

Psalms

Learning to Lament

PSALM 77

Overview

When life is hard and God seems silent, it can make you wonder if he really cares or if he is even there. In the middle of pain and heartache, learning to lament protects our heart from the temptation to cynicism and unbelief and opens the door to deeper intimacy with God instead.

Notes

Part 1: Introducing Lament

What is lament?

“Lament is the honest cry of a hurting heart wrestling with the paradox of pain and the promise of God’s goodness.” *(Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy, p. 26)*

“Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust.” *(Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy, p. 28)*

Why lament?

1. It is a language for loss.
2. It is the solution for silence.
3. It is a category for complaints.
4. It is a framework for feelings.
5. It is a process for our pain.
6. It is a way to worship.

(Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy, pp. 159-160)

Part 2: Four Stages of Lament in Psalm 77

1. Turn (vv. 1-3)
2. Complain (vv. 4-9)
3. Remember (vv. 10-15)
4. Trust (vv. 16-20)

Seeing Jesus

Reflection Questions

1. What painful experiences have shaped your soul and challenged your understanding of God?
2. What are some of the doubts and questions you frequently have to fight when you are hurting?
3. Why do we need to lament? What happens if we don’t lament?
4. Is the idea of praying a lament uncomfortable to you? If so, why do you think that is?
5. Where in your life do you need to trust that God is at work even though his footprints are unseen?

Prayer Prompt

“As you read or watch the news, let it move you to lament rather than despair or disgust. Allow lament to soften your heart to the problems around you.” *(Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy, p. 132)*

Take some time to write out a personal lament. What is troubling your heart? Where do you long for God to take action, to show up, to do something?