**God in our suffering – Lam. 3:31 -36**

**Focal Truth: Holy lament in suffering understands God’s purposes for suffering**

**Lessons from Lamentations**

1. God’s judgement comes on unrepentant sinfulness
2. The holy and the unholy suffer during times of judgement
3. Holy sufferers lament for the unrepentant who remain in their sinfulness
4. Holy suffers lament their suffering condition as part of God’s will for their life
5. Holy lament includes self – talk, self -reflection on God’s nature & ways. Followed by prayer to God in suffering
6. Holy lament leads to hopefulness in God in suffering

Two words for God related to suffering are used in Lam. 3: 31 -36

3:31 - Adonai – Master

3:35 - Elyon – Most High

**Observations**

1. **The Lord God does not permanently reject His children in their suffering – 3:31**

*For the Lord will not reject forever*

1. Jeremiah declares that the Lord God – Adonai does not reject His people permanently

**Adonai** – Master, Lord of Lords

**Adonai** – Lord sometimes in place of Yahweh for reverence for God’s name

**Adonai** as Lord of all His ways & actions – perfect in His

**Reject = forcefully reject, to treat as stench**

Ps. 77: 7 – 9 – *will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again? Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? Has God forgotten to be gracious, or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion?*

Ps. 77:14 – you are the God who works wonders, You have made known your strength to among the peoples

Ps. 94:14 – for the Lord will not abandon His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance

Heb. 13:5 – I will never desert you nor will I ever forsake you

1. **The Lord God lovingly grieves His children in their suffering – 3:32**

*for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to his abundant lovingkindness*

1. God’s purposes bring suffering to God’s children that produces grief

*for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to his abundant lovingkindness*

Ps. 31:9 – be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress, my eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also

Lam. 1:5 – *her adversaries have become her master, her enemies prosper, for the Lord has caused her grief because of the multitude of her transgressions.*

Heb. 12:11 – *all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness*

1. God’s loving discipline in the sufferings of His children produces holiness

Heb. 12:10 – *for they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness*

**Consider;**

1. My suffering produces sorrowful grief sometimes because of sinfulness
2. My suffering produces sorrowful grief while living in right relationship with God
3. **My suffering is for My spiritual good!**
4. God’s abundant compassionate love comforts His children in sufferings

* He that has brought down will pity – Septuagint

**Compassion = deeply love, be tenderly affectionate**

**Abundant lovingkindness**

Heb. 12:6 – 7 - *for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives. It is for discipline that you endure, God deals with. You as sons, for what sone is there whom his father does not discipline?*

1. **The Lord God does not afflict His children cruelly but purposely in their suffering – 3:33**

*For He does not afflict willingly or grieve the sons of men*

* Lit. He does not afflict from the heart
* He does not bring down in anger – Septuagint

**Afflict = downcast**

1. God’s discipline in afflictions to His children is not cruelty without purpose

Ps. 119:67 – *before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep your word*

Ps. 119: 71 – *it was good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes*

Ps. 119:75 – *I know O Lord, that your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.*

1. **The Most High God does not approve of cruelty & injustice between people 3: 34 – 36**

*To crush under His feet all the prisoners of the land, to deprive a man of justice in the presence of the Most High, to defraud a man in his lawsuit- of these things the Lord does not approve*

***Crush = to break***

***Prisoner = captive, bondslave***

***Deprive = turn aside, pervert***

***Justice = act of deciding a case, litigation***

***Most High = Elyon – The highest, the highest ruler***

***Defraud = pervert, falsify a lawsuit***

***Approve = to see, consider with idea of approval***

1. The Most High God does not approve of crushing of prisoners – 34

Isa. 3:11 – *woe to the wicked, it will go badly with him, for what he deserves will be done to him*

Isa. 3:14 -15 – *the Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of His people, it is you have devoured the vineyard, the plunder of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing My people and grinding the face of the poor? Declares the Lord God of hosts*

1. The Most High God does not approve of depriving a man of justice – 35

Pr. 17:15 – *he who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord*

1. The Most High God does not approve of defrauding a man in his lawsuit – 36

Jer. 22:3 – *thus says the Lord, do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place.*

**For the Lord will not reject forever, for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to his abundant lovingkindness**

**To the praise of the glory of His grace! The Lord is near to the door! Come Lord Jesus!**