



LIVING GRACE
COMMUNITY CHURCH

“Waiting on Mercy in 2022”

Sermon Date: January 23rd, 2022

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Below is a reference to the section of the New City Catechism that we went over on Sunday:

The New City Catechism—Lord’s Day 4

How and Why Did God Create Us?

God created us male and female in his own image to know him, love him, live with him, and glorify him. And it is right that we who were created by God should live to his glory.

Prayer

Praise God that He is sovereign over the affairs of man, nothing happens outside of His purposes. Praise Jesus that in Him all that befalls us is not only to the glory of God, but also for our good. Praise the Holy Spirit who is our Comforter, who intercedes for us when we are at a loss for words. As you pray, consider making this prayer your own before God (this prayer was taken from Prone to Wander by Barbara Duguid and Wayne Houk).

Thank you that Jesus looked perfectly to you in every single situation of his life, trusting you completely in all things. We are deeply grateful that Jesus never stopped trusting you, even when you did not allow the cup of condemnation that we deserve to pass from him. Jesus had to be lifted up on the cross because of our unwillingness to lift up our eyes to you. Yet Christ’s life and death on our behalf is the very comfort to which we are habitually so unwilling to look. Forgive us, Father, for our rejection of this beautiful gospel story into which you have invited us.

Loving God, soften our hearts to delight in your love for us. Change us into sons and daughters who are so enraptured with the story of the gospel that we run to our beautiful Savior as we experience suffering in our lives. Help us to trust you as you call us into journeys that we do not want to take, knowing that you will never leave us nor forsake us. Give us strength to believe that from your own fullness you will repay all that you take from us. Lift our eyes afresh to the cross, from whence our help comes, the place where our lives were saved by Jesus’ death. In his name we come, amen.

Scripture

Lamentations 3:22-26 (ESV)

- 22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
23 they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
24 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”
25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him.
26 It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

Handling the Word

1. To better appreciate our passage, please read the book of Lamentations and this introduction to Lamentations (<https://thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/41799>). What are some truths that the book of Lamentations communicates about God?

2. To better understand today's passage, let's break it down:
 - What is God like towards His people, independent of their circumstances (vv. 22-23)?

 - Though the author desires relief, what is his ultimate desire (v. 24)?

 - How does the author encourage the saints to respond to their grievous afflictions (vv. 25-26)?

Understanding and Applying

1. Peter Lee describes Lamentations as “a reminder of the excruciating anguish that characterizes life in a fallen world.” Given this, we could say that Lamentations encourages believers to verbalize our struggles before God in order that we might “commune with Him on the tragic matters” of our lives. Do you articulate your struggles and woes before God, thus communing with Him amid your difficulties? Give an example.
2. Have you ever gotten the impression from the church or even our culture, that the Christian life is characterized by “happiness, blessing, and ease,” and how does Lamentations contradict this mindset (Lam. 3:52-54)? What might be the consequences of adopting this impression—the Christian life is a life exempt from trial and tragedy?
3. In chapter 1 of Lamentations, it is presented as if Jerusalem is expressing her anguish before God, acknowledging that her judgment is on account of her rebellion against God (Lam. 1:5, 8, 9). How does this concept—judgment due to sin—apply to Christ’s death on the cross? What does this concept say about the character of our God and what He has done for us in Christ?
4. Besides encouraging saints to look to God amidst their suffering, Lamentations also encourages us to share our woes together (Lam. 3:46-48). Amidst trials and tragedies, do you find comfort in consoling with other believers (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)? If not, why might that be?

5. Though greatly afflicted, the author can still speak of God's eternal love, endless mercy, and great faithfulness (Lam. 3:22-23). *During* your afflictions, have you been able to speak of God's love, mercy, and faithfulness? Please share.
6. When suffering, I imagine that many of us have looked to God for immediate relief, however oftentimes God's love, mercy, and faithfulness works itself out very differently. Has God ever tended to your afflictions differently than you had asked, and has it still led you to conclude that God is loving, merciful, and faithful?
7. For the Christian, how are we to reconcile the sure tragedies of life with the truth that our God loves us (Romans 8:13-39; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18)? For you personally, how does the way in which the Bible reconciles these two things lead you to comfort and perseverance?
8. Though afflicted, the author declares that 'the Lord is his portion.' (Lam. 3:24). Do you see ways in which God is leading you to conclude the same thing about life, whether at ease or afflicted, whether much or little, whether healthy or sick, the Lord is your prized goal in life?
9. To close, we cannot help but be reminded of 2 Corinthians 1:20— 'for all the promises of God find their Yes in him.' Because we are in Christ, every promise of God is ours, independent of us or our circumstances. What are some of the promises that you are holding onto for 2022?

"Lamentations is a collection of elegant prayers that have been scripted for the sufferer; it reflects the real state of their misery and allows them to finally verbalize these struggles directly to the Lord, to commune with him on the tragic matters of their lives—their frustrations and anguish—and to appeal to him for relief. Although moments of levity and restoration may occur, Lamentations ends as it began, in suffering without relief. But as they focus on the Lord, it becomes clear to them that he is their 'portion' (3:24). With that profound reminder, they realize that their hope is not found in the restoration of their city, nor is it even found in the termination of their pain. Only with a vertical perspective can they truly find hope. Simply put, they can mourn with hope because they mourn in the context of God-centered worship."

-Peter Y. Lee