



HEBRON

Sunday, May 24, 2020

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## **WHEN GOD FEELS LIKE AN ENEMY**

Lamentations 2:1-22

**Passage in a Sentence:** When we are covered by God's cloud of discipline, we are to cry without ceasing to the only One who can comfort us and rescue those we love from the consequences of our disobedience and the condemning taunts of the enemy.

**As we study Lamentations, we are continuing to learn from lament. What we can learn from lament in Lamentations 2 is:**

- I. **GOD'S CLOUD OF DISCIPLINE IS NOT SOMETHING HE JUST ALLOWS BUT IS SOMETHING IN WHICH HE IS VERY ACTIVE (2:1-9, 17, 21-22).**
  - a. Morgan: The daughter of Zion is covered in a cloud, and so cut off from the vision of Jehovah, that is, she cannot see Him. Clouds hide God from men; they never hide men from God. Here, then, is the thought. The loss of the vision is the judgment upon those who ceased looking to Jehovah. The daughter of Zion is covered in the cloud. She does not see her God. But her God, watching over her, neither slumbers nor sleeps.
  - b. When the Lord disciplines us, shelter cannot be found in:
    - i. Our strongholds (2:2,5,8,9)
    - ii. Our strength (2:3)
    - iii. Our superstitions (2:6-7)
  - c. Raymond: I wonder how many of us, if we were living at the time of Lamentations, would ascribe these actions to Satan? Wouldn't that be much more convenient for our theology? But there is absolutely no question reading Lamentations (or Jeremiah for that matter) that it is God who brought down the hammer of judgment upon Jerusalem. Lamentations forces those of us who affirm the authority and inerrancy of the Bible to come to grips with a God who gets really angry at sin and then shows it in judgment. This is who He is throughout the Bible, not just in Lamentations.
  - d. Even in our unfaithfulness, God's becoming like an enemy and not actually becoming our enemy is a grace to us. The first is for our discipline. The second would be for our destruction.
    - i. Ironside: An enemy He never was; though their conduct compelled Him to act as if He were. How many a Christian has had to know Him in a similar way! How often has He seemed to become an enemy! But faith looks beyond all that the eye can see and knows that He is unchanged in His love and tenderness. It is sin in His children that has broken in on the fellowship He delights to have them enjoy.

- e. Whatever we may feel tempted to hold back in our laments to God, Jeremiah shows us God can handle it. Jesus shows us this as well: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?"

**II. WHEN WE REFUSE TO WALK IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD, WE ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES FROM GOD (2:4, 9-12, 21-22).**

- a. Raymond: *Why does God do this? In particular, why does he do it to His people Israel?* It is because they were really, really bad.
- b. It may be my sin, but it will always be our consequences. Our goal should be for our families to be blessed because of our obedience rather than burdened because of our disobedience.
  - i. Wiersbe: The sight of the suffering children broke their hearts, because it's the children who too often suffer most from the sins of the parents. The priests and prophets had sinned, and many of them were slain; but the children were innocent and deserved no punishment.
  - ii. If you could change one consequence those you love are experiencing because of your sin what would it be?
- c. Sometimes in our suffering we lack the words to fully express our sorrow.
- d. Grief can be not only devastating but also exhausting.
- e. The ultimate reckoning for man's disobedience is never found in just earthly consequences but eternal condemnation.

**III. THE CONDEMNATION FROM OUR ENEMIES AND THEIR CELEBRATION IN OUR SHAME ARE TERRIBLE BUT ALSO TEMPORARY (2:15-16).**

- a. Exell: It is heartless and wicked to make sport of the miseries of others, and is a cruel aggravation of those miseries.
- b. When our enemies remind us of our shame, we can remind them of our Savior.
- c. The triumph of the wicked is temporary.

**IV. WE ARE TO CRY WITHOUT CEASING TO THE LORD AND SEEK HIS COMPASSION (2:18-22).**

- a. Exell: Hearts that cried are to cast away all reserve before the Lord. They will have gone a long way towards receiving help when they recognize that He who "is strong to smite is also strong to save."

**V. THE CORRUPTION OF OUR SIN IS VAST AND ONLY GOD CAN COMFORT AND HEAL US (2:13-14).**

- a. Our corruption from sin is not partial but complete.
- b. Raymond: We don't just do bad things we are bad people.
- c. There is no counsel or comfort that would come from others that would suffice to heal us.
- d. Who can restore us from our ruin and offer reconciliation and restoration? Only God.
- e. Psalm 30:11 "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness"