

Lamentations 3:21-26

Introduction

- I. Lamentations was written by Jeremiah the prophet who preached a message of coming judgment on the southern kingdom of Judah, calling the people to repentance
- II. When the people did not repent, the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and destroyed it along with the temple, and Lamentations was written in the aftermath of that tragedy.
- III. A message of hope in the midst of tragedy

The Message

I. The basic message: As Christians we live with a hope which is a knowledge of a future eternity that is grounded in a present reality. That present reality is the faithfulness of God who loves and cares for us.

II. Landmarks of God's faithfulness

- A. Old Testament acts of faithfulness: exodus (God rescuing from Egypt), conquest (God bringing the people into the promise land), monarchy (God providing King David to shepherd the people)
- B. The resurrection of Jesus Christ
 1. The benefits of Christ's resurrection continue to spill over into our lives
 2. The resurrection guarantees that one day God will renew the entire creation
- C. God's acts of love in our lives day by day

Romans 5:2-5: "hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit"

 1. God's love is the environment of our lives
 2. Our present experience of his love is part of his faithfulness and assures us of our future hope
 3. We have not been given a Spirit of fear

III. We are given hope from God as a gift

God initiates our salvation and is the ultimate cause of our hope

IV. We are also commanded to hope

Three reasons we're commanded to hope

- A. Without hope, our faith collapses and corrupts
 1. This is what happened to the Israelites in the wilderness
 2. God desires that we be found without spot or wrinkle at the return of Christ
 3. Hope is placed between faith and love in Paul's list
 - a. Hope keeps faith from corruption
 - b. Hope keeps love from dissolving into frustration
- B. Without hope, we are tempted to quit
- C. Without hope, the world is abandoned

Conclusion

- I. Lamentations: “the Lord is my portion . . . therefore I will hope in him” (Lam 3:24)
- II. If our trust is in this world, we will always be disappointed

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Explain and discuss Paul’s line of thought in Romans 5:1-5.
3. How does thinking about hope as something we are commanded to you change the way you view hope? How well do you think you do in obeying that commandment on a regular basis?
4. If our ultimate hope is for eternal life, what temporal hopes can we legitimately cling to? For what things can we expect God to be faithful to us *during this life*, and what things are we not guaranteed *during this life*?