

9/28/25

Sermon Title: Lamenting the desolation of Jerusalem

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: laments 1:1-22

(laments 1:1) How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.

(laments 1:2) Bitterly she weeps at night, tears are on her cheeks. Among all her lovers there is no one to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies.

(laments 1:3) After affliction and harsh labor, Judah has gone into exile. She dwells among the nations; she finds no resting place. All who pursue her have overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

(laments 1:4) The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to her appointed festivals. All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan, her young women grieve, and she is in bitter anguish.

(laments 1:5) Her foes have become her masters; her enemies are at ease. The LORD has brought her grief because of her many sins. Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe.

(laments 1:6) All the splendor has departed from Daughter Zion. Her princes are like deer that find no pasture; in weakness they have fled before the pursuer.

(laments 1:7) In the days of her affliction and wandering Jerusalem remembers all the treasures that were hers in days of old. When her people fell into enemy hands, there was no one to help her. Her enemies looked at her and laughed at her destruction.

(laments 1:8) Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean. All who honored her despise her, for they have all seen her naked; she herself groans and turns away.

(lamentations 1:9) Her filthiness clung to her skirts; she did not consider her future. Her fall was astounding; there was none to comfort her. “Look, LORD, on my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed.”

(lamentations 1:10) The enemy laid hands on all her treasures; she saw pagan nations enter her sanctuary—those you had forbidden to enter your assembly.

(lamentations 1:11) All her people groan as they search for bread; they barter their treasures for food to keep themselves alive. “Look, LORD, and consider, for I am despised.”

(lamentations 1:12) “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the LORD brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?

(lamentations 1:13) “From on high he sent fire, sent it down into my bones. He spread a net for my feet and turned me back. He made me desolate, faint all the day long.

(lamentations 1:14) “My sins have been bound into a yoke; by his hands they were woven together. They have been hung on my neck, and the Lord has sapped my strength. He has given me into the hands of those I cannot withstand.

(lamentations 1:15) “The Lord has rejected all the warriors in my midst; he has summoned an army against me to crush my young men. In his winepress the Lord has trampled Virgin Daughter Judah.

(lamentations 1:16) “This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute because the enemy has prevailed.”

(lamentations 1:17) Zion stretches out her hands, but there is no one to comfort her. The LORD has decreed for Jacob that his neighbors become his foes; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them.

(lamentations 1:18) “The LORD is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command. Listen, all you people; look on my suffering. My young men and young women have gone into exile.

(Lamentations 1:19) “I called to my allies but they betrayed me. My priests and my elders perished in the city while they searched for food to keep themselves alive.

(Lamentations 1:20) “See, LORD, how distressed I am! I am in torment within, and in my heart I am disturbed, for I have been most rebellious. Outside, the sword bereaves; inside, there is only death.

(Lamentations 1:21) “People have heard my groaning, but there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies have heard of my distress; they rejoice at what you have done. May you bring the day you have announced so they may become like me.

(Lamentations 1:22) “Let all their wickedness come before you; deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my sins. My groans are many and my heart is faint.”

Sharing from *Lamentations* following *Jeremiah*.

The author of *Lamentations*, like *Jeremiah*, is the prophet Jeremiah.

After Jerusalem was conquered by Babylon, Jeremiah witnessed the suffering of Israel’s people, and he expressed his grief, lament, and cries in five poems.

Within the five poems are contained the desperate conditions in which the people of Israel, their own kinsmen, found themselves after incurring God’s wrath and being destroyed by Babylon; yet even in such hopeless circumstances, they did not lose hope, but held on to faith in the covenant-keeping God, and longed for restoration through repentance.

Jeremiah faithfully carried out his ministry for more than forty years, from King Josiah to King Zedekiah, living among the people of Judah and proclaiming God’s word.

He warned the people—who refused to listen to God’s word, practiced idolatry,

social injustice, and moral corruption—about God’s coming judgment and urged them to repent and return to Him.

But Judah stubbornly resisted.

As God had spoken, Judah was finally judged and destroyed in 586 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

The strong walls of Jerusalem collapsed, the Temple was burned, and homes were set on fire.

The holy vessels of the Temple were looted.

Leaders were slain, and the remaining people were taken as captives to Babylon.

It was utterly devastating.

The prophet’s heart was torn apart as he witnessed this.

He knew how earnestly God had longed for His people, the people of Judah, to return to Him.

If only they had heeded God’s warnings, repented, and returned, God would have received them again...

But they stubbornly resisted until they finally fell into destruction.

Looking upon his ruined homeland and fellow countrymen, he wept bitterly and composed five dirges.

Yet, within his laments there is not only grief, mourning, and despair.

Even as he poured out his sorrow, he still believed and longed for the merciful and gracious God to bring salvation.

And he called upon Israel to repent and return to God.

This chapter is the first of Jeremiah’s five laments.

Jeremiah, seeing the once-glorious Jerusalem—especially the beautiful temple where songs of praise had never ceased—now utterly desolate because of Babylon’s invasion, is overcome with grief and pours out a lament.

He confesses that all this has come upon them because of the sins of the people of Israel, and he pleads with God to have mercy on them and once more bestow His saving grace.

(lamentations 1:1) How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.

(lamentations 1:2) Bitterly she weeps at night, tears are on her cheeks. Among all her lovers there is no one to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies.

(lamentations 1:3) After affliction and harsh labor, Judah has gone into exile. She dwells among the nations; she finds no resting place. All who pursue her have overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

(lamentations 1:4) The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to her appointed festivals. All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan, her young women grieve, and she is in bitter anguish.

When under God's love, Jerusalem had been like an impregnable fortress, but now it has become a desolate city.

The once-great multitude of people has vanished.

Many were killed in war or carried off into exile, leaving only loneliness and emptiness.

During the appointed festivals, crowds once thronged the city to offer sacrifices, but now not even that remains.

The city that had been strong and splendid, unassailable by any, has become like a widow bereft of her husband, like an orphan without parents—weak and vulnerable.

The city once honored like a princess, enjoying glory and dignity, has now been reduced to the pitiful state of paying tribute to foreign nations.

Even the surrounding nations that once called themselves allies and friends have betrayed her and become enemies.

The people of Israel, who had lived as God's redeemed, dwelling in His holy city under His protection, have now lost their promised inheritance and become exiles, suffering scorn and persecution at the hands of foreign nations.

Jeremiah, gazing upon this wretched condition of Jerusalem, is overcome with grief and weeps ceaselessly day and night.

He confesses that the misery of Jerusalem has come because the people of Israel sinned against God and broke His covenant.

(Lamentations 1:5) Her foes have become her masters; her enemies are at ease. The LORD has brought her grief because of her many sins. Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe.

(Lamentations 1:6) All the splendor has departed from Daughter Zion. Her princes are like deer that find no pasture; in weakness they have fled before the pursuer.

(Lamentations 1:7) In the days of her affliction and wandering Jerusalem remembers all the treasures that were hers in days of old. When her people fell into enemy hands, there was no one to help her. Her enemies looked at her and laughed at her destruction.

God departed from Israel, who had broken His covenant, and when the glory of the Lord left, there was no one left to protect Jerusalem.

The leaders fled, seeking only to save themselves.

The surrounding nations mocked the abandoned Jerusalem.

Jeremiah gazed upon the desolated Jerusalem and lamented.

Then he pleaded with God to pour out His mercy.

(Lamentations 1:8) Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean. All who honored her despise her, for they have all seen her naked; she herself groans and turns away.

(lamentations 1:9) Her filthiness clung to her skirts; she did not consider her future. Her fall was astounding; there was none to comfort her. “Look, LORD, on my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed.”

(lamentations 1:10) The enemy laid hands on all her treasures; she saw pagan nations enter her sanctuary—those you had forbidden to enter your assembly.

(lamentations 1:11) All her people groan as they search for bread; they barter their treasures for food to keep themselves alive. “Look, LORD, and consider, for I am despised.”

Jerusalem, once full of glory, was brought low because of sin.

The people of Israel offered sacrifices in the temple daily, but they were merely empty rituals.

They worshiped foreign gods and served idols.

They loved money and committed evil deeds such as lawlessness and injustice.

God departed from such a Jerusalem.

A Jerusalem from which God has departed is no longer a holy place.

Foreigners, who were once forbidden from entering the sanctuary, stormed into it, trampled it, and looted its sacred treasures.

The people, starving from famine, gave up their precious possessions in exchange for food to survive.

Jeremiah made it clear that the disaster upon Jerusalem was the judgment of God. It was because Israel ignored God’s warnings and refused to listen to His word, continuing in their own ways.

There was no excuse for Israel’s downfall.

Even so, faced with the reality of judgment, with no one to comfort or help, he fell into despair and wept endlessly.

(lamentations 1:12) “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the LORD brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?

(lamentations 1:13) “From on high he sent fire, sent it down into my bones. He spread a net for my feet and turned me back. He made me desolate, faint all the day long.

(lamentations 1:14) “My sins have been bound into a yoke; by his hands they were woven together. They have been hung on my neck, and the Lord has sapped my strength. He has given me into the hands of those I cannot withstand.

(lamentations 1:15) The Lord has rejected all the warriors in my midst; he has summoned an army against me to crush my young men. In his winepress the Lord has trampled Virgin Daughter Judah.

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(lamentations 1:17) Zion stretches out her hands, but there is no one to comfort her. The LORD has decreed for Jacob that his neighbors become his foes; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them.

The sins of Israel became a yoke that bound them.

God sent fire upon the people of Judah, spread a net for them, and fastened them with a yoke.

Before God’s judgment, even warriors and young men were of no use.

God struck down all the warriors within the city and shattered the young men when they were gathered together.

He summoned the enemies to slaughter Judah as one tramples grapes in a winepress.

With the warriors and young men gone, Israel could see no hope for the future.

They stretched out their hands seeking someone to help and comfort them, but no one was found.

Jeremiah confessed that God, who judges Israel, is righteous.

It was only just for God to judge Israel and its people for disobeying His commands.

(lamentations 1:18) “The LORD is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command. Listen, all you people; look on my suffering. My young men and young women have gone into exile.

(lamentations 1:19) “I called to my allies but they betrayed me. My priests and my elders perished in the city while they searched for food to keep themselves alive.

Israel laments the betrayal of those they loved.

These “loved ones” refer to everything Israel relied on—neighboring nations, foreign gods, and wealth.

Foolishly, the people of Israel believed such things would save them in times of trouble, but when calamity came, they proved utterly useless.

They could neither comfort nor deliver them.

The only way for them to be saved was this one thing: to humbly come before God.

They needed to confess their sins, repent, and turn back to Him.

Then God would save them once again—and not only that, He would also repay their enemies.

God’s judgment proves that He is the King and Ruler over all the earth.

Foolishly, Israel did not realize that God would judge them so severely.

Yet God had clearly declared that He would bless those who obey Him and bring curses upon those who disobey.

Jeremiah confessed the sins of Judah before God and pleaded for His mercy.

He also brought charges against their enemies for their evil deeds.

(lamentations 1:20) “See, LORD, how distressed I am! I am in torment within, and in my heart I am disturbed, for I have been most rebellious. Outside, the sword bereaves; inside, there is only death.

(lamentations 1:21) “People have heard my groaning, but there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies have heard of my distress; they rejoice at what you

have done. May you bring the day you have announced so they may become like me.

(Lamentations 1:22) “Let all their wickedness come before you; deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my sins. My groans are many and my heart is faint.”

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,

The people of Israel were not faithful before God.

Once they entered the land of Canaan and were settled and prosperous, they forgot the God who had brought them out of Egypt where they had been slaves, and who had given them the land of Canaan as He promised to Abraham and his descendants.

They broke the covenant with God and disobeyed His Word.

They worshiped foreign gods and idols.

They loved money, and in doing so, they perverted justice.

They did not care for the socially weak but instead exploited them.

God sent countless prophets to warn them.

But the people of Israel rejected God’s Word and continued in their wickedness.

Finally, God pronounced judgment, and as He declared, they were destroyed.

God is a righteous God who surely holds people accountable for their sins.

When sin is committed, the penalty must inevitably be paid.

Thus, Israel was cast out of the land God had given them, taken captive into foreign nations, and forced to live under the rule of foreign kings.

Jerusalem, once admired by all, was left in ruins.

Its walls were broken down, the temple, palaces, and homes were burned.

The people were taken away as captives, and hardly anyone was left in Jerusalem.

To make matters worse, those who remained suffered hunger because of famine.

The nations mocked them as they looked upon their misery.

Yet even so, Israel had hope.

Because God is faithful to His covenant.

If His chosen people repent and return to Him, He will receive them back and restore them.

Do not take a sin lightly!

Most of the suffering we experience in life comes as a result of our own sins.

People often make excuses and offer justifications, but the true cause lies within themselves.

Deep down, they know it well.

Are you suffering in hardship right now?

Do not commit the folly of seeking sympathy from people through excuses or justifications.

People cannot truly help.

Repent, and turn back to God!

Only God can forgive our sins and deliver us from suffering.

When we repent and return to Him, He will receive our repentance, turn His heart toward us, and embrace us in His love.

He will fully restore us.