

Devotional on the book of Lamentations

Although the author for the book of Lamentations is not given, it is traditionally attributed to Jeremiah, who is known as “the weeping prophet.” Jeremiah is thought to have written this while “lamenting,” or grieving over the destruction of Jerusalem. As we read in Lamentations 2:11 about how Jeremiah cried out in anguish to God on behalf of the people, we discover he wept so intensely from inner torment that “tears blinded his eyes.” Verse 11b continues to say his heart was “poured out on the ground,” which signified he was fully drained emotionally and emptied of strength. While Lamentations expresses intense grief and mourning over the destruction of a city, it also offers hope to its survivors. We are reminded in chapter 3 v. 22-23 that it is “Because of the LORD’s great love that we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

The saddest scenes from any disaster or crisis/pandemic are the unfortunate sufferings of innocent people. Compassion wells up inside us when we hear of families struggling to understand the reasoning behind the untimely death of one or more of its members. Whether we have experienced this first-hand or from a distance, we can all relate to this type of heart-wrenching pain. As I read this portion of scripture recently in my quiet time with God, I realized that in the midst of this horrific national crisis over the COVID19 pandemic I had not once got on my knees and truly poured out my heart for “my people” (Ch. 2 v. 11). In Psalm 107 the psalmist motivates us to cry out to the Lord in our trouble as he cites four examples of the Lord’s deliverances of His people. In each case the people pleaded for the Lord to help them out of their trouble and He “delivered them from their distress” (vv. 6, 13, 19, 28); likewise in Psalm 34:17, we are told that “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears; he rescues them from all their troubles.”

In times like this, it is good for us, as God’s people, to remember the works of the Lord in the past. It is only by God’s amazing grace that we are able to get up, greet each new day, and go forth into this world proclaiming His goodness and mercy in our lives. Our most effective tactic is to cry out to our Maker in heaven who hears us (cf. 1 Peter 3:12 & Jn. 5:15), for His grace and mercy upon our nation. Will you join me, just as the poet of Lamentations did, to rise above this calamity and reaffirm the faithfulness and goodness of our God; and to pray for healing, restoration, and for an expedient end to this destructive pandemic that is spreading across our globe?