

10/12/25

Sermon Title: Singing of hope in the midst of despair

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: laments 3:1-66

(laments 3:1) I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the LORD's wrath.

(laments 3:2) He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light;

(laments 3:3) indeed, he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long.

(laments 3:4) He has made my skin and my flesh grow old and has broken my bones.

(laments 3:5) He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.

(laments 3:6) He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

(laments 3:7) He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains.

(laments 3:8) Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer.

(laments 3:9) He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked.

(laments 3:10) Like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in hiding,

(laments 3:11) he dragged me from the path and mangled me and left me without help.

(laments 3:12) He drew his bow and made me the target for his arrows.

(laments 3:13) He pierced my heart with arrows from his quiver.

(laments 3:14) I became the laughingstock of all my people; they mock me in song all day long.

(laments 3:15) He has filled me with bitter herbs and given me gall to drink.

(laments 3:16) He has broken my teeth with gravel; he has trampled me in the dust.

(lamentations 3:17) I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is.

(lamentations 3:18) So I say, “My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD.”

(lamentations 3:19) I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.

(lamentations 3:20) I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

(lamentations 3:21) Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

(lamentations 3:22) Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

(lamentations 3:23) They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

(lamentations 3:24) I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him.”

(lamentations 3:25) The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

(lamentations 3:26) it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

(lamentations 3:27) It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.

(lamentations 3:28) Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him.

(lamentations 3:29) Let him bury his face in the dust—there may yet be hope.

(lamentations 3:30) Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace.

(lamentations 3:31) For no one is cast off by the Lord forever.

(lamentations 3:32) Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.

(lamentations 3:33) For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.

(lamentations 3:34) To crush underfoot all prisoners in the land,

(lamentations 3:35) to deny people their rights before the Most High,

(lamentations 3:36) to deprive them of justice— would not the Lord see such things?

(lamentations 3:37) Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?

(lamentations 3:38) Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?

(lamentations 3:39) Why should the living complain when punished for their sins?

(lamentations 3:40) Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.

(lamentations 3:41) Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven, and say:

(lamentations 3:42) “We have sinned and rebelled and you have not forgiven.

(lamentations 3:43) “You have covered yourself with anger and pursued us; you have slain without pity.

(lamentations 3:44) You have covered yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can get through.

(lamentations 3:45) You have made us scum and refuse among the nations.

(lamentations 3:46) “All our enemies have opened their mouths wide against us.

(lamentations 3:47) We have suffered terror and pitfalls, ruin and destruction.”

(lamentations 3:48) Streams of tears flow from my eyes because my people are destroyed.

(lamentations 3:49) My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief,

(lamentations 3:50) until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees.

(lamentations 3:51) What I see brings grief to my soul because of all the women of my city.

(lamentations 3:52) Those who were my enemies without cause hunted me like a bird.

(lamentations 3:53) They tried to end my life in a pit and threw stones at me;

(lamentations 3:54) the waters closed over my head, and I thought I was about to perish.

(lamentations 3:55) I called on your name, LORD, from the depths of the pit.

(lamentations 3:56) You heard my plea: “Do not close your ears to my cry for

relief.”

(lamentations 3:57) You came near when I called you, and you said, “Do not fear.”

(lamentations 3:58) You, Lord, took up my case; you redeemed my life.

(lamentations 3:59) LORD, you have seen the wrong done to me. Uphold my cause!

(lamentations 3:60) You have seen the depth of their vengeance, all their plots against me.

(lamentations 3:61) LORD, you have heard their insults, all their plots against me—

(lamentations 3:62) what my enemies whisper and mutter against me all day long.

(lamentations 3:63) Look at them! Sitting or standing, they mock me in their songs.

(lamentations 3:64) Pay them back what they deserve, LORD, for what their hands have done.

(lamentations 3:65) Put a veil over their hearts, and may your curse be on them!

(lamentations 3:66) Pursue them in anger and destroy them from under the heavens of the LORD.

This is the third lament of the prophet Jeremiah.

It is the longest chapter in the Book of Lamentations.

While chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 each consist of 22 verses, this chapter contains 66 verses.

In chapters 1 and 2, Jeremiah laments with despair and sorrow as he observes the misery of Jerusalem, the nation of Judah, and his fellow people.

However, in this chapter, though still in despair, he does not lose his faith but clings to hope and earnestly pleads with God for deliverance.

Verses 1–18 describe the sorrow and despair of Judah and its people, while verses 19–66 express hope in the midst of affliction.

Unlike chapters 1 and 2, where Jerusalem and Judah's tragedy is described from a third-person perspective, this chapter speaks in the first person, identifying the prophet himself with the suffering of Jerusalem.

He portrays Jerusalem, struck by the rod of God's wrath, as his own condition — utterly broken under divine judgment.

Jeremiah calls Jerusalem “the one struck by the Lord's anger” and tearfully appeals to God over her devastation.

(lamentations 3:1) I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the LORD's wrath.

(lamentations 3:2) He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light;

(lamentations 3:3) indeed, he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long.

(lamentations 3:4) He has made my skin and my flesh grow old and has broken my bones.

(lamentations 3:5) He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.

(lamentations 3:6) He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

Jeremiah pours out his heart over Jerusalem's hopeless and inescapable situation.

(lamentations 3:7) He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains.

(lamentations 3:8) Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer.

(lamentations 3:9) He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked.

Jeremiah struggles to escape the darkness, but God has built a wall around him, leaving no way out.

God has made his chains heavier so that he cannot move.

He cries out earnestly to God for help, but God turns a deaf ear to his prayers.

This is a complete abandonment by God.

Such divine abandonment is the most severe form of judgment that can fall upon God's own people, Israel.

Jeremiah laments that God has become an enemy to Jerusalem, seeking to destroy it, and that Jerusalem has become a laughingstock among the surrounding nations.

He compares God to a bear or a lion lying in wait to kill Jerusalem, and to a hunter setting traps to capture His people.

(lamentations 3:10) Like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in hiding,

(lamentations 3:11) he dragged me from the path and mangled me and left me without help.

(lamentations 3:12) He drew his bow and made me the target for his arrows.

(lamentations 3:13) He pierced my heart with arrows from his quiver.

(lamentations 3:14) I became the laughingstock of all my people; they mock me in song all day long.

Jerusalem suffers because there is no food to eat.

God has left not even a trace of hope and has utterly crushed Jerusalem.

With the glory of God departed, all hope in Jerusalem has perished.

(lamentations 3:15) He has filled me with bitter herbs and given me gall to drink.

(lamentations 3:16) He has broken my teeth with gravel; he has trampled me in the dust.

(lamentations 3:17) I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is.

(lamentations 3:18) So I say, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD."

However, Jeremiah makes a dramatic turn here.

Up to this point, he had been lamenting the miserable reality of Jerusalem with despair and mourning, but now he begins to sing of hope and faith for the future. The lament over the fallen walls, the destroyed temple, and the desolate city of Jerusalem turns into a confession of God's faithfulness and a hope in the Lord who will restore the ruined foundations.

Even in the midst of discouragement and despair, Jeremiah holds on to hope, believing that the God whose mercy and compassion never fail will not utterly destroy Israel.

(lamentations 3:19) I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.

(lamentations 3:20) I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

(lamentations 3:21) Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

(lamentations 3:22) Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

(lamentations 3:23) They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

(lamentations 3:24) I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him."

It means they are determined to believe that God is their inheritance in every circumstance and to wait for Him to the end.

At the same time, Jeremiah exhorts the people of Israel to humbly accept the Lord's punishment.

(lamentations 3:25) The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

(lamentations 3:26) it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

(lamentations 3:27) It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.

(lamentations 3:28) Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him.

(lamentations 3:29) Let him bury his face in the dust—there may yet be hope.

(lamentations 3:30) Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace.

Jeremiah, trusting in the goodness of the Lord, urges the people to wait quietly for His salvation.

He tells them to bear the yoke the Lord has placed upon them in silence, to humble themselves completely and wait for the Lord's punishment.

For the punishment they suffer is the due consequence of their sin, and deliverance rests in the hands of the Lord.

Jeremiah believes that although God punishes Israel, He will not cast them off forever but will save them through His abundant mercy and compassion.

God had already told Jeremiah that after seventy years, He would bring His people back to their homeland.

(lamentations 3:31) For no one is cast off by the Lord forever.

(lamentations 3:32) Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.

(lamentations 3:33) For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.

(lamentations 3:34) To crush underfoot all prisoners in the land,

(lamentations 3:35) to deny people their rights before the Most High,

(lamentations 3:36) to deprive them of justice— would not the Lord see such things?

God does not take pleasure in seeing His children suffer.

Yet He punishes them because He does not take pleasure in seeing His children live in sin.

There are certain sins that God especially detests — oppressing the weak, perverting justice, and denying people a fair hearing in their cause.

Jeremiah emphasizes that salvation belongs to the sovereignty of God.

Since both calamity and blessing come from the mouth of the Most High, he urges the people to rely solely on God's goodness and mercy.

(lamentations 3:37) Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?

(lamentations 3:38) Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?

Jeremiah declares that God's judgment is the rightful consequence of sin.

Therefore, we should not grumble or complain when disciplined, but humbly acknowledge the righteousness of God's judgment.

He calls the people to offer genuine repentance and return to the Lord — and to pray.

(lamentations 3:39) Why should the living complain when punished for their sins?

(lamentations 3:40) Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.

(lamentations 3:41) Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven, and say:

Jeremiah weeps uncontrollably over the devastating condition of Jerusalem and the people of Judah.

He says that his tears will not cease to flow until the Lord looks down and takes notice of His people's suffering.

This expresses his deep longing for God to have compassion on Israel and to intervene in their distress.

(lamentations 3:48) Streams of tears flow from my eyes because my people are destroyed.

(lamentations 3:49) My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief,

(lamentations 3:50) until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees.

(lamentations 3:51) What I see brings grief to my soul because of all the women of my city.

Jeremiah, even in the midst of utter despair, places his hope in God's mercy.

He laments that he has come to a desperate point where death seems inevitable under the attack of his enemies.

Jeremiah brings before God every injustice that Jerusalem and Israel have suffered at the hands of their foes, earnestly pleading that God would bring judgment upon them.

(lamentations 3:52) Those who were my enemies without cause hunted me like a bird.

(lamentations 3:53) They tried to end my life in a pit and threw stones at me;

(lamentations 3:54) the waters closed over my head, and I thought I was about to perish.

Jeremiah pleads with God to hear and answer his prayer now — just as God had heard and answered him in the past when he was in trouble — and to deliver Israel once again.

(lamentations 3:55) I called on your name, LORD, from the depths of the pit.

(lamentations 3:56) You heard my plea: "Do not close your ears to my cry for relief."

(lamentations 3:57) You came near when I called you, and you said, "Do not fear."

(lamentations 3:58) You, Lord, took up my case; you redeemed my life.

Jeremiah pleads that God would repay his enemies according to what they have done.

(lamentations 3:64) Pay them back what they deserve, LORD, for what their hands have done.

(lamentations 3:65) Put a veil over their hearts, and may your curse be on them!

(lamentations 3:66) Pursue them in anger and destroy them from under the heavens of the LORD.

Although Babylon was merely a tool of God's judgment, it forgot its place and acted with cruel excess, going far beyond what God had intended for Judah.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,

The prophet Jeremiah wept bitterly and lamented over the terrible and hopeless state of Jerusalem and Judah, destroyed under God's judgment because of their sin.

Yet even in his despair, he held on to hope — trusting that the God of abundant mercy and compassion would not utterly destroy His people.

He urgently called the people of Judah to genuine repentance and to return to God, pleading that God would show mercy and turn His heart back toward them.

Punishment is the rightful judgment of God upon sin, and salvation belongs to His sovereign will.

The discipline that fell upon Israel was just, for they had sinned against the Lord. Yet if they would truly repent and turn back to Him, the God rich in mercy and steadfast love would see their repentance, forgive their sins, and deliver them.

God does not take pleasure in bringing punishment upon His people. But because Israel had sinned, the righteous God had no choice but to execute justice.

The heart of God, who must judge His beloved people, suffers even more than those who endure the judgment.

If it were possible, He would rather forgive and embrace them again in love.

If they would only repent and return to Him, He would forgive them and once again be their inheritance.

Are you in deep despair, feeling as though you cannot go on?

Even in the darkest, most hopeless moment, salvation is still possible.

Hold fast to hope in your heart!

Repent and return to God!

The Lord, abounding in mercy and compassion, will forgive you, turn His heart toward you, and bring you salvation.

God is our inheritance.

Believe in Him who will be your portion, and wait patiently for His time.