

Good morning... welcome...

(9) This morning we're going to come along side the people of Haiti > **cry w/them... ask "why?" w/them!**

Going to do that via the OT book of **Lamentations** ... these words are a **lament** ... they provide us with a **form & vocabulary** for dealing with **loss and pain...**

This lament was authored by the ancient Hebrews when (Jerusalem) was destroyed (600 BCE)...

PAUSE...

As I read them this week, I realized that they are **also the cries of the people of Haiti... PAUSE... "...and they are our cries as well..." LONG PAUSE...**

[IMAGE CAVEAT – “some tragic images”]

OPENING PRAYER...

(SITTING ON STOOL)

From the ancient book of Lamentations (600 BCE)...

¹ [a] **(24) How deserted lies the city,**
once so full of people...! LONG PAUSE...

² Bitterly she weeps at night,
tears are upon her cheeks.
Among all her lovers
there is none to comfort her...

...All her gateways are desolate,
her priests groan,
her maidens grieve,
and she is in bitter anguish.

⁶ All the splendor has departed...
...Her fall was astounding;
there was none to comfort her.

(SLOWLY) "Look, O LORD, on my affliction,
for the enemy has triumphed."

PAUSE...

¹¹ **...(25) All her people groan**
as they search for bread;
they barter their treasures for food
to keep themselves alive.
"Look, O LORD, and consider,
for I am despised."

¹² "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Look around and see.
Is any suffering like my suffering
that was inflicted on me,
that the LORD brought on me
in the day of his fierce anger?"

¹⁶ "...This is why I weep
and my eyes overflow with tears.
No one is near to comfort me,
no one to restore my spirit.
(26) My children are destitute
because the enemy has prevailed."

...Listen, all you peoples;
look upon my suffering.

My young men and maidens
have gone into exile.

- ²⁰ "See, O LORD, how distressed I am!
I am in torment within,
and in my heart I am disturbed...,"
²¹ "People have heard my groaning,
but there is no one to comfort me..."

LONG PAUSE...

They **don't have the infrastructure**... they are unable to deal with this disaster... that there are **still now** people alive under some buildings...

"(27) We can't do anything, we are completely destitute in the face of the magnitude of this catastrophe." Father Maurice Piqard, Port au Prince, Globe, 2010-01-14

Which makes this event seem even more tragic!... that this earthquake hit the poorest of the poor... **PAUSE...**
Why them God?... Haven't they suffered enough?

[(28) Thursday > this picture/ambulances story]

Why God? LONG PAUSE... Why Them?

PAUSE... "Lamentations 2"

- ⁵ ... **(29) The Lord is like an enemy...;**
he has swallowed up **[Haiti]**.
He has swallowed up all her palaces
and destroyed her strongholds.

He has multiplied mourning and lamentation...

- ⁶ He has laid waste his dwelling like a garden;
he has destroyed his place of meeting.
The LORD has made Zion forget
her appointed feasts and her Sabbaths;
in his fierce anger he has spurned
both king and priest.

- ⁷ **(30) The Lord has rejected his altar
and abandoned his sanctuary.**
He has handed over to the enemy
the walls of her palaces;
they have raised a shout in the house of the LORD...
⁸ The LORD determined to tear down
the wall around the Daughter of Zion.
He stretched out a measuring line
and did not withhold his hand from destroying.
He made ramparts and walls lament;
together they wasted away.

- ⁹ **(31) (SLOW) Her gates have sunk into the ground;
their bars he has broken and destroyed.**
Her king and her princes are exiled among the
nations,
the law is no more,
and her prophets no longer find
visions from the LORD.

- ¹⁰ **(32) The elders of the Daughter of Zion
sit on the ground in silence;**
they have sprinkled dust on their heads
and put on sackcloth.
The young women of Jerusalem
have bowed their heads to the ground.

¹¹ My eyes fail from weeping,
I am in torment within,
my heart is poured out on the ground
because my people are destroyed,
because children and infants faint
in the streets of the city.

(VERY SLOWLY) (33) They say to their mothers,
"Where is bread and wine?"
as they faint like wounded men
in the streets of the city,
as their lives ebb away
in their mothers' arms....

PAUSE...

Only... in so many cases in Haiti... mom is not even
there any more... **PAUSE...**

I cried when I read these words this week, **"(34)** Even the
bodies strewn on every other block seem to be calling for help.
A dead school-girl lies against a fallen metal gate with her arms
spread wide, calling silently for the embrace of her mother. But
her mother too is dead. So there is no hug, and nobody to claim
the girl's decomposing remains." Globe, Where the Bodies fill the Streets, 2010-01-15

PAUSE... (35) This is a picture of **Cindy Terasme**
screaming out after recognizing the dust covered feet of
her dead 14 year old brother...

LONG PAUSE...

¹⁸ **(36)** The hearts of the people
cry out to the Lord.
O wall of the Daughter of Zion,
let your tears flow like a river
day and night;

give yourself no relief,
your eyes no rest.

¹⁹ Arise, cry out in the night,
as the watches of the night begin;
pour out your heart like water
in the presence of the Lord.
Lift up your hands to him
for the lives of your children,
who faint from hunger
at the head of every street.

²⁰ **"(37)** Look, O LORD, and consider:
Whom have **you** ever treated like this?...

²¹ "Young and old lie together
in the dust of the streets;
my young men and maidens
have fallen by the sword.
You have slain them in the day of your anger;
you have slaughtered them without pity.

LONG PAUSE...

The OT writers don't shy away from holding God
accountable for what's happened... **PAUSE...**

Part of me gets that > if God is **all loving** and **all
powerful** > **then WHY?...** **PAUSE...** this is an
incomprehensible mystery... **LONG PAUSE...**

(QUESTIONING TONE) **To teach us** about our frailty,
our mistakes, our sins(West) - is this who you are God?

To one day turn it for good – how do the dead have
an upside in this God... where do those who've lost
everything find hope?...

To know that you cry too?... **PAUSE...** **but still!...**

Acts of God like this drive people away from you!... they lead us to **question** you... be **angry** with you... **blame & accuse** you.... “ (38) Look, O LORD, and consider: Whom have **you** ever treated like this?”

Globe writer yesterday dubbed Haiti, “**God forsaken!**”

LONG PAUSE... “Lamentations 3”

² **(39)** He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light;

³ indeed, he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long.

⁴ **(40)** He has made my skin and my flesh grow old and has broken my bones. ⁵ He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.

⁶ **(41)** He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

⁷ He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains.

⁸ **(42)** Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer.

⁹ He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked.... he dragged me from the path and mangled me and left me without help

¹⁶ **(43)** ...He has broken my teeth with gravel; he has trampled me in the dust.

I have been deprived of peace;
I have forgotten what prosperity is.

¹⁸ **(44) (SLOW)** So I say, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD."

¹⁹ I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

LONG PAUSE....

²¹ **(45) (BABY GIRL IMAGE)** Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed... **PAUSE...**

And we're not!!... because this is not over... **God's story** is not finished yet... and even if we can't understand this, **He does!...** **PAUSE...**

BESIDES >> Where else can we go? Who else has the answers? PAUSE... All the disaster relief services in the world... and all the power of the nations can't even fix this or make this right!... **LONG PAUSE...**

Obama can say “**you will not be forsaken...**” [**Bush Clinton effort**] (**thank God for these intentions!**), **PAUSE...** “But there is *no one* who can *fully* save Haiti from this calamity – **from death, permanent loss, and immeasurable sorrow – BUT ONE!...** **PAUSE...**

1.As **individuals** we find strength and security in other people (society) via **emergency response systems...**
2.A **broken country** can even be lifted up, supported and restored by **other nations...**
3.The whole world can rally around Haiti, **but there comes a point where we need to reach even further... PAUSE... to an even bigger SAVIOUR!**

In times like this, where else can we go but to you God? PAUSE... (SLOW) In life and in death we belong to you... Death is not the end to you... PAUSE

(46) (CROSS) God is with them (beneath rubble)... and with us... he knows our earthly sorrows... he knows what it's like to suffer deeply... PAUSE... and He knows that death is not the end...

LONG PAUSE... "Lamentations..."

... (47) for his compassions never fail.

²³ They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."

²⁵ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him...;

²⁸ **(48) Let [her] sit alone in silence,
for the LORD has laid it on [her].**

²⁹ Let [her] bury [her] face in the dust—
there may yet be hope...

³¹ For [she is] not cast off
by the Lord forever.

³² Though he brings grief, he will show compassion,
so great is his unfailing love.

³³ **(49) For he does not willingly bring affliction
or grief to the children of men.**

³⁴ To crush underfoot
all prisoners in the land,

³⁵ to deny a man his rights
before the Most High,

³⁶ to deprive a man of justice— **PAUSE...**
would not the Lord see such things?

³⁷ **(50) Who can speak and have it happen
if the Lord has not decreed it?**

³⁸ Is it not from the mouth of the Most High
that both calamities and good things come?

⁴⁰ ...Let us examine our ways and test them,
and let us return to the LORD....

LONG PAUSE...

⁴⁷ **...(51) We have suffered terror and pitfalls,
ruin and destruction."**

⁴⁸ Streams of tears flow from my eyes
because my people are destroyed.

⁴⁹ My eyes will flow unceasingly,
without relief,

⁵⁰ until the LORD looks down
from heaven and sees.

PAUSE.... "God sees..." (10 s PAUSE...)

**And we can hang onto the hope of that - our only
hope - even when it's impossible to understand...**

Read yesterday **“(52) Streets are jammed ever night with the homeless. Some bed down but, all through the night thousands of women’s voices echo across the city in church song.”** Globe and Mail 2010-01-16

Read this morning about Jesus taking hand of a dead little girl and saying, **“My dear child, get up”**

Our understanding of the world is that the story is not over yet!...

Death is always followed by resurrection... Jesus was the first of many!

(SLOWLY) Even now Jesus takes the hand of the Haiti... (through us... and then one day perfectly, after us!)...

Our resurrecting love and power in helping to save Haiti, is a foretaste of HIS!

LONG PAUSE...

Lamentations 5 (the concluding chapter!)

¹ **(53) Remember, O LORD,** what has happened to us; look, and see our disgrace...

³ We have become orphans and fatherless, our mothers like widows.

⁴ **(54) We must buy the water we drink; our wood can be had only at a price...**

⁹ We get our bread at the risk of our lives...

¹⁰ Our skin is hot as an oven, feverish from hunger...

¹⁴ **(55) The elders are gone from the city gate; the young men have stopped their music.**

¹⁵ Joy is gone from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning.

¹⁶ **(56) The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned!** [WE here in WEST.. doing what elite he Haiti have done!]

¹⁷ Because of this our hearts are faint, because of these things our eyes grow dim...

¹⁹ **(57) (VERY SLOW) You, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation.**

²⁰ **(58) Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long?**

²¹ **(59) Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old PAUSE...**

(60) (VERY SLOW) unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.

HEATHER TO PRAY