

SERMON TITLE: "Words of Lament"

DATE: July 18, 2021

SCRIPTURE: Selected Scriptures

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Not a day goes by that we aren't shaped by words—words spoken to us, words on the news, words on social media, our own words. We're shaped by words because there is a mysterious and yet certain power in them. The Bible says that there is life and death in the power of the tongue. Words are used to build up and give life. Or, sometimes, they're used to tear down and take life. So, how can we be sure that we are speaking life to others? How can we avoid words that cut and tear down? How can we know we are honoring God with what comes out of our mouths? Answer: God himself is not silent. He is the God who speaks. In Scripture and ultimately in Jesus, we have God's holy communication to us. His word should be the primary thing that shapes our words so that others might find life in him.

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What words should we use when life is hard, when it's full of disappointment, grief and confusion? We have been given the gift of lament, a prayer in pain that leads to trust. In the Bible, we see in the examples of Job, Jeremiah, David, and even Jesus that we are allowed to bring our honesty and messy questions to God in the middle of life's pain.

How do we lament?

T - Turn to God. Psalm 77: In the day of trouble I seek the Lord. Don't give in to silent despair. Keep dragging your struggles to God, believing that he hears us.

C - Bring your Complaints. This is different than petty whining or grumbling about inconveniences, but we can cite God's promises feeling as if he has forgotten them. Psalm 10: Why do you stand far away? Who do you hide yourself in times of trouble? Bring your specific frustrations. Come humbly.

A - Ask Boldly. Our confidence in God's character enables us to make bold requests. Hebrews 4: We can with confidence draw near to the throne of grace. The Psalms are full of requests such as: Grant us help, let justice be done, restore us, vindicate me, remember your covenant.

T - Trust in the Lord. We reach a point of decision to "cross the line." We move through the YET bridge to declare what we know to be true about God even though it may not feel true. It's a movement all the way to active patience and trust.

Books for further study:

A Sacred Sorrow by Michael Card

Dark Clouds Deep Mercy by Mark Vroegop

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Discussion Starters —

1. What is lament? Do you feel that it's appropriate to address God in this way?
2. What does TCAT stand for? Which part of the TCAT process resonated with you the most?
3. When you feel anxiety / grief / pain, what is your default reaction? Grumbling to others, broadcasting to social media, healthy prayer?
4. What has been consuming your thoughts lately? What do you have to lament?
5. Homework: Write out a prayer (or several) of lament this week, following the TCAT model.