**20200607\_CorporateLament**

Thanks guys. Yeah. This morning. Want to take a few minutes as I'm trying to set the table biblically for what we're going to be participating in this morning, uh, as Mike mentioned, We did focus on the conversation of the Psalms of lament back in the fall. And we particularly looked at what are called the individual Psalms of lament.

Uh, there were about 50 of the 150 Psalms that actually focus on the subject of lament. And about half of them are focusing on individual amend, but there are also another large body of Psalms. That our corporate Psalms of lament reminding us that corporate lament is a God ordained role of his people in all generations.

I want to remind you of the definition of lament that we used in that series. And we're still using today. Lament is the honest cry of a hurting heart wrestling with the paradox of pain and the promise. Of God's goodness, it's trying to put those things together. When we are in a season of confusion, pain, wondering why things are the way they are and why they continue to stay the way they're continuing.

I'd like to pray together again, as we, as we reflect on the scripture together, and we'll look at this study, Lord, we do look to you,

God, we believe that you are sovereignly ruling in our world.

Lord in your oversight, you have allowed this season in our world and specifically in our nation to raise up questions and struggles and concerns that we, as your people feel we cannot ignore and rather want to embrace in continuing way. But in this way, this morning as an opportunity for people to lament, God teach us through this hour together.

I pray in Jesus name. Amen. These two types of lament that I mentioned earlier, individual lament, which is basically crying out to God with our own sorrow, our own confusion, our own pain. Also flows into corporate lament, a season where we also bring our sorrows as a community to God, we bring our personal anguish, but we also our bid to bring our lament for others.

Corporate lament is, is highlighted not only in the old Testament, but in the new Testament revelation chapter six, verse 10 says this where the, those who have been slain for the word of God are lamenting. And here's what it says. Those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness, they had born cried out with a loud voice.

Oh, sovereign Lord. Holy and true. How long. Before you will judge an event, our blood on those who dwell on the earth. There is this longing for God to move in God, to make himself known and God to bring justice. There are two primary reasons in the Psalms for corporate lament. The first. Is over a, is a lament for loss, loss of safety.

Uh, there's a lot of laments to talk about the enemy surrounding and coming upon God's people. There's loss of loved ones, loss of financial security and position. Psalm 60 is a, is a Psalm of corporate lament. And it says this talking about this lament for loss, it says you have made the land to quake.

You have torn it open. You have made your people see hard things. You've given us wine that to drink that made us stagger. We have just come through actually are still in a season of COVID-19, which has brought too many, a season of mourning loss. We have FCC families who have couples who got married with virtually no one able to be there.

We've had families who have had to bury loved ones, almost in solitude. We've had families who have loved ones and friends who have been lost due to the COVID virus. 12,000 people in our state have died from it in three and a half months. Economic suffering has hit many business owners, airline pilots, restaurant, and entertainment, business employees, and many, many others.

The loss of feeling safe has been real and remains real for many in our body. It is grounds for lamenting, but there's a second reason for corporate lament and that is the lament over injustice lamen for injustices perpetrated upon us. There is so much cry for vindication in the Psalms of lament. It's all about being treated unfairly, unjustly Psalm 78, Psalm 43 verse one says this vindicate me, Oh God.

And defend my cause against an ungodly people from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me. But there is also the cry for injustice done to others. And this may be the most important form of corporate lamenting of all. Psalm 10 says it this way. A Psalm of lament in arrogance, the wicked hotly pursued the poor.

He murders the innocent, the helpless are crushed. They sink down and fall by his might. Those are all expressions in the context of corporate lament. This morning, we are inviting you to lament. We don't have the capacity to do that because we're not meeting together in this auditorium with pieces of paper, but that we could, we could put around the room as Jerry suggested where we're asking you to consider putting your laments in the chat page or the chat section of the, the online page you're looking at.

If you're someone who has, or is suffering from COVID-19 economically, personally, you have grounds for lament. If you feel the pain of people who have died or a suffering, you have grounds to lament. If you have been the recipient of racism, prejudice, and injustice, you have grounds to lament. But what about the rest of us?

What about those of us that don't necessarily we fit in a corporate lament experience this morning. Well, possibly right here, what God is asking us to do is to lament for the injustice toward others, to recognize the pain of others and share that pain to possibly acknowledge our own callousness to the pain of our own brothers and sisters.

That is certainly my element. Like many of you, I've had some powerful conversations in the last two weeks. I've had conversations with black brothers and sisters. I've sat with black pastors who I considered among my best friends. I sat with two of them, men who are grace driven, humble, gentle men. And I've watched them weep.

As they recounted how the events of the last week have triggered their own journey of personal injustices, humiliations at time fears. And wondering if the white majority will ever really understand how it is to walk as a black man in this day, in this country, I've talked with other brothers and sisters and heard similar stories and realized there is so much.

I have not walked in the shoes of, but want to understand that there is an injustice that our brothers and sisters have experienced are experiencing. And to some degree we'll continue to experience without change. Many of you are here saying not, not many of you, but maybe you're here saying, well, where to go Mark.

You have now bought in to the liberal press agenda. You have become a mouthpiece for the secular establishment. This is the liberal press speaking, but it wasn't. It was my brothers. It was your brothers and sisters. Not angry people, not defiant people, just people who have walked the journey and are still walking a journey that we know almost nothing about.

We must hear the cry of people this morning and we must not let them be drowned out by the firecrackers of the looters or the broken glass of shop windows. What we must hear is we must hear the cry of millions of people around us, including in this congregation, whose story is one that is marked by injustice and discrimination.

We must hear their story. It is not our story, but it is theirs. And the fact that it is a story that continues should cause all of us to lament. And to cry out for God for justice and change. There are four stages of lament and that's how we're organizing our service this morning. The first part is they're all one word statements go grown.

Ask trust, go means simply go to God. We can go to social media with our laments, with our, our pain. It's not wrong to do that. It's wrong to do that in a wrong way, but there's no healing and hope for our pain in social media, the healing is found in the presence of God. We must go to God with our RP.

Secondly, we grow, we express our pain. We grown publicly that we might grown together. There is individual lament. Many of you are individually lamenting, but this morning we're doing it corporately that we can grown with you, that we can pray with you, that we can join together. If you're groaning today, about the last one and the lonely funeral you had to endure, or the last wedding.

Or the frustration with lost income and opportunity that we can grown with you and pray with you as brothers and sisters, or if you're groaning with the feelings of injustice and inequality, and you're a mistrust of a system that has failed you, we want to grown with you and we want to pray with you as well, because the third part is to ask.

To ask for God's help. As we see each other grown, as we see pain and sorrow, anger, and groaning, that we take the time to ask God to help and God to change. And then we culminate our service where the Psalms of lament inevitably take us to trust God, to choose, to trust him and to praise him. I'd like to pray as we commit this, this time together to the Lord, let's pray, Lord.

We gathered together as your people and we're scattered all throughout Burlington and Camden County. And even to some degree, other parts of the world as people tune in this morning, Lord, we're coming as mentors. And we're crying out to God with our pain and with the pain of our brothers and sisters. So Lord, I pray as we come to you, who are just you, who are merciful, you are the writer of wrong.

Use this time for us to experience healing, some to ex express, great pain. Lord, may we grey see each other by bringing their pain to you. Thank you for designing corporate limb lament that we can lament together as your people in Jesus' name. Amen. The first part of lamenting is going to God. And that's what we're trying to do with this entire service.

And we wanted to start off with this song. Yes, I will. As our worship team and we have a real worship team today, a big one that is going to lead us in our first song, guys.