



8/5/26

Lamentations 3:19-33

I often listen to a devotional in the morning called Sing Daily Devo with The Worship Initiative. On today's devo, Joni Eareckson Tada spoke of how she "Casts her cares" on the Lord. What a beautiful picture of what we're talking about with praying psalms of lament. Joni was paralyzed when she was 15 years old, over 60 years ago. Her whole life has been devoted to the Lord in total surrender as she's spread the gospel to countless people in need. I am absolutely sure she rehearses the gospel to herself every day. Her love for the Lord is inspiring. If you'd like to listen to the devo, reply to this email, and I'll send you the link.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

On Sunday, Sam explained 3 ways we get stuck when we struggle. 1. We turn inward on ourselves instead of turning to the Lord. 2. We linger in the complaining and never get to the place where we hand it to the Lord in faith. 3. We become tough... we muscle it. We immediately jump to turning outward and we hold God at arm's length. I have done every one of those, and it never goes well. And when I've done that, I missed out on the beautiful, sweet comfort God wants to give.

Today, I turn to Lamentations 3. This is a picture of turning from the focus of the complaint to a focus on the truth of who God is. This is so important for me to see. BOTH the complaint AND the turning in trust are necessary. To ignore the complaint is to let all that toxicity build up inside until I blow. To ignore turning in trust is to let that toxicity take over my soul. To tell the Lord all my troubles is to go to the one who is able to remove all that toxic waste. To trust Him is to let Him take it even if it means He has to keep prying it from my fingers little by little. He wants me to release it to Him so that He can fill me with something else, something better. He wants to give me beauty for my ashes, but if I hold onto the ashes, there's no room for His beauty. O Lord, please teach me to do both... to cry out to You and to entrust it all to You.

Vs. 19-20 ~ "Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me."

Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations in the wake of the Babylonian captivity of the Israelites. Jeremiah was grieving over what had happened to his people because of their own rebellion against God. I see in the book of Jeremiah how terribly they treated him for his faithfulness as God's prophet while he was calling them to repentance. In this book of lament, Jeremiah could have turned in bitterness on the Israelites for how they treated him... but instead he grieved over what happened to them. He also grieved over what he was personally experiencing. To read what he wrote leading up to these few verses is painful. He had been faithful to God. And yet he felt he was suffering at the hands of God.

I find his words to be so helpful in trying to express my own heart, though I would never claim to be as faithful and innocent as he genuinely was. But I've felt what he felt, being stuck in my affliction, my misery. I've felt the wandering, like I was an outcast as he was. I've felt like my life was wormwood, poison. I've felt the gall, the bitterness. To try to ignore that would keep me from moving toward hope. To stay in that is to fill myself with more poison and bitterness, to sink down in a pit and stay there. O Lord, please help me to learn from his example... to be honest about the pain, but also... to not let that be my whole focus as I'm about to see.

Vs. 21-23 ~ "But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."

O Lord, I need to make the choice to turn my mind to the bigger truth, to the absolute hope that I have in You... a hope that never changes no matter how bad my circumstances may be.

I love the Berean Literal Bible translation of vs. 22. It captures something from the Hebrew that the ESV misses, "Because of the loving devotion of YHWH we are not consumed, for His mercies are not finished." God's loving devotion toward me never runs out. His mercy, His compassion for me is never finished. AND I AM NOT CONSUMED!!! When I turn to the Lord, no matter how bad things are, I will not be consumed.

Paul says in Romans 8:35-37, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, 'For Your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Even the worst of circumstances won't separate me from God's love. Even when I feel like I'm a sheep to be slaughtered as they said in Psalm 44, not only am I not consumed, God makes me a conqueror, an overcomer through His undying love. The loving devotion and compassion of God sustain me... they even makes me thrive!

God's promise to love me and to be compassionate toward me is not one and done. It's new every morning. His faithfulness never comes to an end. His faithfulness is abundant. It is

greater than my suffering.

Psalm 63:3 says, "Because Your steadfast love (Your loving devotion) is better than life, my lips will praise You." Your love is greater than my circumstances. It's better than health. It's better than beauty. It's better than easy. It's better than comfortable. O Lord, I do believe. Help me in my unbelief.

Vs. 24-26 ~ "'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in Him.' The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

Father, You are my portion. You are my inheritance. You are the place I want to be. I will not look for another way, another source. My hope is from You. My hope is in You. My hope IS You.

I trust that You ARE good to those who wait for You, so I will wait for You. My confidence is that You will be true to all Your promises. So I will faithfully seek YOU, and not just what You can do for me. I will seek Your word for answers and not rely on my feelings or my opinions or my finite understanding.

The meaning of the word "good" in the Hebrew is more than I could comprehend from that simple word. It also means that You are pleasant, agreeable, beneficial, beautiful, joyful, precious, sweet. Wow. You are all these things toward me when I wait for You and seek You. You want to be all these things for me when I take matters into my own hands and seek other sources and ways of escape. But how can You pour Your goodness on me when I refuse to receive it? O Lord, please help me to be still before You and to wait for You to deliver me. Please help me to stay near You in stillness and trust so that You can sustain me until You deliver me. Your goodness toward me doesn't START when You deliver. It's with me the WHOLE time. Help me trust Your word from Exodus 14:14, "The Lord WILL fight for you, and you have only to be still."

I think the next four verses are the reason I and so many don't want to wait for You and seek You. We want to rest on Your deliverance, but not on what You will teach us as we wait for Your deliverance. I have come to realize that it's so much easier to speak of the trials You'll walk us through than it is to actually walk through them with You in hope and trust.

Vs. 27-30 ~ "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust— there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults."

O Lord, how many times have I sent vs. 21-26 to someone, along with vs. 31-33... and completely skipped over these verses because they sound so harsh??? I don't like them. I would rather have the easy button and not bear the yoke. This says it is GOOD for me to bear the yoke in my youth. It's the same Hebrew word used about Your goodness toward me! How can it be pleasant, joyful, and beautiful to bear the yoke? How can it be good to be still when the yoke is

laid on me? It hurts! How can it be good to put my mouth in the dust??? Somehow, that's where my hope will be found.

1 Peter 1:6-7 tells me that You only allow trials that are NECESSARY so that You can grow my faith. Romans 5:3-5 tells me that You use my suffering to grow my endurance and my character and my hope, so that I can experience a deeper understanding of the love You're pouring into my heart through the Holy Spirit.

Suffering doesn't mean hopelessness. It means the story isn't over. It means You are doing something in me that I will not regret. So Lord, whatever it takes... please help me to wait for You and seek You with my whole heart... even if it means being insulted and reviled. Help me to follow Jesus' example from 1 Peter 1:23, "When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly."

Vs. 31-33 ~ "For the Lord will not cast off forever, for, though He cause grief, He will have compassion according to the abundance of His steadfast love; for He does not afflict from His heart or grieve the children of men."

Here's the truth I need to remember more than the pain of my soul. The Lord my Master will not reject me, though it may feel like it. But even if, in His sovereignty, He allows me to walk through trials that grieve me, it's only temporary. He will always show compassion that's measured by the size of His abundant, unfailing, unconditional forever eternal love toward me.

It is not His heart's desire to grieve me or afflict me. So why would He do that? It's like a parent who allows his child to experience the consequences of her choices... and it's like a trainer who puts his trainee through rigorous physical exercises to make her stronger. But the pain in itself isn't what He wants for me... just for the sake of the pain. The Lord knows what I need to grow in hope and trust, and He will do what's best for me even if that means some pain... but the end of His plan is always my hope because of His compassion and love.

Everything God does is done in love and compassion... even the difficult things. In all of it, He is still good. His love is still constant. His mercy never ends. And I am not consumed. I will remember You, Lord, more than I remember the affliction. The affliction is temporary. You are forever. Amen.