

Episode 6-21: Living a Life of Joyful Lament

Resources:

Podcasts

[Biblical Lament - Joyful Journey](#)

Books

[Dark Clouds, Deep Mercies - Mark Vroegop](#)

[Gentle and Lowly - Dane Ortlund](#)

[Dark Clouds, Deep Mercies Journal - Mark Vroegop](#)

Website

[Biblical Counseling Training Conferences](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Welcome back. This is Janet once again, here with Leah.

Leah: Hello, everyone.

Janet: And today we're gonna be thinking about what do we do with the pain that just comes into our lives? We have done an episode with Mark Vroegop on what is biblical lament. Highly commend it. I will be referencing it, and I will be summarizing it a little bit, but if you've not heard that, highly recommend that you go back and hear that. But for this morning, I guess I just want us to start by thinking about, what happens when your feet are knocked out from under you by a shocking betrayal? Or how do you deal with the pain of regret, even at your own sin? How about maybe chronic pain that just doesn't let up? Or maybe those good, God-honoring desires and they're just not being met and there's a pain there. And certainly a variety of other situations, but, Leah, as I mention those things, or even other things. What do you think are some typical ways that we, or maybe others, 'cause I'm sure not you, respond to pain and difficulty?



Leah: Yeah, in my personal life, I see that I seek rescue or escape immediately.

Janet: Yeah. So by distracting or what do you mean?

Leah: So either, for pain, ailments.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: I see the desire to go to a doctor's immediately.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: To try out all the different cures, to try.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Out all the different remedies, right? That kind of rescue. But then, yeah, for escape it's do I distract myself? Am I so busy that I don't think about this pain?

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: Or this hurt.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: This trial, this suffering that I'm going through. And I know a lot of people too, bitterness comes up.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: That's the response when it doesn't go away.

Janet: Yep.

Leah: When our problems aren't solved, or again, the ignoring, the escapism is like denial, right?

Janet: Yeah.



Leah: Saying that this isn't a problem.

Janet: It's not, or hear a lot, this isn't a bother, it's okay.

Leah: Yep.

Janet: How often do you hear that? Somebody tells you something really bad and then they go, but it's okay.

Leah: They say, it's fine.

Janet: I'm okay. It's fine. I'm fine. No big deal. I'm fine. I'm fine. They're clearly not fine. I'm fine. It's no big deal.

Leah: And I think, it doesn't even matter. And I think we all need to get into the practice of lovingly reminding people, no, it's not fine.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: And that's okay that it's not fine. That's what's okay.

Janet: But if I don't know what to do with it, then that's what I do. It's fine. Or you know what? I just have to get through it.

Leah: Yes.

Janet: I'm gonna hold my nose and get through it. And certainly God has a better answer, but part of what leads to despair in that one is how often does it just either not end or the next thing hits you? Like wave after wave and now you're never through. Now what? Yeah. Or the Christian way, because I trust God, I just stay busy. I'm gonna keep loving God, I'm gonna keep loving others, and I'm good. Because I trust Jesus, and if I trust Jesus, nothing's hard. I don't think so.

Leah: Yeah, or not wanting to, the two things of I'm not gonna talk about it because I don't want to burden other people with it.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Or I'm just going to vent and complain.



Janet: Yes.

Leah: Without actually seeking a solution.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Or real help.

Janet: So how I deal with the pressure is I just let it all out to someone else who can go, I hate them with you.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And then we all feel better. Or I put up the walls, yeah. And I see a lot of walls that get put up. I'm not gonna get hurt in the future. Here's how I will protect myself from getting hurt.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: In the future. Yeah and we'll find that we will do sometimes, if the pain is bad enough, anything, even sinful things, just to minimize the pain. And I know for me, when I started thinking about that, the list was easy.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: It wasn't hard to come up with that list. And I hope at least we can realize these responses, they just come naturally.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: So that's not shocking.

Leah: We wanna control.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And those are all ways that we can control.

Janet: Yes.



Leah: What's happening to us or.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: What's happening to those around us.

Janet: And I think it's good to not just go, oh, I shouldn't do that. I feel guilty about that, but to realize God offers us something better. He offers us something far superior, but it's a little counterintuitive.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And it's only available to his children. The unbelieving world cannot do this. Lament is a gift to God's children, and Mark Vroegop, in his book, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, says it this way, To cry is human, but to lament is Christian.

Leah: Yeah, and I've really never heard this talked about, honestly, in any other circle outside of Christian ones.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I don't think they have an answer for that. They may say vent. Find support. Cancel. Avoid all the things, but only the Christian can do this. And there's a reason that a third of the Psalms are laments. And I think that can be a surprise for many of us. We live in a broken, sin-cursed world. There is much to lament.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And I think that sometimes we think, as a believer, lamenting is a lack of faith. It's blaming God. it isn't any of those things. So, what is it? Vroegop defines lament this way, Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust. Isn't that good?

Leah: It's so good because when start your conversation reminding us that it's a gift to us as believers.

Janet: Yeah.



Leah: And it's a prayer.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: Again, if you don't have hope in God, if you're chasing answers outside in the world, there is no hope because it's, prayer is our way we communicate to the Lord.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: So I think thinking of lament and understanding it in this way is that, no, God tells us to pray in all circumstances, not in a positive way, always happy. Prayer can be painful.

Janet: Yes. Yes.

Leah: And that's so beautiful.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: That's so helpful.

Janet: And I like that he starts it as a prayer. Because it means I'm taking it directly to God.

Leah: Exactly.

Janet: And if you think about that, sometimes we think, if I take all of that to God, I don't wanna be complaining. I just wanna be trusting. But when I take something to God, I'm acknowledging His power and sovereignty. It's an act of faith to pray. So I am not walking away from God when I pray, even if I don't know what else to say, and sometimes all I say is, I have no idea what to say right now, God. My brain is spinning. I don't even know what I'm thinking. I don't know how I'm feeling. I am overwhelmed, but where am I going? To Him.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I'm going the right place.

Leah: Yeah.



Janet: Just go to Him. And I love that it's a prayer in pain, which means it's honest. I think sometimes we think, if I trust God, then I need to deal with my pain, and then say to the Lord, Thank you, God, that thou workest all things for good, and I completely trustest thou. Therefore, I'm good. But it's honest, and it means I know something about God. It means I know He cares about me and He loves me.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: He is the perfect daddy. And I think about that. If your child is hurting, you don't want them to come to you and go, I figured it all out. I didn't wanna bother you with it. If they're hurting, what do you want? You want them to come to you.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: You don't want them to come to you with the answer. Just come to me and tell me. Be honest with me about what it is, and He wants to hear from us. We are safe to be vulnerable with Him and to take our pain to Him, which might mean I need to do some work in my life understanding the character of God, if I'm gonna be able to vulnerably lament. I might be back on, I need to really meditate on, Matthew 11:28-30. Come to me, all you who are weary. That's what He wants. And maybe Dane Ortland's book on Gentle and Lowly, maybe what I need to help me lament is to know that this is His heart when I lament, when I bring Him my pain.

Leah: And I think that's a good encouragement for anyone listening who's like, I've studied lament. It just doesn't come naturally. I don't know how to make this a normal part of my life.

Janet: Yep.

Leah: Maybe it does go back to studying who God is.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And His love for you.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Because again, then we see this as it is, a gift to believers.

Janet: Yes.



Leah: To be able to do this.

Janet: I don't have to wordsmith it. And that doesn't mean that I should run to God and say to God, I totally know better than you, God. You were wrong, and you shouldn't have done it. No, but I can go to Him and say, I don't understand. I know I'm the kid, and you're the dad, and I know you're a perfect dad. I don't get it. I'm totally confused right now.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: That act of humility and honesty. He wants that from me. He doesn't just tolerate it 'cause I'm so weak, I have to do something. He wants that.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And I do think, for many in Christian circles, we're not comfortable with that.

Leah: No.

Janet: I recently had the opportunity to teach on this with a precious group. And they did a Q&A at the very end where they wrote out questions. I didn't know who asked it, which was fine, but I think it's a question many of them would've had. how do you do that when you feel like you're just complaining and disrespecting God. And so it seems like lament is wrong. And it's like number one, I gotta go to His character. Number two, it's in the Word.

Leah: Yeah, He gave it to us.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: Again and again.

Janet: And one, question was, how do you keep it from getting where it shouldn't? And I understand that. I don't think that fear should keep me from doing it. But what it can do is I said, You know when you're learning how do I be honest with the Lord, then take a lament and use that as your buoy.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And say all that is said in that lament, and then make it personal for what's going on with you, but keep it there if that helps you.



Leah: And honestly, that's why I love that book, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, because until I read that several years ago, one, I had never even been taught about how to lament.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: But we did it with our small group, our Bible study. So we were able to talk about those harder things, about how to do it with each other.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: And use each other's life. And so to me that was eye-opening to see this as a tool God's given me in my life so that I can grow in my faith, and it doesn't mean I am gonna always lament perfectly. I'm never gonna always complain in the biblical way, right? It's gonna come out sinful sometimes. But that book is very helpful going into more detail of what does that look like?

Janet: Yes.

Leah: How can I do it?

Janet: Yes. And I like that even his short definition, he says the goal, which I think is incredibly important. The goal is not therefore I feel better, therefore I get God to do what I want. The goal is greater trust. Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust. I'm taking my honest pain to God, and the result is a greater trust in His character and His heart, so I might have to study those things.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: To be able to begin to do that. So I hope at least at this point, if this is new for you that's listening, at least be intrigued. And you might be going, I still have no idea what that looks like. I'm not sure what I think of all of it. I can't imagine it. But that's intriguing. At the end of this, we will link some articles and again, we will link Vroegop's book, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*. A lot of what I'm gonna share can be traced back to this book. I do highly recommend it. In his book, he will talk about four elements of lament. And I was just talking with a friend, she's learning this as well and saying, don't get caught up in which element is this. The point is these are the things that make up lament. And the first one should be obvious. If I'm gonna pray, I have to turn to God. So he calls that the first element of lament. Naturally, we either wanna turn to ourselves and you might go, I don't know how I do that. We do it all the time. I can handle it. I don't need anything. I'll just ignore it. I will deny. I will protect. I turn to me. Or I turn to others and vent. You know what? I just have to get this off my chest. Or sometimes when I'm venting and then



you actually try to help me biblically, here's what I say next, I just want a friend right now. It's like, what am I saying? I'm saying, I just want you to agree with me. I just want you to listen while I get it off my chest. So I wanna look for someone to validate my bitterness. Validate my anger. I want you to agree this isn't right. Wouldn't you be mad, too? It's only. And I've heard this. It's only rational. It's only reasonable. It's only natural to be mad, right? It may be all those things, but it's not supernatural. Lament, I turn to God. I don't start with going to my friends. I don't start with me. I start with God, which means, again, I gotta trust Him.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: 'Cause it's a pretty vulnerable thing to do, and sometimes I don't even know what to say. But go there. You're not going there to perform a four-part act that you do perfectly. You're just going there, and sometimes that's all I've got, and when I do that, that's an act of faith and humility. I'm acknowledging my need, and I'm acknowledging His ability.

Leah: Yeah, because no matter how much we claim to trust or love God, in the middle of chronic pain or deep suffering, I know I found myself that turning to my own way out or to others for help is what comes first.

Janet: And it seems almost more sure.

Leah: Yes, instead of going to the God who is over every circumstance. So this turning to God is humbling.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: Because it's saying, no, I really can't do anything. No one can offer me anything, but I can approach the one God who does and admit that He's the only one who can do anything, cause anything to change my circumstances. It's trust. It's humility, and like you said, it's not natural for us. It takes a reorienting of the heart's desires, honestly.

Janet: Oh, it does. You mentioned earlier that a lot of the ways we do it is a way to control. What's the very first thing you know when you pray? You're not in control.

Leah: Exactly. Yes.

Janet: And I can't, I don't have a guarantee God's going to do what I think is right. So then I'd rather do what I think is right.



Leah: Yeah. And as you were talking about even just the goal of all of this is trust, greater trust in God, you have to be a Christian to even want to do that.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: The goal of everyone else in deep pain, deep sorrow, deep loss is to get a fix.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: To get out of it.

Janet: Yep.

Leah: It is not to trust the ultimate being of the universe who made you and cared for you and died for you. That's not, unless you're a Christian, this won't even make sense to you.

Janet: Yeah. So I have turned to God. The second part of lament, bring your honest pain and thoughts. Vroegop will say, bring your complaints. And that's used biblically. There are biblical complaints. That's not a wrong word, but when I say it that way, people immediately think I'm venting. So it's like, no, that's not what we mean. But bring your honest pain and thoughts. God, I don't understand. I don't know how much longer I can do this. I'm weary. I'm tired. I'm angry. I'm confused. I'm afraid to talk to anyone after being hurt like that. I don't think I can handle that again. I don't know what to do now. I don't know where to go for hope. I've had people say to me, He already knows, so I don't need to tell Him all that. He asks us to.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And my soul needs to do it, and He wants me to do it. And as a parent, I totally get that. I could look at my child and know that they're hurting. But it doesn't mean so they don't need to let me know. I can tell. I already know. I want them to come to me.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: 'Cause I love them. So I get to bring my honest thoughts, and that's where we get, how do I, should I really? That's where it can really help to read the lament Psalms.

Leah: Yes, because if anyone had a reason to complain, it's the Psalmists who were running for their life.



Janet: Yes.

Leah: And in real physical danger, right? When you think about their complaints, it is such a good example because their Psalms of lament help us see what's that line.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: In the sense of because it has all of these elements in it of lament, of focused on trusting God, it doesn't stay put in the complaint. It doesn't become sinful venting. It gives us that example of, so then I still need to turn back.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: I need to bring my honest complaints and trust that the God who loves me and died for me hears it.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: And He will do what He thinks is good in the middle of it.

Janet: If I knew all that he knew.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I would agree.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I just don't know all that He knows, and so by faith I'm having to trust in a really hard place.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: Yeah.



Janet: So what do I do next? I bring my thoughts, my pain, and I ask boldly for help. And you will see that in the Psalms of Lament.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Boldly, God, I need your help. And almost sometimes I'm like, man, are you talking to God that way? They're like, if you don't help me, I'm gonna die. I need you to deliver me. That is not them saying, I will tell you what to do. It is crying out for help.

Leah: Yeah. And I think a big part of it is in this step to ask boldly for help, and I know, again, the book goes a little bit deeper into this.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: But that idea of if you know who God is and His character, then you can ask Him to do things that are in line with His character.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And trust that He wants you to be asking that. He wants you to be demonstrating your belief in Him by asking Him to act in ways that only He would act.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And I find that powerful for me, this step really, is to not be afraid to ask God to do something.

Janet: Yeah and so to your point, I don't believe, I'm not typically praying imprecatory prayers. God, let them dash on a stone, and I get that they did. I also know this side of the cross, Jesus did all of that.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: So I don't typically go there, but the fact even that I want out of pain, I was designed by God to live before sin with Him forever without pain. It's not wrong. It's consistent with His character that I don't even want pain. Now, He may know something better.

Leah: Yeah.



Janet: But I can ask. I can say, I need help, even if I don't even know. Sometimes I think I feel like I need to pray what I know ought to happen, and I don't even always know what ought to happen.

Leah: Yeah, and I think.

Janet: I don't have to always pray, if I do have a desired outcome, tell Him, but if it's like, I don't even know how to fix this, so do I pray that? It's like, I don't know, Lord. I have a situation going on right now and I just said to someone, I am praying for righteousness, I'm praying for clarity and wisdom, and I'm praying that the God who can do above and beyond that all of this would result in greater unity. I don't know how.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I don't know how it's gonna happen, but I know those are things God desires.

Leah: Yes.

Janet: So I can boldly ask. I can say, Can you fill me with an awareness of your love and presence? 'Cause I feel completely alone right now. Make me aware that you're here. I know it. Please give me the outcome I desire. I believe it's a God-honoring outcome.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: When I'm praying that a marriage would be restored, I believe that's God-honoring, and sometimes it isn't restored. But it was still good and right to boldly ask for that. God, let it stop. Can I have relief? Those are not wrong desires.

Leah: No. I think, again, it just reflects that we are seeking to know and love our God more, to know who He is and what He says is righteous and good. And I think about John 14, Jesus teaching his disciples how to pray and to ask whatever they want in His name.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: He would do it so that the Father would be glorified.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: People do get stuck on I don't know what I should ask to glorify God.



Janet: Yes.

Leah: I don't know the specific thing. But those examples you gave were so helpful of, yeah, but you can pray for justice and righteousness.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: You can pray for His power to heal, to redeem, to forgive.

Janet: 'Cause I know He wants that.

Leah: Yes.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: And He will do whatever will bring Him the most glory.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: And we can trust that.

Janet: That's right. So I can ask Him for what I believe is best, and I don't have to hide what I'm thinking, but the last one bounds all of it. And then, because I know about His heart and I know His character and I know His love, I choose to trust. I can trust whatever He does. Noelle, our other co-host, I love that when she prays laments for her friends or herself, she ends it with after, here's our desired outcome. Here's what we're asking for Lord or something better. And I love that she does that 'cause it's a reminder that if He doesn't do what I'm asking, it's because He's gonna do what's better than that. And if I knew all that He knew, I would be going, He understands why I'm asking for it. And I can think of a specific example about a year or so ago where my husband and I begged God to not allow this one thing to happen that would cause pain to so many people. We were begging God, could this please not happen? It happened. But the Lord knew that what we were afraid of, He used in the exact opposite way.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: He knows the heart behind what we're praying for. I don't think He was rolling His eyes going, oh, my word. It was like, I hear you. I hear you, but I'm gonna do something better.

Leah: Yes.



Janet: And it was still good and right to ask. We can only ask what we know and trust. If He doesn't do what I'm requesting, I know what He does is better.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I'm fighting for that trust.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And that's what's another uniqueness of lament. It's not a way to try to control God. It's a way to bring Him all of that, and then to trust.

Leah: And honestly, I like how trust really is just every step of this process. 'Cause it takes trust to turn to God.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: To believe He's the solution. It takes trust to truly be honest with Him.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And to ask for His help. So the process of the other three elements, it all has to do with leaving us at the feet of Jesus.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Trusting that He's already made a way for our biggest problem.

Janet: That's right.

Leah: Which was our sin. So how could we not believe that He's going to make a way for these other problems that we face? It's all trust.

Janet: Even if I can't see it.

Leah: Yes.



Janet: I will trust. And I love that, because that goes back to the, if I'm looking at a lament, I don't need to get caught up in is this turning to God or is this trust? What you're seeing is these are the aspects of lament. And it can be good. I think it's helpful to look at Psalms and look for those things.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: But you might look at one verse and go, I see turning to God and I see trust.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Oh, I see crying out to God and asking for help. I also see an acknowledgement of pain. I also see trust. They're not one in each verse. But they're all there.

Leah: Yeah. And personally, I have found a good way to practice lament in my life, just in prayer life in general, is I've been using a five-year prayer journal where.

Janet: Five-year prayer journal?

Leah: It's a five-year prayer journal, and every day there's a few lines for you to write a prayer, so then the next year you see the prayer that you wrote. And some of my prayers are laments, and I've asked God to do things. And so your personal story reminded me of this. I'm now on year three of this prayer journal. One, it's awesome to see God answer prayers, but two, it's even more beautiful to see the things that I've cried out to Him for, some of which He has answered in mighty ways. Some has been the way I've asked. A lot have been in different ways I never would've known to ask.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And that's what's so beautiful of reflecting back, again, whether it's your personal journal and trying to make that a habit, or reflecting on the Psalms. I love the Psalms that talk about God's deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt, and that rehearsal of His faithfulness. The people were crying out in pain.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And to see God's faithfulness. So these, Psalms are just another way that we can practice rehearsing the truth that God hears.



Janet: Yeah.

Leah: He cares. We can trust Him. And lament is a gift to help us see more of that beauty of who He is and how He's going to answer.

Janet: And I love what you've just shared 'cause it gives you an opportunity to look back and go, I see where God was at work, where I couldn't see it at the moment.

Leah: Yes.

Janet: And it might be totally different, but it, Philippians 3, above and beyond. All that I ever thought to ask. And then, what will that do is deepen your trust.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Even more.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: For the next hard thing. Good. So I mentioned a third of the Psalms are lament, so what I thought we could do is take a look at a shorter one and just think through it this way. This is an easier one to see it just because it's short, but can you read Psalm 13 for us?

Leah: So Psalm 13, How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long will I store up anxious concerns within me, agony in my mind every day? How long will my enemy dominate me? Consider me and answer, Lord my God. Restore brightness to my eyes; otherwise, I will sleep in death. My enemy will say, I have triumphed over him, and my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your faithful love; my heart will rejoice in your deliverance. I will sing to the Lord because He has treated me generously.

Janet: I love that, and in that, those short verses there, we see all of the elements of lament. Think about the honesty there. I don't know if you ever thought about that, but are we comfortable going, how long, Oh, Lord are you gonna forget about me forever? And you're like, oh, my word, did you just accuse God of forgetting about you? When will this end? How could you let this happen? I don't want to accuse God, but I can say it feels like this right now, God.

Leah: Yeah. Tell God your feelings.



Janet: Yes. I feel like you've forgotten me. And that's what the Psalmist did, and God did not rebuke him for that. And I do think it's important, it's a short Psalm, it goes through all of the aspects of lament, which is what's helpful for teaching. But the process is not short. It's not then, I should be able to, in five minutes or less, read and get from, how long, oh Lord, to, I trust and I'm good. It's a long process.

Leah: I've used this Psalm for weeks with counselees before, just this one little Psalm.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: To go through that and to make it your own.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: To use it as an example, and to just focus slowly on the hope there is, no matter what the very hard thing is you're going through.

Janet: There's so many longer Psalms as well you see example after example of being honest with God about their pain. Think of Psalm 25:1-2, to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. That sounds nice. Oh my God, in you I trust. Yes. What's he saying then? Let me not be put to shame. Let not my enemies exalt over me. God, this is where it is right now. I'm trusting You. Don't let me be put to shame for trusting You. And you're like, well. Of course you won't be put to shame for trusting Him. That's what he's fearing, and so he brings it to the Lord. Psalm 55:6-8, I could have written this. I lived this many times.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Oh, that I had wings like a dove. My family, we say, let's just go to Alaska. I don't know what we think's gonna happen in Alaska. We've been there. They need the Lord, too. We have friends ministering in Alaska. It's a hard place to minister. I know all those things, but my brain's like, far away. Mountain where no one is. Oh, that I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and be at rest. I'd get out of this hard. Yes, I would wander far away. I would lodge in the wilderness. I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest. Can you relate to that?

Leah: Yes. Yeah.

Janet: I'm like.

Leah: That desire for escape.



Janet: Yes. Yes. And so what does he say? Because I trust you, God, I don't have any desire to. I'm just telling you, I wish I could get out of here. But what does he do with that? He takes it to the Lord.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Psalm 142:2-3. I pour out my complaint before Him. I tell my trouble before Him. When my spirit faints within me, You know my way. I love that. I've been where I'm just like my spirit is fainting

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I'm not coming to you, God, with incredible faith and trust. I'm coming to you weak and dependent, and here's all my troubles. They're overwhelming to me. I can't even. Yes, but here's what I know, you know my way.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And that's a comfort when I know the character of the God who knows my way.

Leah: Yes, it is. Yeah, because it reminds you of your Savior who came to suffer and die for you.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: He knows. He's the only one who knows.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: You don't even fully know.

Janet: No.

Leah: Your own way. He does.

Janet: Yes. And I'm kinda thankful He hasn't told me.

Leah: 'Cause would we want to go on?



Janet: Exactly. But He'll be with us, and I'm like, okay, so all of these Psalms are helping me learn I have to do something with my pain. And this is what He tells me. So we will do something with our pain. I think that's something that I've really had to come to grips with is I have thought, I'm not a journaler, and I have said that. And it doesn't come natural to me to journal, in part just because that may not be a skill that I've had, in part because, I'd just rather, I'm just gonna trust God, memorize the next verse, and keep moving. I don't wanna slow down. And journaling, you have to slow down.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: So, that may not be a natural thing for me, but what I see is we all deal with pain. We all have it, and we will all do something with it. And when I don't do what God's called me to do, when I don't lament, whatever else I do, at best it's an inferior Band-Aid, and typically it may even be sinful and not God-honoring.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I'm tempting myself to respond sinfully when I don't handle my pain the way God invites me to handle it. Sometimes we think, if I were just stronger, I wouldn't need to do this, but, that's just not reality.

Leah: No.

Janet: We started this session listing the other ways we deal with our pain, but God made us, God loves us, and He's provided a way to deal with our pain that will be a balm to our soul, and it draws us closer to Him. When I do it my way, it does not draw me closer to God.

Leah: Because it draws me closer to me.

Janet: Exactly.

Leah: And to that false idea that I have any control.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Over the circumstance.

Janet: So I might think it's a way that I show that I'm strong in the faith. I don't need to lament. But what I'm really doing is trusting me, because God's told me to lament, and I apparently know



better. And now I'm not drawing closer to Him. Sometimes I think at least one of the hindrances to lament is our struggle to believe in that moment that He really loves me. Not that I'm not saved, I understand, but can I trust God by being this vulnerable with Him? Does He really care?

Leah: That reminds me of one of the Gospel Primer, sections about liberation from self-love. It's this lie that I think only I can love myself best.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And when we believe that lie, that I know the best way to love me or I'm the best person to love myself, it's preventing us from experiencing that greater love.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: That God has to know the One who knows me better than I know my own heart.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: He's the one who loves, and so yeah, I think you're right. A big struggle is, yeah, I don't think He loves me because I think I love myself better.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: My solution would be the more loving thing.

Janet: And since He's not doing it, why would I trust Him?

Leah: Yes.

Janet: Yes. Yes. And I think, at those times, our circumstances are really loud. yeah, but what about this? And I look around me, and it's very loud, and it seems to drown out everything else. In those moments, I do something that I call, just for me hanging out at the cross. And you've mentioned that. The primer, what's gonna help me see that his love for me is better than my love for me? Because right now it doesn't look that way. So I literally will kneel by my bed, and I imagine Christ on the cross. And I imagine Him looking at me. No, I don't know what He looked like, but I imagine Him looking at me as He's there, and I'm honest, and I start telling Him, right now, nothing in my world indicates that you care. But I'm looking at the cross.

Leah: Yeah.



Janet: And it's a little hard to look at Him on the cross and say, therefore, I know you don't. So I've had to think through, okay, number one, do I believe that the cross happened? If I'm not sure that it happened, study that 'cause God's word can handle it. But for me, when I think through that, I'm like, it would actually take so much more faith for me to not think that happened than to, I believe that happened. Yes. In history, literally, I do believe Jesus is God in the flesh. I don't have doubts about that. And I'm thankful for that. If you do, study it 'cause we need to know that.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I believe He rose from the dead. I believe He died on the cross and rose. Okay. Why? Why did He do that? I can't come up with any other reason than that He must care.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And here is what really helped me think through that. When my kids were in high school, they spent two years in the youth group going through a systematic theology textbook. And if they were gonna do it, I wanted to do it with them. So I read a systematic theology textbook, and what I recognized is I used to think at some level, I didn't verbalize it, but it was like, He's God, so He had to die for me. He's God. He is good. He does what's right. He has to die for me. It doesn't really mean He has affection for me. What it means is He's gotta do the right thing because He's God.

Leah: Almost like He had to fix it because He's good, right?

Janet: Yeah. He just has to do it.

Leah: It's the good thing.

Janet: Yeah. And then as we're reading this, I don't remember if it was a chapter on angelology, soteriology, on salvation, I don't remember which chapter it was, but he talked about the fact that the angels living in the presence of God, Satan, who is a beautiful angel, decides he can be God. He rebels, takes a third of the angels with him. They rebel, and they're expelled. Okay. None of them got the opportunity to be redeemed. None of them. Is God still good?

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah. Wow. They saw the goodness of God, they rejected it, and God did not give any of them the opportunity to repent. They were sealed in their state. And then I thought, we, Adam and Eve walking with God in the cool of the garden, they saw Him, they walked with Him. They



chose to rebel. And God has a whole plan of the whole scriptures of how to redeem His sinful children. He didn't have to do that.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I think it took that for me to realize He would be good, He would be right if He had just sealed us in that state.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: So then why would He take our slander against him all the time and continuing to love, that one of the definitions, committing yourself to someone who doesn't want to be committed to you. That's what He's done. We don't wanna be committed to Him.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And He continues to commit Himself to us. Why? So think about that for just a minute, and then we'll come back to that. As we think about lament, let's also apply it to Jesus. 'Cause I think some of us, it's does He love us? We're gonna tie all of that together. Some of us, it's I'm just not like that, or I don't want to be like that. I want to be stronger.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And not need to lament, because I just trust God. The truly strongest human being to ever walk the Earth, Jesus, who walked toward crucifixion willingly. He was not a martyr. He chose it. How did He deal with His pain? Think about a time when we get a glimpse into His heart in dealing with immense pain. And I think about the night before His crucifixion. In John 13, even at the Last Supper, we're told He knows what's gonna happen, and so what does He do? He loves and teaches His disciples. Amazing. What love, what strength.

Leah: Yeah, to be focused on them.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Praying for their souls and their needs.

Janet: And not saying, do you know what's gonna happen to me? Could somebody think about me for just a minute? He doesn't do that. So there is an perfect love, perfect strength. And He does tell us in verse 21, when He thought about being betrayed by Judas, He was troubled. So we



know number one, He experienced pain. And then we get to follow Him into Gethsemane. And He's gonna pray there, but in light of lament, listen to some of the things that He says in Matthew 26, He's talking to Peter, James, and John, and He says to them, I'm deeply grieved to the point of death. So I guess we have to agree He's in pain. He's in great pain. He says that. So what do we know about lament? A prayer in pain that leads to trust. So what's Jesus gonna do with His pain? In verse 39 it says, going a little farther, He fell face down and prayed, my Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will. That's really two short sentences, and what do we see in there? He turns to His Father.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: He laments. He acknowledges the pain, and you see the asking for help. Could this just pass from me? And that He will trust. All in one statement. Matthew goes on to tell us that He, again, a second time, He prayed, My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. And then after leaving them, He went away and prayed a third time and said the same thing. So we see that He cried out in His pain to His Father, chose to trust, but it wasn't an unfeeling trust. He's crying out three times over and over in the midst of his pain. And then Dr. Luke gives us an additional detail. He says being in anguish, He prayed more fervently, and His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Leah: Which is just such a vivid picture.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: I think especially of people with chronic pain. Like.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: That's a picture of what that feels like.

Janet: Yes. Yes. So.

Leah: But it was real. It wasn't just a picture.

Janet: No. It literally, that's what happens. Luke reiterates the same thing that Matthew did, that He went there and He prayed, but Luke lets us know He was sweating blood. Which we now know is a medical condition called hematidrosis. And Google describes it like this, an extremely rare condition where a person spontaneously oozes or sweats blood from intact skin, usually on



the face. It's primarily triggered by intense physical or psychological stress, which causes the tiny blood vessels supplying sweat glands to rupture.

Leah: And if anyone was in extreme stress, we have to look at Jesus on that night.

Janet: That's right. No one has. What we know, He was intense psychological stress as He pondered the trial He was about to face. And what did He do with that pain? He didn't say, because I trust God. No. He ran to the Lord. He ran to His Father. He lamented. He prayed about His pain. He asked God to intervene, and He trusted His Father regardless of the answer. He wasn't stoic. The strongest man to ever live lamented in His pain. His faith was perfect. He loved and trusted His Father. And as a human, He lamented.

Leah: And I think for me, when I think of all the wonderful aspects of who Jesus is and how He came and the way He came.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: This part focused on His humanity. The fact that He lamented as one of us would lament is just so powerful to me. It's beyond my comprehension.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: That He had the physical weakness, right?

Janet: Yes.

Leah: 'Cause He was human.

Janet: Yep.

Leah: And He had the perfect faith to utterly be honest to His Father.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: To ask for it to be taken, and to trust even if it wasn't.

Janet: Yes.



Leah: To know that it wouldn't be, honestly. He knew the Father's plans.

Janet: And yet still begged.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: But just this, balance of His ultimate humility and that humanity combined, it just causes me to stop and say, how could I ever not run to Him? How do I ever think He doesn't understand what I'm going through?

Janet: That's right.

Leah: Or what this loved one of mine is going through. I can lament because He did first.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And that's a gift.

Janet: Oh, such a gift. Even thinking about what brought Him to that level of distress, He knew He was just about to endure horrific pain, but I don't think it was the physical pain. I love this. Jonathan Edwards says this, it seems that at this time, God gave Him an extraordinary view of it. He's talking about the cross. A sense of that wrath that was to be poured out upon Him, and of those amazing sufferings that He was to undergo was strongly impressed on his mind by the immediate power of God, so that He had far more full and lively apprehensions of the bitterness of the cup which He was to drink than He ever had before. And these apprehensions were so terrible that His feeble human nature shrunk at the sight and was ready to sink. And it wasn't just that He would take on the wrath, He would do it alone.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: Jesus was going to drink the cup of the Father's wrath, and because He was doing that, He would be separated from His Father for the first and only time in all of eternity past and future. He had never been separated from His Father. They had perfect joy and unity from eternity past. And as He contemplated this, He almost died before He died.

Leah: As you say that, I think of little kids who have to maybe spend the night with a grandparent for the first time, or, you.



Janet: Yeah.

Leah: There might be something exciting about it, but for a lot of kids, they fear leaving that parent.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And obviously that's not the same as this, but.

Janet: Not the same degree.

Leah: But that helps me think of this as, you're saying all of that, of there's that picture of love clinging to the one that you've always known.

Janet: Yes, and you've never been alone.

Leah: Yeah, you've never had to be away. You've never even had to try to understand what that's like until it's happened.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: So yeah, I just was thinking of that kind of imagery in my head.

Janet: And I think.

Leah: As you say that.

Janet: Even take that same imagery and not going to a sleepover, but being dropped off somewhere with people who don't care about you. 'Cause He's now facing wrath. He's taking on sin. This little child who has only ever been with this parent who loves them, and now they're standing alone in the dark, surrounded by people who hate them.

Leah: Oh, yeah. I mean.

Janet: How would that feel? That just makes my guts, like inside I'm like, oh, my word, get that poor baby.

Leah: Oh, I mean.



Janet: Get that poor baby and protect them.

Leah: Janet, it makes me wanna cry.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: I'm thinking of the first night that our first foster daughter came to us. I mean.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: That happened to her.

Janet: Yes. Yes.

Leah: That was her, being taken from the only people she knew. And to hear the sadness her crying.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: That's what I'm thinking of. Like that, is that kind of separation of a loss It's so intense, we can think about this and I can relate to it, but I still don't know the depth of it.

Janet: Oh, no.

Leah: I still don't know.

Janet: But I can grow to appreciate it a little bit more.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And one of the things that is amazing to me about this is He lamented, and the answer was no.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And I've been there.

Leah: Yeah.



Janet: When I'm crying out to the Lord, and the answer is no. And I think in those moments, oh, Jesus understands that too.

Leah: Yes.

Janet: Because He's been there, where He cried out in pain. Chose to trust, and the Father had to say no, not because He didn't love Him, but because there was a bigger plan, and Jesus knew that. And now we know that. When I'm like, but you don't know how hard it is. I'm asking for this good and right thing. Please don't let them die. And then the answer is no. Here's one thing I know among many, Jesus knows what that's like, too.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: To want something desperately and to get the answer of no.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And what did He do? He got up And he walked toward that pain. Why? Because He loves His father. Yes. And He and His father determined this plan because they love you. Wow. That is love. That is a God I can trust. Even when nothing else in my world seems to indicate that He cares, that's a God I can humbly and vulnerably lament to. He understands.

Leah: And going so slow and thinking through this together is so helpful to understand that lament's not just a Band-Aid to say, okay, no matter what I'm going through, Christ died for me, so that should be better, right?

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: Sometimes it just feels cold and rote, just.

Janet: And it is.

Leah: 'Cause we know.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: Even if you're just reading the words of the Gospel account, like it can sometimes feel that way 'cause it happens so quickly, right?



Janet: Yep, yep.

Leah: But when we go through this slowly, like it really helps me see this lament is worth it.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: It's not a Band-Aid of just slapping the Gospel on. No, it's seeing what the Gospel really truly is.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And then praying in obedience to that. Because of the hope that I have.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: I can lament obediently because He loves me. And understanding that love is not something we can rush through.

Janet: No. It takes time. And to know that even this painful situation can be used by God to draw my heart closer to Him. If I will humbly and vulnerably run to Him.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I think for many people listening, and I know for me as well, it's awkward if you've not done it. I am growing now, but it was new. It was awkward. So what do you do? Like you sit down, you're like, I don't even know what to say. That's part of the beauty of a third of the Psalms. I think it can be really helpful to read one of those Psalms and then paraphrase it with your circumstances.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And get used to being able to talk to the Lord about that. We've mentioned the book *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*. He has a devotional journal that goes along with that, that I just think is gold.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: You've not read the book, it will give you more. I love the background of the book of even what caused him to write it and understanding his heart. And it's so much more depth. But even



the devotional journal's gonna give you a little summary. And then every day is a different Psalm, and I say day. It takes me probably three or four days to do a day. So it's not do a Psalm a day. At least that was not my experience. But I read the couple of pages, and then it says read Psalm 13 or Psalm 25. Then it's gonna take you through, first of all, beginning to analyze the Psalm. Where do you see all those elements? Again, don't get caught up in should that go here or here? Maybe both. That's fine, but you're learning to go, oh, it is there. Oh, it is there. And then how would I take that Psalm and write? And you're learning how to do that. If nothing else, you mentioned having, a five-year prayer journal. Journaling your prayers will slow you down. Write out what you're thinking to the Lord, and be thinking about these aspects of it while you're doing it. and I would say the number one thing is just do it. And you're like, yeah, but I don't know how. You can turn to God.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: If all you know is to say, I have no idea what to say right now, but I'm not gonna go anywhere else, I'm going to you with all of my pain, you're starting.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And just keep turning to God. But these other tools can help you grow in how to do that. I love that your small group did it together.

Leah: Yeah. Yeah, it was a huge benefit to see, oh, wait, we do all need this in all of our different circumstances of life.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Some who've experienced great pain and loss, and others who haven't. Even those who were saying, I don't think this book is gonna apply to me because I've not really had great suffering, even those people were so helped by this idea of.

Janet: Yes, 'cause we all have pain.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: 'Cause we're in a broken world. There is no.

Leah: There's disappointment.



Janet: Possibility of not having that.

Leah: Yeah, there's disappointment, there's hurt, there's even just small things like a breakup, or losing a job, whatever. Those are big things to people.

Janet: Absolutely.

Leah: They may not be the same thing as chronic pain or the loss of a loved one, but they're important to us.

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: So they're important to God.

Janet: And God gives us a way to deal with them.

Leah: Yes.

Janet: And I think some people think, a life of lament is a life of no joy. You're just lamenting all the time and it's just the opposite. A good friend of ours, a lot of what he has the privilege of doing is hearing a lot of heavy things from a lot of people all the time. And I was talking with him and I said, so, how do you carry that? That's a lot. And he's very godly man, but, I just can't imagine the weights. And he said a few things that were really helpful to me, but, one of them was, I hear, and I care, and I engage. This is my paraphrase. I'm sure he said it differently, but this is what I came away with. And I do take pain, but I don't absorb it. I take it, and I give it to the Lord. And he said, I lament every morning. And I thought most of us would be like, I lamented a year ago, and I don't wanna do it again. Or I've had people say I did that already. It's like no, this isn't a thing that you do and you're done. It's a way of life in a sin-cursed world 'cause there's always more.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: And he said, I get up every morning, and there are things to lament, people I love, his own life, his ministry, people he's caring for, and he said, I get to care about it, take it, and give it all to the Lord every morning. And then I enjoy my day. Why? Because the one carrying that, I trust. And I think, living a life of joyful lament I get to lament. I get to do something with that pain. I don't have to pretend it's not there. I don't have to try to avoid it. I don't have to try to be Pollyanna. I don't have to cancel anyone around me that is hurting. But I don't have to carry it



either. I take it. I give it in lament, and then I enjoy my day. And I think that's the supernatural upside-down way that God's children can live that the world can't even fathom.

Leah: Yeah. And that's why biblical joy is so much different than just being happy, right?

Janet: Yes.

Leah: Because so much more than that.

Janet: Yes. Sorrowful and always rejoicing.

Leah: Yes. Yeah. And we live in a sinful world. There is reason to be sorrowful.

Janet: Yes.

Leah: And if we're not, I think we're missing out on part of the way God wants us to communicate with Him right now.

Janet: Yes. That's right.

Leah: On this side of the cross, on this side of heaven, right?

Janet: Yep.

Leah: In the in between. And yeah, I think it's just, it's encouraging when you see, yes, a third of the Psalms are lament. The other two-thirds, most of them are praise, right?

Janet: Yeah.

Leah: And I almost think, yeah, these authors were able to praise so much because they also lamented.

Janet: Yes. It's not one or the other. Yes.

Leah: Yeah.

Janet: I love that. Yeah. So I hope all of us will just turn to God.



To keep from missing any future episodes, please sign up for our newsletter on our webpage faithlafayette.org/JJP From there you can also subscribe to this podcast on Apple, Google, or Spotify. You can also visit us on our Facebook page or Instagram at Joyful Journey Podcast. If you have questions or comments for us, you can email us at joyfuljourneyquestions@outlook.com. Joyful Journey Podcast is a ministry of Faith Bible Seminary. All proceeds go to offset costs of this podcast and toward scholarships for women to receive their [MABC through Faith Bible Seminary](#).

Host Janet and her husband, Brent, also speak at a variety of conferences as a way to raise money for the seminary. If you want to look at what they offer or book them for a conference, [go to their website](#).