

## Learning to lament with the Psalms...



As we study Psalms of lament these three weeks (Psalm 77, 86, & 90) we don't want to stop at reading them – we want to *pray* them ourselves – to use the words of the psalmist as a springboard and guide for our own prayer life.

A psalm of lament typically has four parts (the *movement* of the lament): 1) an address to God, 2) a complaint, 3) a request, and 4) an expression of trust/praise<sup>1</sup>. As you take the psalm and use it in your prayer life this coming week, here are a few suggestions, an example and a guide.

### Suggestions:

- 1) Read the Psalm slowly and get a sense of what it is saying.
- 2) Try to capture the four different movements or elements of the Lament: address, complaint, request, and trust.
- 3) Reflect on your own life and turn what the Psalmist says into a prayer of your own.

### An Example:

Movement of Lament <sup>2</sup>	Psalm 13	My Lament
Coming to God: <i>Address God as you come to Him in prayer. This is sometimes combined with complaint.</i>	v1 How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?	God, I feel like I've been coming to you today but you seem distant. I'm coming again asking that you hear me and help me.
Bring your complaint: <i>Identify in blunt language the specific pain or injustice. <u>Why</u> or <u>how</u> is often the question asked in the complaint.</i>	v2 How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all day?	God I can't shake my discouragement! How long will this last – I feel like a dark cloud has followed me all week. Why? God where are you?
Ask boldly: <i>Specifically call upon God to act in a manner that fits His character and resolves your complaint.</i>	V3 Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.	God, I pray for the grace to hope in You – I pray you put a new song of praise in my heart even in this trial.
Choose to trust: <i>Affirm God's worthiness to be trusted, and commit to praising Him.</i>	V5 But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation	God you have always been faithful – I know that hasn't changed. I love you and trust you with my future.

<sup>1</sup> Stacey, Gleddiesmith, "My God, My God, Why? Understanding the Lament Psalms."

<sup>2</sup> *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy* by Mark Vroegop, pg. 203 (Appendix 3)

**A guide for Psalm 77** – having read Psalm 77, take some time to make it your own prayer. Use the guide below to guide you through the movements of the lament.

Movement of Lament	Psalm 77	My Lament
<p>Coming to God:</p> <p><i>Address God as you come to Him in prayer. This is sometimes combined with complaint.</i></p>		
<p>Bring your complaint:</p> <p><i>Identify in blunt language the specific pain or injustice. <u>Why</u> or <u>how</u> is often the question asked in the complaint.</i></p>		
<p>Ask boldly:</p> <p><i>Specifically call upon God to act in a manner that fits His character and resolves your complaint.</i></p>		
<p>Choose to trust:</p> <p><i>Affirm God's worthiness to be trusted, and commit to praising Him.</i></p>		