

“Psalms of Lament”

Summer in the Psalms #4

Psalm 142

July 15, 2018

**Scripture Reading: Psalm 142:1-7**

### **Introduction**

Johnny Cash to Larry King: “I’ve never done a concert in anything but black. You walk into my clothes closet, it’s dark in there.” | The Man in Black

### **We Are Not Particularly Good at Dealing With Suffering and Grief**

Tim Keller — Dr. Paul Brand, a pioneering orthopedic surgeon, in the treatment of leprosy patients, spent the first part of his medical career in India and the last part of his career in the United States. He wrote: “In the United States . . . I encountered a society that seeks to avoid pain at all costs. Patients lived at a greater comfort level than any I had previously treated, but they seemed far less equipped to handle suffering and far more traumatized by it.”

- Proverbs 18:14, Ecclesiastes 7:3

### **Ways To Deal With Negative Emotion**

1. Avoid, escape, replace
2. Fight, deny, argue
3. Lament

**Big Idea:** Lament is the biblical, God-given way for humans to deal with life’s suffering & grief

### **About the Psalms of Lament**

1. One-third of the psalms<sup>2</sup>
2. Individual laments | e.g. Psalm 142
3. <sup>2</sup>Corporate laments | e.g. Psalm 85
4. Imprecatory psalms | e.g. Psalm 69

### **What The Psalms of Lament Teach Us**

1. The psalms of lament give us permission to grieve | 142:4, 6
  - a. Dan Allender & Tremper Longman — In many circles, passionate emotions are discouraged as unspiritual. You are considered godly if you can handle difficult trials with a detached and apparently unruffled confidence. But this conclusion is wrong. There are times when lack of emotion is simply the byproduct of hardness and arrogance. The Scriptures reveal that this absence of feelings is often a refusal to face the sorrow of life and the hunger for heaven; it is not the mark of maturity, but rather the boast of evil (see Isaiah 47:8, Revelation 18:7).
2. The psalms of lament help us to learn from our emotions | 142:1-2
  - a. Are emotions morally neutral? | complaint vs. grumbling

3. The psalms of lament set boundaries for our emotions | 142:3
4. The psalms of lament teach us how to suffer well | 142:4-7a
  - a. Joe Thorn — When the world strips away your comfort and confidence in things temporal, when friends become enemies and attack you, when in the providence of God suffering enters your life like a flash flood, you are given an opportunity to see very clearly where your ultimate dependence lies and where you find your identity...Do you want to be confident in God's good purposes for your life? Then you must discover them in times of ease as well as times of difficulty. Do you want to become more like Christ? Then you must suffer, and suffer well.
5. The psalms of lament teach us that we need others | 142:7

### **Jesus and the Psalms of Lament**

1. Jesus was known for his prayers of lament | Hebrews 5:7
2. Jesus prayed psalms of lament from the cross | Mark 15:34 (Psalm 22:1)
3. Jesus bore our curses and imprecations | Galatians 3:13-14

### **Conclusion**

1. For those who are suffering, or who have suffered, you need to lament honestly
2. For those who are not currently suffering, enter into the suffering of others

### **Benediction**

Psalm 27 <sup>13</sup>I am certain that I will see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. <sup>14</sup>Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart be courageous. Wait for the Lord.