



September 8..... In the Midst of Suffering

September 15..... In the Midst of Judgment

September 22..... In the Midst of Hopelessness

September 29..... In the Midst of Sadness

October 6 ..... In the Midst of Restoration





## Pastor's Introduction

Have you ever gone through a time in your life when you were suffering or going through trials? You cried out to God, but it seemed as if He wasn't listening? Maybe you are in that valley right now. That is exactly the theme of the book of Lamentations. Jeremiah wrote the book during the destruction of Jerusalem in the Old Testament. The Jewish people underwent tremendous hardship during this period of their history. Lamentations teaches us to turn to God, lay out our complaints before Him, ask Him for help, and trust Him. Join us for our five-week sermon series, "God, Are You There?" My prayer is that by walking through the deep valley of Lamentations together, we will learn to trust Him more.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Green". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed. TG



**Participant Guide for September 8, 2024**

## **In the Midst of Suffering**

Lamentations 1:18

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. How would you define justice, and how does your understanding of justice align with your concept of God?
2. Why do you think Jeremiah emphasizes God's justice at the start of this verse? What does it tell us about God's character?
3. This verse speaks of both God's justice and the nation's suffering. How can we reconcile these seemingly opposing ideas?
4. The verse describes the exile of young people as a source of profound grief. How does this suffering challenge our understanding of God's sovereignty and love, and what does it teach us about human suffering?
5. How does the idea of rebellion fit into a picture of a just God? How would you explain the connection between justice and disobedience?
6. Repentance is often seen as a one-time event, but is it a singular act or an ongoing transformation process? How does our understanding of repentance shape our relationship with God and the world around us?

## Respond

### → **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated?**

- ◆ This week, intentionally seek out those around you that you know are hurting or suffering and consider how you might respond with compassion and action. What steps can you take, no matter how small, to bring hope to those affected?

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**Participant Guide September 15, 2024**

# **In the Midst of Judgment**

Lamentations 2:18-19

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

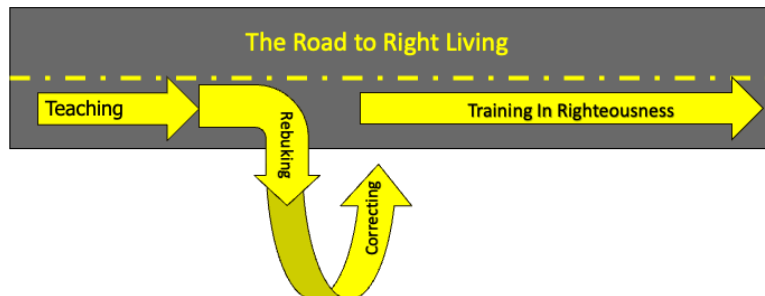
## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Has there ever been a period in your life when you felt like you and/or your family became disoriented toward God, church, or religion? Thinking back, who did you attribute the disorientation to? God? Satan? What did you base your opinion on?
2. Read verses 18 & 19. Given the fact that God uses judgment to disorient us, what should be our course to discern how to climb out of our dark moments?
3. Ultimately, according to the truth that we know about God, what is His purpose in judgment toward His people? Why is it important to understand the entire character of God and His sovereignty concerning His interaction with His people, His church?
4. Just as God orients us toward His holiness and disorients us to correct our sin, He also reorients us back to Himself. Read 1 Timothy 3:16. How does this clarify and exemplify this process?



5. How does the new covenant in Christ give us hope even in the midst of discipline?
6. Regarding our question for the day, "God, Are you there in the midst of judgment?" what is the true conclusion?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Spend time in personal and family prayer, asking God to reveal our sin to us so that we might confess and repent and live in the freedom of His love.

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## Participant Guide for September 22, 2024

# In the Midst of Hopelessness

Lamentations 3:23-24

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### **H**ighlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **E**xplain

Sermon and discussion notes:





## Apply

1. Have someone in class pull up the Lyrics to “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.” How do the contrasting emotions and perspectives found in Lamentations 3:23-24 compare to the overall tone of hope and gratitude expressed in the hymn?
2. How does today’s passage contrast hopelessness and hope?
3. Read Psalm 103:8–10: How does God's boundless compassion and forgiveness offer hope and healing to those experiencing deep despair? How does this Psalm give you hope during challenging times?
4. How important is having a support system during challenging times? Share a time when you had a firm support system to help you get through a difficult time in your life.
5. How would you describe your spiritual journey in just one sentence? How can you share that journey with others who are lost and without hope?
6. How would you respond to someone challenging your belief in a loving God because of their experiences of suffering?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, reflect on God's faithfulness in your life. Share a specific instance where you experienced His unwavering love and care with someone you see during the week.



**Participant Guide for September 29, 2024**

## **In the Midst of Sadness**

Lamentations 4:17

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### **H**ighlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **E**xplain

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. In recent American history, can you recall a significant event or crisis that prompted the nation to turn to its leaders for hope and guidance?
2. In Israel, there were three leadership positions that the people were looking to in times of trouble. Ultimately, Jesus becomes the ultimate of all three. What were they? What is the significance of each?
3. Read verse 17. Why was there such sadness in Judah?
4. How did the reality of leadership change from the OT to the NT?
5. Regarding our question for the day, “God, Are you there in the midst of sadness?” what is the true conclusion?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Read Revelation 21:1-7 and shout to the Lord in anticipation of the Kingdom of God to come.

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**Participant Guide for October 6, 2024**

# **In the Midst of Restoration**

Lamentations 5:21-22

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## **H**ighlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **E**xplain

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Looking back at this series, what would you say is the overall theme of Lamentations? As a conclusion of sorts, how does this passage fit into the broader context of the book?
2. Read Lamentations 5:19-22 to gain additional context for today's passage. After reading Lamentations 5:19-22, in what ways does it appear that the author is experiencing drastically fluctuating emotions? Are you able to relate to this feeling? How so?
3. Jeremiah expresses a profound sense of abandonment by God. Have you ever experienced similar feelings of despair or disconnection from your faith, and if so, how did you cope?
4. How has the book of Lamentations addressed the problem of evil and suffering? What have you learned about God's nature and character?
5. How can the author express despair and hopelessness while calling God for restoration? What does this reveal about the human experience of suffering and faith?
6. How can this passage inspire us to persevere in our faith, even in the face of adversity? What practical steps can we take to seek restoration and renewal in our own lives?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, consider what practical steps you can take to seek restoration, renewal, and a deeper connection with God while in the midst of challenges and setbacks.