

Rethinking Lament
By Jason Huff

Mark 14:32-42

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

- No net
- What are you lamenting?
 - No haircut
 - No enjoying eating out
 - The difference between personal time and work time with family
 - First world problems – what about India? What about those who have no place? Those in studio apartments? Those with large families?
 - Anne Frank – two families and a single dentist holed up for over two years attempting to avoid capture by the Nazis
- Today's passage is famous for a few reasons
 - Jesus is at His most human
 - Disciples falling asleep
 - The thought that most of us have in our minds is, "Jesus didn't want to die" – good reasons for that
 - Yet what if there is more to it? What if Jesus' prayer in the garden is lament?
 - Scripture is full of lament; Psalm 22 is one example, one that Jesus quoted on the cross as both an outcry and a comfort
 - David, the man after God's own heart, wrote many; we have a book dedicated to it; it is a constant Biblical concept; Jesus man of sorrows; lament for the death of Lazarus; lament over Jerusalem's fate
- Lament for sin
 - Sin is the root cause of this
 - We are to blame – we lament our sin and what brought us to this point
 - We also lament the feeling that God is far away

- The only reason Jesus must die is sin, and there is no other way to repair the damage except through Him
- We are so grateful; we are happy; we are hopeful; we lament this was the only way
- Lament for sin that is not yet gone from our lives
- Lament for the loss of companionship and friendship
 - Jesus would never again be in the same relationship with the disciples
 - He teaches them again, but always leaves; after 40 days, He ascends to the Father; will not drink the cup again until the Kingdom comes in its fullness
 - David lamented the loss of friends, some who turned against him
 - It is OK to lament during this time the inability to connect; thankfully, we have means to do so, but it is so much harder
- Lament for the uncertainty before us
 - Jesus told us to live each day for itself; tomorrow would have enough trouble of its own
 - James told us to be careful not to boastfully plan, but to say, “If the Lord wills, we will do such and such.”
 - Yet the uncertainty about everything creates uneasiness, even if we are unafraid
 - Jesus knew what was coming, and yet there is the difference between knowledge and experience that Jesus – being fully human – still had to go through; sometimes knowing makes it worse
 - Lament is often that in that uncertainty, we perceive God as far away from us and want Him to draw close
 - It is OK to lament vacation plans that have been rescheduled, camps and trips that have a big question mark by them, the fun things we do to escape our normal routines; it’s also OK to lament the loss of freedom and the plan of each day as it once used to be
 - Don’t try to fix it yet, especially not at the detriment of others
- Why is lament so hard for us?
 - American culture despises lament; wants cheerfulness all the time; distracts us from our grief and refuses to acknowledge it
 - Christian culture has bought into it – positive and encouraging, recent study about largest mega-churches avoiding sin and talking about self-help garbage – **we fear that lament is saying God has let us down**
 - We want and expect to be happy, which is why we’re so miserable
 - Lament gives us the opportunity to put our grief before God, who fully understands it, who bore our griefs to the cross, and promises an end to grief

- Lament has an end date
 - Psalm 22 continues: I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.
 - We know the ending; we have the Savior; we have His Spirit; we have His promises.
 - In the midst of our grief, we know that God is with us.
- The challenge, then, is to lament, but also to comfort others in their grief.
 - The disciples' failure was ultimately their self-centeredness – they could only contemplate their own grief, not Jesus, and they fall asleep
 - We do not have the ability right now to be like Job's friends – the only good thing they did was sit beside him for a week
 - We can learn from the friends
 - Don't assure that everything will be OK
 - Do grieve alongside them; we rejoice with those who rejoice and grieve with those who grieve
 - Don't assume we know why things are the way they are
 - Do help them know that you are willing to be a presence in the midst of their sorrow