



“The Voice of Pain”

Lamentations 3:1-13

January 31, 2021

Lam 3:1-13

**1 I am the man who has seen affliction
Because of the rod of His wrath.**

2 He has driven me and made me walk
In darkness and not in light.

3 Surely against me He has turned His hand
Repeatedly all the day.

4 He has caused my flesh and my skin to waste away,
He has broken my bones.

5 He has besieged and encompassed me with bitterness and
hardship.

6 In dark places He has made me dwell,
Like those who have long been dead.

7 He has walled me in so that I cannot go out;
He has made my chain heavy.

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1 I am the man who has seen affliction

Because of the rod of His wrath.

- What Jeremiah does here is amazing.
- Jeremiah places himself as one speaking on behalf of Israel and Jerusalem. He is their representative.
- They can't speak so he will.
- The sufferings of the people of Judah are described as though one man had experienced them.
- Jeremiah doesn't just dump Israel and walk away.
- Jeremiah is not being punished because of his sin or idolatry.
- He has lived, ate, and slept with the people of Jerusalem for 40 years.
- So what they feel, he feels – “I feel your pain.”
- And now he is a voice for them – a voice that is in pain.
- This is pain that came from God's wrath.

Where does affliction leading you?

1. Affliction leads some to doubt the existence of God.
 2. Affliction leads some to doubt God's goodness.
 3. Affliction leads some to see all affliction as a sign of God's wrath.
 4. Affliction should lead the righteous to a greater understanding of God's mercy and how it is meant for their good.
- Ps 119:71**
71 It is good for me that I was afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.
5. Affliction ,for the believer, may become the opportunity for thanksgiving to God.

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2 He has driven me and made me walk

In darkness and not in light.

- Jeremiah feels the pain of darkness.
 - God has driven Jeremiah to walk in the darkness of His judgment, rather than in the light of His blessing and presence.
 - “If the darkness be in the place where God has led us, it is best for us to be in the dark.” (Spurgeon)
- Ps 23:4**
- 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 - Judah had been walking in the darkness of idolatry for centuries and now God gives them over to more darkness.
 - Sometimes God gives us more of the ungodliness of what we desire.

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Repeatedly all the day.

- Jeremiah is feeling the pain of a hand that once helped, to a hand that now hurts.
- God’s hand that chose Israel, that clothed and adorned Israel, that protected Israel, that brought Israel great blessing, has now become the hand of cursing.
- This is not just a slap on the wrist.
- This is a God who has been offended and the “repeated” striking of the hand shows how deep the offense is.

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- Jeremiah describes the pain caused by starvation:
 - Flesh **בָּשָׂר** **basar** (baw-sawr') - body.
 - Skin
 - Bones
- Caused by not getting enough to eat – affects the skin & body – bones become brittle.

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- Here is the reference to the Babylonian army surrounding Jerusalem, but it is really God who is doing it.
- Jeremiah is feeling the pain of being oppressed, depressed, and suffering need.

6 In dark places He has made me dwell,

Like those who have long been dead.

- Jeremiah feels the pain of death.
- God placed Jerusalem in a place where the stench of death was real both physically and spiritually.
- Darkrooms are used for development of an image.
- Darkrooms produce photos that reveal images of what we are like.
- God may take us into a spiritual darkroom to develop us into the image and likeness of His Son.
- Then we are ready to be displayed in the light.
- Are you in God's darkroom? Then don't despair.

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- Jeremiah voices the pain of confinement. We feel that somewhat today.
- Jeremiah tells us what it is like to be restricted from leaving Jerusalem.
- It was like having a heavy chain tied to his body.
- No freedom, little choice of where to go and what you can do.

**8 Even when I cry out and call for help,
He shuts out my prayer.**

9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone;
He has made my paths crooked.

10 He is to me like a bear lying in wait,
Like a lion in secret places.

11 He has turned aside my ways and torn me to pieces;
He has made me desolate.

12 He bent His bow

And set me as a target for the arrow.

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- Jeremiah voices the pain of no reply from heaven.
- There is prayer which God does shut out – the prayer of sin and selfishness.

Ps 66:18

18 If I regard wickedness in my heart,
The Lord will not hear;

James 4:3

- 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.
- There is also prayer that is heard but the answer to which is not immediate, nor it may not be what we expect.
- God always answers but the answer may be 1 of 4 responses: 1. No. 2. Yes. 3. Wait. 4. Surprise!

9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone;

He has made my paths crooked.

- Jeremiah voices the pain of roadblocks.
- “Hewn” shaped just perfect to block my way.
- The paths are difficult and hard to navigate.

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- Jeremiah feels the pain of anxiety of the unknown.
- God was like a bear or a lion waiting in hiding to spring an unexpected attack, seeking to devour him.
- God wiped out Jerusalem as a vicious animal would tear their prey and destroy it.

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- Jeremiah has felt the pain of being hunted by a marksman.
- Strength was needed to bend the bow.
- Notice “arrow” is singular, then it is plural. The hunter makes sure he has taken down his target.
- Jeremiah felt as though he was a target that the Lord was shooting at.
- God did not miss. He always hits the target.
- The inward parts contained life.
- If hit, life was gone.
- The emotions of life like joy and sorrow were found in these parts as well. It’s who you are, your life and soul.

How does this apply to me?

1. Sin produces pain.
2. Pain produces analysis.
3. Jeremiah’s purpose is 2 fold:
 1. To describe to us what it is like to taste the wrath of God for sin.
 2. To even further describe what it is like to be innocent and still taste the wrath of God.
4. This is a prelude to the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross who bore our sins, our pain, our suffering. He identified with sinners and took our sins to the cross and died in our place. He was totally innocent.
5. If you have not trusted Christ as your substitute for sin, you need to do so. Refusal will someday bring the full wrath of God on you for your sin.

“God has
a purpose for your PAIN,
a reason for your STRUGGLE,
and a reward for your FAITHFULNESS.”

- Dave Willis