

## Lamentations 3: Faith in the Darkness - Tim's notes

(For syllabus and resources for this Jeremiah series type [bit.ly/nlncmu](http://bit.ly/nlncmu) into any browser.)

### Getting Started:

Can you describe a time when someone's actions spoke louder than their words?

Jeremiah was a man of many words, but can you remember any times when his actions spoke even louder? – *bought the field, wrote out 19 years of prophecy twice, remained in Jerusalem with the "rabble."*

### Today's lesson (Lamentations 3.19-33)

Context: Lam 3 is another acrostic, this time with 66 verses (3x22). – *This time the first 3 begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the next 3 verses begin with the next letter, and so on through the alphabet. We'll ignore this structure in our reading as we focus on v19-33.*

*The first 20 verses of today's chapter are a deep lament. In our first reading this morning, we'll just pick up the last two of these verses. Then we'll move on to some hope.*

Read Lam 3.19-20: (wrapping up 20 verses of lamenting)

How are people whom you know experiencing loss and suffering? – *stagnation, substance abuse, relationship breakdown, a friend's rape, the death of a spouse, career failure, illness...*

Does it help you to remember and grieve over your losses and sufferings? – *Tell about AA meeting this past Wednesday night.*

21-25: (at last, some hope)

Does this passage remind you of a song? – *Great Is Thy Faithfulness.*

In v21, Jeremiah writes of remembering some things that gave him hope. What do you think he remembered? – *Biggies: fulfillment of God's promise to Abram/Sarai, Exodus, manna in the wilderness, possession of the Promised Land, deliverance from the attack of Assyria, promises this same God gave to him of a future for the people of Judah.*

Beyond what Jeremiah could remember to give him hope, what do we have that to give us hope? – *Rebuilding of Jerusalem 70 years after it was crushed by Babylon. Jesus coming to fulfill God's promises of old. Jesus' resurrection and his promise of ours. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and on to us. 2600 more years of God's story history - including 2000 years of Christian history.*

26-30:

How do you understand v29? – *It is an image from military practice in the ancient world. A defeated soldier might bury his face in the dust before a conqueror in hopes of being spared execution. In this act, the soldier is bowing to the will of a new lord. It was an act of surrender. See the first 3 steps of [AA's Twelve Steps](#).*

In the previous passage, Jeremiah counsels readers to remember God's centuries-long faithfulness. In v26-30 he adds more best practices. Let's list them:

- *Wait quietly for the Lord's salvation.*
- *Submit to the Lord's discipline and ways.*
- *When insulted or attacked, turn the other cheek.*

From your experience, can you add more bullets to Jeremiah's list? – *Live in a Christian community (AA is a good example of the value of community during suffering.)*

How do you incorporate both silence and community in your times of sadness or suffering?...

31-33:

How can we reconcile vs 32 & 33? – *It helps to climb to the top level: remember who God is and the larger trajectory of his story, which is captured in these verses. Beyond that, we must get comfortable with some mystery, some things we'll never fully understand. Over time, Christians learn to trust God through the mystery. Everything that happens in our lives is not a result of biology, physics, logic, or any of these concrete things. There are some things that are metaphysical (above the physical) such as goodness, truth, and beauty. Especially in these three transcendentals, we find cause to trust in God.*

Connecting to life:

When you face loss or suffering, how do you deal with it? – *Journaling? Poetry? I spent years journaling and every re-reading struck me with how I wrote more prolifically in sad and struggling times. I remember a poet telling me how prolific their poetry was during her darkest years, and how sparse writing was during the joyful times. Journaling/writing are therapeutic. When joyful times come, those writings are good reminders of God's deliverance.*

Today's news is full of suffering people and suffering people groups. Which one troubles you the most? Have you found a way to do anything to relieve that suffering?

– Here's our list from the past three years::

- Nazarene [Sponsored Child Sponsorship](#). Giving code ACS1013 plus child's reference number, billing phone 866.624.3092. They can stay in the program until the exit grade 12. Currently supporting one student in Bangladesh. Got a late start in school (girl in Islamic area).
- Nazarene [Un-sponsored Child Sponsorship](#). Giving code ACM1851. Promoted this fund in lieu of people giving money to my dad and mom's funerals.
- Nazarene [Global Refugee & Immigrant Fund](#). Giving code ACM1311. Supports work among

*Syrian refugees in Europe.*

- Nazarene [Education for Syrian Students](#). Giving code ACM1245. Supporting a school in Jordan and another in Lebanon.
- [East Toledo Family Center](#) and local area Nazarene church who together minister in a drug invested mostly African-American part of East Toledo, Ohio.
- A few under-resourced college students.
- Nazarene South Asian ministries (led by Pastor Chris Nallan, ICCSJ). Starting churches especially among immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and a few more countries.
- [Donors Choose](#). An organization that funds individual classrooms in under-resourced schools throughout the U.S. I started this lesson asking about times when someone's actions spoke louder to you than their words. And though Jeremiah was a man of many words, we noted times when his actions spoke louder. Can you think of times when God's actions spoke louder than his words? – *Incarnation, Jesus ministry, crucifixion, Pentecost, the spread of the gospel...*

Can you share something from your life of wandering from God like the nation of Judah, suffering because of it, and then somehow finding hope again? –

Frances' moment: Revisited Lam 3.31-33 and added Mat 5.39, 44, 45, 48 and 1 Pet 4.12-14.

Session objective: To understand that when we suffer we are still under the watchful eye of God.

***Prayer → let's worship together!***

## **Lamentations 3:19-33 New Living Translation (NLT)**

19 The thought of my suffering and homelessness  
is bitter beyond words.

20 I will never forget this awful time,  
as I grieve over my loss.

—

21 Yet I still dare to hope  
when I remember this:

22 The faithful love of the Lord never ends!  
His mercies never cease.

23 Great is his faithfulness;  
his mercies begin afresh each morning.

24 I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance;  
therefore, I will hope in him!"

25 The Lord is good to those who depend on him,  
to those who search for him.

—

26 So it is good to wait quietly  
for salvation from the Lord.

27 And it is good for people to submit at an early age  
to the yoke of his discipline:

28 Let them sit alone in silence  
beneath the Lord's demands.

29 Let them lie face down in the dust,  
for there may be hope at last.

30 Let them turn the other cheek to those who strike them  
and accept the insults of their enemies.

—

31 For no one is abandoned  
by the Lord forever.

32 Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion  
because of the greatness of his unfailing love.

33 For he does not enjoy hurting people  
or causing them sorrow.

# Lamentations 3: Faith in the Darkness - handout

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Beyond what Jeremiah could remember to give him hope, what do we have that to give us hope?

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How can we reconcile vs 32 & 33?

Connecting to life:

When you face loss or suffering, how do you deal with it?

Today's news is full of suffering people and suffering people groups. Which one troubles you the most? Have you found a way to do anything to relieve that suffering?

– *Here's our list from the past three years::*

- *Third world child sponsorship*
- *Syrian refugees, including students*
- *East Toledo Family Center*
- *Under-resourced students - both in poor schools around the U.S. and individual college students*

Can you share something from your life of wandering from God like the nation of Judah, suffering because of it, and then somehow finding hope again? –

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