

SERMON: The Need for Hope
SERIES: Thrill of Hope
SPEAKER: Pastor Brady

December 3, 2017

CONNECT (5-10 minutes): Help the members of the group grow in relationships with one another so all people in the group know they matter. Spend some time discovering what is happening in the lives of your group members. Share how God has been revealing himself in each other's lives.

REVIEW (15-20 minutes): Use this time to review the passage and the sermon outline (see below).

Note: this is a great opportunity to share leadership.

Use these simple questions to review the sermon/passage or for if you don't have much time:

1. What does this passage teach you about God? About us?
2. How does this passage point us to the gospel? How does it challenge you? Change you?

SCRIPTURE:

Lamentations 3:1-33.

1 I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath;
2 he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light;
3 surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long.
4 He has made my flesh and my skin waste away; he has broken my bones;
5 he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation;
6 he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago.
7 He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has made my chains heavy;
8 though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer;
9 he has blocked my ways with blocks of stones; he has made my paths crooked.
10 He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding;
11 he turned aside my steps and tore me to pieces; he has made me desolate;
12 he bent his bow and set me as a target for his arrow.
13 He drove into my kidneys the arrows of his quiver;
14 I have become the laughingstock of all peoples, the object of their taunts all day long.
15 He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood.
16 He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes;
17 my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is;
18 so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord."
19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!
20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.
21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:
22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;
23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."
25 The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.
26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.
27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.
28 Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him;
29 let him put his mouth in the dust— there may yet be hope;
30 let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults.
31 For the Lord will not cast off forever,
32 but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love;
33 for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. The Need for Hope.

- We are all built for hope and live from hope.
- Hopelessness comes when we place our hope in something other than God.
- Lamentations 3:1-18 describes utter hopelessness, brought on by God.
 - Psychologically: we are never fully satisfied so we move from discontent to despair.
 - Theologically: Is God to blame for my hopelessness?

II. The God of Hope.

- Lamentations 3:22-24 describes the character of God: Steadfast love, mercy, faithfulness.
- The character of God incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - In his incarnation, death, and resurrection, Jesus entered our hopelessness, took our hopelessness and united us to eternal hope.
 - Our eternal hope is personal, physical, permanent, perfect, and possessed.

III. Living in Hope.

- Lamentations 3:19-21; 25-33 show us how to live in hope.
- Lament allows us to process our sin and suffering within our new covenant relationship with God.
 - We must let our suffering move us toward God.
 - We must trust the work of God and the justice of God.
 - We must trust the heart of God: suffering is not his final word; he does everything from compassion and love; his greatest desire is for your good.
- God will never withhold God.

GROW (45-60 minutes): Use this time to go deeper with your group.

Use these questions to discuss the sermon/passage:

Background: Lamentations was written by the prophet Jeremiah during the time of Judah's exile in Babylon. Judah had trusted in false gods, their religion, alliances, and failed to place their hope in God. Lamentations describes the horror of their destruction while showing us the sovereignty of God in the situation.

1. Hope is a life changing expectation or assurance that a desire will be fulfilled in the future. What big or little things do you hope for? Can you identify hope in your daily life? Your spiritual life?

2. Read Lamentations 3:1-18. How do you respond to this passage? Can you relate to it? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt hopeless? Do the holidays increase your hope or your hopelessness?

3. Hopelessness comes when we trust in something more than we trust in God. Read Lamentations 3:19-24. Why can we trust in God more than anything else (think about his covenantal steadfast love, mercy/compassion, and faithfulness)? When/where have you seen God's love, mercy, and faithfulness in your life?

4. How does the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus prove God's love, mercy, and faithfulness? Are you placing your hope in something other than the life, death, and resurrection of Christ?

*Note: We can even trust in "God" without trusting in his gospel work through Jesus. For example, when we place our hope in God getting us out of our suffering today rather than hoping in the indwelling life and love of Christ as what will sustain me through the suffering.

5. Read Colossians 1:27- How does our union with Christ fulfill the promise that God's love and faithfulness will never come to an end?

6. Which of these truths from Lamentations 3 can help you in your current suffering:

- Recall God's character (v. 21-22).
- Quietly and patiently trust God's work (v. 25-27)
- Accept God's justice in your deserved and undeserved pain (v. 28-30).
- Trust God's heart- suffering is not his final word, and his greatest desire is for your good (v. 31-33).