

At the start of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland in 1557, John Knox wrote to his congregation before going into exile and said,

“You are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge . . .

And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”

Let’s Worship God

9th-14th January 2017
Lamentations



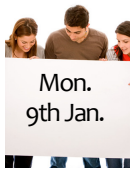
Let's Worship God is a ministry of



Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church

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Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!



Mon.
9th Jan.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The steadfast love of the Lord
never ceases;
his mercies never
come to an end;
Lamentations 3:22

reading

Lamentations 2:1-3 - A Measured Anger

notes

Grief rarely walks in a straight line. That is to say, it does not go from Point A to Point B - from sorrow to resolution. Rather it goes between progress and regress. The first lament may have appeared to make some headway - even if in a minuscule way - but as we move to the second lament we find the Prophet back in the depths of his grief and sorrow.

The emphasis of this second lament is on the anger of the Lord. That probably is not an attribute we like to think about. But it is necessary. From the very first verse we read: "How the LORD in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud!" In the following verses we will read of his fierce anger, wrath, fury, indignation, and scorn. We cannot understand what God has revealed about himself without understanding his anger.

One reason this is hard is because we think of God's anger like our own - irrational, explosive, hot-headed, emotive, etc. But as the Westminster Confession reminds us, God is a spirit and so is "without body, parts, or passion." When we read of human qualities in God (e.g. His hands, ears, face, and even anger) we should understand that the Bible is speaking in human-like terms so we can understand something about him.

But we should not think of his anger as being exactly like human anger. His anger is not an unhinged and mismanaged response to something, but it is an expression of who he is toward sin. His anger is his justice directed at injustice, and his righteousness directed at unrighteousness. As the early Christian theologian Lanctantius wrote: "He who loves the good, by this very fact hates the evil; and he who does not hate the evil, does not love the good."

If God's anger is his response to sin then it is to be feared. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:26) and he will punish sin (Matt. 25:46). But it should also make us thankful for Jesus who bore the anger of God on the cross.

questions

1. Why is God's anger not like our anger?
2. What does anger mean for sinners?

praise pray

Ps. 7:1-6

1. Ask God that he would make you angry with sin.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Sat.
14th Jan.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The steadfast love of the Lord
never ceases;
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Lamentations 3:22

reading

Lamentations 2:17-22 - The Hand That Wounds and Heals

notes

Throughout this second lament there has been an overwhelming emphasis that Jerusalem has been grieved by the Lord's hand. At least thirty times in the first ten verses Jeremiah forces us to see the Lord in all his sorrow. For that reason many have said verse 17 is the focal point: "The LORD has done what he purposed." That is a difficult expression. As Matthew Henry wrote: "It becomes necessary, though painful, to turn the thoughts of the afflicted to the hand of God lifted against them."

It should be noticed in the words of the Prophet that the Lord's involvement was not simply a bare permission. Sometimes people make that mistake. They want to remove God's hand from their sorrowful situations and so blunt the truth with ideas that God merely allowed something to happen. But that is not at all the sense of the Prophet. He had already said that the Lord had "stretched out a measuring line" (v 8) referring to the calculating work of God against his people. Further, Jeremiah says he purposed it, carried out his word, and commanded it long ago - especially as we understand Jerusalem's destruction in light of Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

When we come to understand this, especially in the chastisements God brings against our sin, it should not leave us in despair. Rather, if God is true in his words of judgment we can also be certain that he will be true in his word of blessing. If we can depend on God to fulfill his word of promise in cursing, we can depend on God to fulfill his word of promise in blessing. That is why Jeremiah turns the people back to God: "Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord! Lift up your hands to him!" If his is the hand that wounds it will also be the hand that heals.

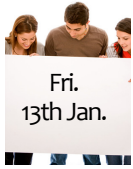
questions

1. How do we know that God's involvement wasn't simply an act of permission?
2. If God is faithful in his judgment what else will God be faithful to do?

praise pray

Ps. 30:all

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Fri.
13th Jan.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The steadfast love of the Lord
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Lamentations 3:22

reading Lamentations 2:11-16 - The Contempt of the World

notes The world around us loves to see the church fail. All too often we have read with broken hearts of the scandals, moral failures, and unfaithfulness of prominent people that have been the occasion of the world to heap up their scorn and contempt against the church. These things have likely been a source of shame and embarrassment to those involved, but far more devastating is the way in which it dishonors Jesus and injures the witness of the church in the world around us.

This is something Jeremiah recognized, and it only added sorrow upon sorrow. He tells Zion that her prophets dealt falsely with her: "Your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions; they have not exposed your iniquity." Since they ignored their sin, the Lord disciplines them in the sight of all peoples. In so doing their enemies mock: "Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth?" and they boast: "Ah, this is the day we longed for; now we have it; we see it!" This was in fulfillment of what Moses had spoken when he warned Israel against covenant breaking: "And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples" (Deuteronomy 28:37).

As the church we live before a watching world. Jesus taught that when he said we are "a city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). In our faithfulness or unfaithfulness, the world will watch and their watching will either turn to contempt or to glorifying our Father in heaven. Let us think upon the words of Charles Spurgeon: "O, Church of God! Believe thyself invincible, and thou art invincible; but stay to tremble, and fear, and thou art undone. Lift up thy head and say, 'I am God's daughter; I am Christ's bride.' Do not stop to prove it, but affirm it; march through the land, and kings and princes shall bow down before thee, because thou hast taken thin ancient prowess and assumed thine ancient glory."

questions 1. In what two ways does the world respond to the church?

2. What does Jesus compare the church to?

praise Ps. 2:all

pray 1. Pray that God would help you live in such a way that others glorify him.

2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.

3. Pray for family matters.



Tue.
10th Jan.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The steadfast love of the Lord
never ceases;
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Lamentations 3:22

reading Lamentations 2:4-6 - The Presence is Gone

notes The gracious presence of God with his people is the highest blessing of his covenantal promises. In the Old Testament he was present in the temple which was the "splendor of Israel" (see Isaiah 64:11). More particularly, his presence was on the mercy seat where his glory was said to dwell between the cherubim. For that reason the ark of the covenant - over which the mercy seat laid - was called his "footstool" (see 1 Chronicles 28:2). When the people entered the temple, they entered into the gracious presence of their covenant God.

However, through their persistent disobedience Zion no longer enjoyed the privilege of his gracious presence. They had provoked God to withdraw, and so he withdrew. That is why Jeremiah laments: "He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger." As he surveys the destruction of Jerusalem he sees the temple in ruins, the altar scorned, and the sanctuary disowned (v 6-7). It would be hard to think of a more severe judgment than the removal of God's gracious presence from his people. As Richard Brooks wrote: "In no way was God any longer enthroned upon the praises of His people or manifesting Himself in the congregation of the righteous."

Of course, the temple and the ark of the covenant are no longer the splendor of God's people. Jesus is. He is the one who is the radiance of God's glory, and is himself full of grace and truth. In him we have a temple not built with human hands, but a temple of living stones being built together to be a habitation for God by his Spirit. Nevertheless, if we despise the presence of Christ's grace and slight the work of the Spirit in the ordinances it will be no surprise to find our churches void of his gracious presence. After all, it was Jesus who warned the church in Ephesus: "Repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent" (Revelation 2:5).

questions 1. Where was the gracious presence of God in the Old Testament?

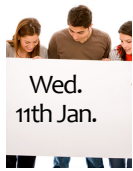
2. Where do we find God's gracious presence now?

praise Ps. 27:11-16

pray 1. Pray that your church would be glad for the presence of God.

2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.

3. Pray for family matters.



Wed.
11th Jan.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
The steadfast love of the Lord
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Lamentations 3:22

reading Lamentations 2:7-10 - The Eclipse of Glory

notes In Isaiah 42:8 we read: "I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other." That is not selfish of God simply because he is worthy to receive all honor and praise. Yet, that does not keep sinful men and women from trying to exchange the glory of the Creator for the creature. That is what Judah had done. They refused to listen to the prophets and had turned aside to evil ways and evil deeds by going after other gods to serve and worship them (see Jeremiah 25:4-7).

The response of God against this was to "set the daughter of Zion under a cloud!" As a cloud eclipses the light and warmth of the sun, in his anger the Lord eclipsed the glory and beauty of Zion to demonstrate that he is indeed Adonai the true God, Lord, and Master of all things. In the verses that follow we are given a long list of those things which he overthrew: habitations (v 2), strongholds (v 2, 5), kingdom (v 2), rulers (v 2), might of Israel (v 3), palaces (v 5), temple (v 6), festival (v 6), king and priest (v 6), altar (v 7), sanctuary (v 7), wall and gate of the city (v 8 and 9), the law (v 9), and the prophets (v 8). Anything that was a symbol of their might and strength, religious and military prowess, or safety and security he decimated in his fierce anger. The result of which brought the people - from the elders to the young women - to deep and profound humility (v 10).

It is sobering to remember that this anger was shown to those who were his covenant people. What, then, of those who are not in covenant? The Apostle Paul would later write: "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). This is why we need the gospel of Jesus Christ that "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

questions

1. What were some of the things that God overthrew in Jerusalem?
2. Why do we need the gospel of Jesus Christ?

**praise
pray**

- Ps. 89:26-30
1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Thur.
12th Jan.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
The steadfast love of the Lord
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come to an end;
Lamentations 3:22

reading Lamentations 2:6-9 - Prophet, Priest, and King

notes In ancient Israel there were three anointed offices among the people: prophet, priest, and king. Painting in very broad strokes the prophets were to speak the mind and will of the Lord to the people; the priest was to offer the sacrifices in accord with the law and intercede on behalf of the people; and the king was to subdue the enemies of the people. In this way the LORD was providing for their needs.

It is not insignificant then that when the Lord brings his judgment against Jerusalem, Jeremiah records specifically how he dealt with each: "In his fierce indignation [he] has spurned king and priest" (v 6), and "Her kings and princes are among the nations; the law is no more, and her prophets find no vision from the LORD" (v 9). In his anger the Lord did not spare even those who held these anointed offices. Why? The answer is quite simple. They too were sinful. The prophets had not spoken the word of the Lord, the priests had neglected the law, and the kings had not walked in righteousness, justice, and mercy. As a result, they were insufficient to satisfy the true needs of the people.

While this was severe judgment upon them, their failings also point us forward to the need we have for an ideal prophet, priest, and king. We need a prophet whom we can listen to (Deuteronomy 18:18), we need a priest in the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4), and we need a king who will rule forever (2 Samuel 7:13) - we need a prophet, priest, and king who is untouched by the infirmity of sin. That, of course, is Jesus the Christ. In fact, "Christ" means "the anointed one." He has been anointed our true prophet to reveal by his Word and Spirit the will of God; he has been anointed our true priest by offering himself as a sacrifice for sin and continually interceding for us as we draw near to God; and he has been anointed our true king who subdues all our and his enemies.

- questions**
1. What were the three anointed offices in the Old Testament?
 2. How is Jesus a Prophet, Priest, and King?

- praise
pray**
- Ps. 141:5-9
1. Focus on one of Christ's offices and thank him for his work.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.