



Sermon-based Guide Questions for Reflection and Discussion Week of March 21

The Final Answer

Scripture: Lamentations 5:19-22 and Ephesians 1:7-10

Summary

The final words of Lamentations are addressed right at God. It is God that we must contend with, first and last. Lamentations reminds us of the centrality of God. Lament strips away any sense of self-sufficiency we harbor and leads us to look right at the throne and the God who sits on that throne.

It is important that we let Jeremiah ask his question without having us rush to the answer. The question is, have you utterly rejected us, are you angry with us beyond measure?

God has *not* utterly rejected us. He is *not* angry beyond measure. His covenant promise is greater than his covenant curse. He subsumes his covenant curse back into himself. The answer to the Jeremiah and the people of Jerusalem's question comes hundreds of year later, in a time that feels just as overwhelming as the time of the Book of Lamentations. The answer, of course is Jesus.

Jesus comes not just to rescue us from our lament, he comes also to enter our lament. Jesus does not rescue us from on high, but he comes into our brokenness, joins us there, and rescues us from within.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is the lament that Jesus cries out on the cross.

In Christ, and through Christ, we are called to live into his answer for the church community and the broader community; for all those living in a place of lament. Like Christ (and only through his crucified and resurrected power) we are called to be a foretaste of the fullness of Christ's answer to the world.

Questions

1. Our discussion questions from last week focused on listening to the lamenting voices of others and coming alongside them with compassion. Did you have any new awareness of lamenting voices this past week? Did you try lamenting for someone new or in a new way? If so, what did you notice about compassion along with lament?
2. As we come to the end of this Lenten journey through the book of Lamentations, what is your take-away? What would you like to incorporate into who you are? Is there anything you sense God is calling you to in response to this journey?
3. What are some ways you might intentionally go into Holy Week with "new eyes" because of our Lenten journey through Lamentations? What is your desire for this next phase in our liturgical calendar?