

LAMENT

Lamentations 3:19-26; Psalm 13
Sunday, May 26

This is Memorial Day weekend. Tomorrow is actually “Memorial Day.” Many people seem to have forgotten the purpose or meaning of this special holiday on our calendar. Observed the last Monday in May, Memorial Day honors those who lost their lives while in service to the United States during peace and war. Memorial Day reminds us that grief is a part of life. Pain and suffering are a part of life.

When faced with grief, pain, and/or suffering, we wonder and often ask why? How? We are hurting so much we can't imagine how we get through the hurt. A few years ago, I read a profound book by Mark Vroegop entitled *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*. Here are some quotes from the book:

The Bible gave voice to my pain.

I battled fears, disappointments, and sorrow. And in my journey, I discovered the grace of lament, a song I never wanted to sing.

When the circumstances of life create dark clouds, I hope you'll come to embrace lament as a divinely given liturgy leading you to mercy. This historic song gives you permission to vocalize your pain as it moves you toward God centered worship and trust. Lament is how you live between the poles of a hard life and trusting in God's sovereignty. Lament is how we bring our sorrow to God. Without lament we won't know how to process pain. Silence, bitterness, and even anger can dominate our spiritual lives instead. Without lament we won't know how to help people walking through sorrow.

Lament can be defined as a loud cry, a howl, or a passionate expression of grief. However, in the Bible lament is more than sorrow or talking about sadness. It is more than walking through the stages of grief. Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust.

As we seek to understand the “language of lament” in the Bible, let’s look at two specific passages, Lamentations 3:19-26 and Psalm 13. From these passages we learn:

1. The laments of scripture teach us to embrace the brokenness in the world with a hopeful confidence in God! (Lamentations 3:19-26)

2. The laments of scripture provide us a pattern to follow. (Psalm 13)

Psalm 13 teaches that most laments feature four essential elements:

- Turning to God in prayer
- Bringing our complaints
- Asking boldly
- Choosing to trust (or praise)

3. The laments of scripture require honesty, transparency, and humility.

Congregational worship is important in helping people to learn the biblical language of lament. Often the songs we sing are celebratory, but at times they need to include songs of lament. These are songs that help us learn to express our deepest pains and sorrows to God. Psalm 34:18 says, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” Keith and Kristyn Getty wrote a powerful song based on Psalm 130.

‘I Will Wait for You (Psalm 130)’ by Keith and Kristyn Getty

*Out of the depths I cry to you
In darkest places I will call
Incline your ear to me anew
And hear my cry for mercy, Lord*

CHORUS

*I will wait for You
I will wait for You
On Your word, I will rely
I will wait for You
Surely wait for You
Till my soul is satisfied*