’s house*

Jeremiah confesses **God’s resistance** because their sinfulness

Jeremiah confesses **God’s departure** from Israel because of their sin

Jeremiah confesses **the results of God’s discipline** of Israel

* Panic
* Pitfalls
* Devastation
* Destruction

Isa. 24:17 – 18 – *terror, and pit and snare confront you, O inhabitant of the earth. Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare…*

1. **Lamenting prayer to God cries in brokenness over the suffering of sinfulness 3:48 – 49**

*My eyes run down with streams of water because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. My eyes pour down unceasingly, without stopping*

1. The holy sufferer is tender & sorrowful for sinners in their suffering

*Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.*

Jer. 8:20 -21 – the *harvest is past, summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken, I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?*

Jer. 9:1 – *Oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*

1. **Lamenting prayer to God waits & cries on God’s help while in the pit of suffering – 3:50 – 55**

*Until the Lord looks down and sees from heaven. My eyes bring pain to my soul because of all the daughters of my city.*

*My enemies without cause hunted me down like a bird*

*They have silenced me in the pit and have placed a stone on me*

*Waters flowed over my head, I said, I am cut off*

*I have called on Your name, O Lord, out of the lowest pit.*

1. Holy suffering waits & prays to God from the pit of suffering

*Until the Lord looks down and sees from heaven*

1. What is the condition of the pit of suffering
* The pit of suffering is a place of silence
* The pit of suffering is a place of loneliness
* The pit of suffering is a place of separation
* The pit of suffering is a place of lowliness

**Holy sufferers pray in faith to God from the pit of suffering!**

*I have called on Your name, O Lord, out of the lowest pit*

Ps. 130:1 – *Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord*

1. **Lamenting prayer to God trusts that God will hear our suffering cry – 3:56 -57**

*You have heard my voice, do not hide your ear from my prayer for relief*

*for my cry for help*

*You drew near when I called on you, you said, do not fear!*

1. The prayer of faith **believes that God hears** the prayer for mercy
2. The prayer of faith **believes that God will bring relief & help**
3. The prayer of faith **believes that God is near in prayer**
4. The prayer of faith **hears God say**: **Do not fear!**

Isa. 41:10 - *do not fear, for I am with you, do not anxiously look about you for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand*

John 14:27 – *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful*