

PRAYING In The Bible

Prayer in the Bible: Lamentation prayer in the Psalms

There are prayers called Lamentations. It means to express feelings of sorrow, mourning, or regret. In many ways it is a wail or cry out to the Lord. Look at these two verses below.

2 Samuel 3:31 *“Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, “Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and mourn before Abner.”*

Genesis 37:34 *“Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.”*

We will continue the prayer study with a look at two places in the Bible where lamentations appear. The first is in the Psalms. When a person is feeling sorrowful, a smart Christian usually turns to a Psalm for comfort. Yet, the Psalms are many things to many people. They are uplifting and theological. There are Psalms like 53 that point to Jesus. Yet, sprinkled throughout the Psalms are cries to the Lord.

People have an opinion on how we should pray to God. We studied the songs of the Bible to see Bible characters praise the Lord. To recount the good things God has done for us. I also looked at two of Jesus prayers to see the template He used. Praise God, pray for others, and give thanks. Yet, the Lamentation is a legitimate prayer. I believe we are encouraged to cry out to God. There are good reasons to be angry with the Lord. Psalm 119:130 *“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”* For a moment we might think God neglected us or is not responding. Yet, through our grief we will find clarity. God is tough. He is

willing to let you have the time to work things through. That usually comes in the form of a Lamentation.

Psalm 3:1-2 *“Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, “God will not deliver him.”* We could cry out to God demanding that He act. Mary and Martha did that with Jesus over their brother Lazarus. Yet, Jesus had waited till Lazarus died. Sometimes to see things clearly, we must let a dream die. God just wants us to get to a place where we are humbly willing to listen beyond our fears and tears.

Psalm 22:1 *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?”*

For so long I have wondered why Jesus repeated that verse on the cross. Then it hit me. What if Jesus (in His pain) cried out something He remembered. A psalm that was dear to Him. As Jesus bore our sins (the weight of the world). God separated Himself from His son. In that moment did Jesus’ cry out in pain, abandonment, and fear. Remember Jesus was God but He was also fully human. We see both sides with miracles and the sweating great drops of blood. Is Psalm 22 a cry of being forsaken or someone crying out to the only one who can help?

Psalm 42:1-2 *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”*

Sometimes God will withdraw Himself from us. In the book of Job, did God abandon him? The final answer is no. God was waiting for Job to understand the truth. Unpleasant things do happen to good people. When we see the good God within the storm, then we will find understanding. Does your soul pant for God in times of trouble. Sometimes we are crying out to find Him. That is a good place to be. Why? Do we pant for God in times of blessing and

pleasure? Why is God always present in our wilderness? That is probably where we will find the Lord most of the time. Waiting to give us living water.

Psalm 51:1-2 *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”*

This is a Psalm of David. He wrote this (in pain) for his crimes committed against Uriah. This pain comes not from confession but from judgment. There was a massive cost for his adultery. Yet, David could have blasted God. Instead, he chose to lament. To cry out for mercy. David had flaws as a father and a King. Yet, he never forsook his God. What makes this lament prayer great is that it contains honesty towards God. David was able to put himself in the right standing before judgment. A humble sinner.

The lament should not happen often in a believer's life. We are to trust in the Lord. It is our job to help others. That means we pray for people in their need. We are to trust that God will do what is best. Yet, there are those moments where we should cry out. Where we should wear our hearts on our sleeve. God has a big shoulder. He can take a good scrap. Hopefully, (if the prayer does its work) we will find ourselves humble before the Lord. Listening at the feet of Jesus. The whole point of tribulation is to find understanding. Through a lament, that might be the only way to see clearly.