

The Biblical Process of Lament: Turn

(from the Book, Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy)

The biblical process of lament helps us navigate the wilderness of our grief.

Mark Vrogoep says that in his journey of grief he “learned that many Christians [are] unfamiliar – even uncomfortable – with lament.” He says that lament is “just not familiar terrain.” He says that many books on grief attempt to explain the purpose of pair or walk readers through the stages of grief and that while finding an explanation or a quick solution for grief, while an admirable goal, it can circumvent the opportunity afforded in lament – to give a person permission to wrestle with sorrow instead of rushing to end it. He says, “walking through sorrow without understanding and embracing the God-given song of lament can stunt the grieving process.”

He says that the historic song of lament gives you permission to vocalize your pain as it moves you toward God-centered worship and trust. It’s how you bring your sorrow to God. Without lament, he says, we won’t know how to process pain and that silence, bitterness, and even anger can dominate our spiritual lives instead.

****Before moving on, record any thoughts or questions you have regarding what you’ve read so far.**

Vroegop says, “Lament is the honest cry of a hurting heart wrestling with the paradox of pain and the promise of God’s goodness,” and that “lament stands in the gap between pain and promise.”

He says, “Every Christian experiences some kind of suffering and hardship,” and that lament provides a critical ballast for the soul in times of suffering and hardship.

He defines lament as “a loud cry, a howl, or a passionate expression of grief.” He also says that lament is “more than sorrow, talking about sadness, and more than walking through the stages of grief. Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust.”

“Throughout the Scriptures,” he says, “lament gives voice to the strong emotions that believers feel because of suffering...to pray in pain...is an act of faith where we open up our hearts to God.”

He says, “I’ve found that many people are afraid to lament. They find it too honest, too open, or too risky.” He asks, “I wonder how many believers stop speaking to God about their pain? He says that maybe you are a Christian who hasn’t spoken to God about

your pain – possibly because you don't know what to say, or maybe it's just difficult to talk with him about a particular issue or struggle. Biblical lament is meant to help you talk with God about your sorrow and pain.

****Record any thoughts or questions you have regarding what you've read and then answer the questions that follow:**

1. What has been the typical way that you process your pain and sorrow and why?
2. What are your thoughts about embarking on the journey of lament?
3. Have you found it difficult to talk with God about your suffering, sorrow, and pain? Explain.
4. What painful events in your life (and your subsequent sorrow, pain, hardship, struggle, suffering) do you think God is inviting you to lament with Him about?
5. What are some of the hard and painful questions that you've asked God over the years?
6. As you think back on God's faithfulness, where has he proven himself to be trustworthy?
7. What are some of your favorite passages in the Bible that bring comfort and assurance to you when you are suffering?

***Journal –**

Title this journal entry "My story with pain and sorrow."

This week I'd like you to write this story. Take your time – do this over as many days as you'd like to. It doesn't have to be a polished story – just let the thoughts and words flow. Take time to pray before you write and ask God to help you get the words on paper. Don't analyze, judge, or comment on what you are writing. Just focus on your story of pain and sorrow in your personal suffering. Let the focus just be on you and your experience.