

10/26/25

Sermon Title: The Last Prayer of Jeremiah

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: laments 5:1-22

(laments 5:1) Remember, LORD, what has happened to us;
look, and see our disgrace.

(laments 5:2) Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,
our homes to foreigners.

(laments 5:3) We have become fatherless, our mothers are widows.

(laments 5:4) We must buy the water we drink;
our wood can be had only at a price.

(laments 5:5) Those who pursue us are at our heels;
we are weary and find no rest.

(laments 5:6) We submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough bread.

(laments 5:7) Our ancestors sinned and are no more,
and we bear their punishment.

(laments 5:8) Slaves rule over us,
and there is no one to free us from their hands.

(laments 5:9) We get our bread at the risk of our lives because of the word
in the desert.

(laments 5:10) Our skin is hot as an oven, feverish from hunger.

(laments 5:11) Women have been violated in Zion, and virgins in the towns
of Judah.

(laments 5:12) Princes have been hung up by their hands;
elders are shown no respect.

(laments 5:13) Young men toil at the millstones;
boys stagger under loads of wood.

(laments 5:14) The elders are gone from the city gate;
the young men have stopped their music.

(laments 5:15) Joy is gone from our hearts;

our dancing has turned to mourning.

(lamentations 5:16) The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned!

(lamentations 5:17) Because of this our hearts are faint, because of these things our eyes grow dim

(lamentations 5:18) for Mount Zion, which lies desolate, with jackals prowling over it.

(lamentations 5:19) You, LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation.

(lamentations 5:20) Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long?

(lamentations 5:21) Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old

(lamentations 5:22) unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.

This is the fifth and final lament of the prophet Jeremiah, concluding the Book of Lamentations.

The prophet Jeremiah vividly describes the sorrowful and desperate condition of the fallen nation of Judah and the utterly devastated city of Jerusalem, pleading with God for deliverance.

He depicts in detail the miserable state of the Israelites and the humiliation they suffer at the hands of foreigners, as if painting a picture before our eyes.

He portrays the starving inhabitants, the violated women, the young men forced into hard labor, the tortured leaders, and the elders who have lost their honor.

And he cries out to God for salvation.

Jeremiah pleads with God to remember the suffering and disgrace His people have endured because of His judgment and to show mercy by granting them deliverance.

(lamentations 5:1) Remember, LORD, what has happened to us; look, and see our disgrace.

At the same time, Jeremiah reports to God the horrific scenes resulting from the judgment.

(lamentations 5:2) Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners.

(lamentations 5:3) We have become fatherless, our mothers are widows.

(lamentations 5:4) We must buy the water we drink; our wood can be had only at a price.

(lamentations 5:5) Those who pursue us are at our heels; we are weary and find no rest.

(lamentations 5:6) We submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough bread. Here, “our inheritance” refers to the land of Canaan that Israel received from God. They were deprived of their land and homes by Babylon and suffered under heavy taxation to the point that they even had to pay for the water they drank and the firewood from their own land.

It was the suffering of a people reduced to colonial subjects.

They had to run about in every direction just to find food.

Jeremiah confesses that all of this came upon the Israelites because of their sins.

(lamentations 5:7) Our ancestors sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment.

This means that because of the sins of their ancestors and the continued wickedness of their descendants who followed in their footsteps, the cup of God’s wrath was finally filled to the brim.

It portrays the people suffering as subjects under colonial oppression.

(lamentations 5:8) Slaves rule over us, and there is no one to free us from their hands.

(lamentations 5:9) We get our bread at the risk of our lives because of the word in the desert.

(lamentations 5:10) Our skin is hot as an oven, feverish from hunger.

The “servants” refer to the lower officials of Babylon.

Judah could no longer serve its own king but was forced to live under Babylonian rule.

They suffer because they have no food.

Jeremiah continues to report to God the dreadful suffering of the people of Israel.

(lamentations 5:11) Women have been violated in Zion, and virgins in the towns of Judah.

(lamentations 5:12) Princes have been hung up by their hands; elders are shown no respect.

(lamentations 5:13) Young men toil at the millstones; boys stagger under loads of wood.

(lamentations 5:14) The elders are gone from the city gate; the young men have stopped their music.

(lamentations 5:15) Joy is gone from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning.

Women were violated by Babylonian soldiers.

Leaders were tortured, and elders were no longer respected.

Young men, having lost their dreams, were forced to turn the millstones—a task once reserved for slaves—and children, who should have been protected, had to carry wood.

The city gates, where elders and judges once presided over justice, were shut, leaving the people without fair trials.

They had to submit helplessly to the arbitrary judgments handed down by Babylonian officials, unable to raise any objection.

Jeremiah laments that their crown has fallen and confesses that all of this has happened because of their own sins.

(lamentations 5:16) The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned!

The expression “our crown has fallen” carries several meanings.

It signifies that Judah has lost its national privilege and dignity and has been reduced to a colony.

It also means that all joyful festivals have vanished from the land of Judah.

After confessing that all the disasters they are experiencing are the result of their own sins, Jeremiah acknowledges that they are now stricken in both body and spirit with a deep sense of loss and that Zion is laid waste.

(lamentations 5:17) Because of this our hearts are faint, because of these things our eyes grow dim

(lamentations 5:18) for Mount Zion, which lies desolate, with jackals prowling over it.

In Jewish culture, the fox symbolizes destruction and desolation.

The image of foxes roaming there depicts the fallen walls of Jerusalem and the land laid waste.

It also serves as a metaphor for the enemies ravaging their land like foxes.

Even as Jeremiah laments over this national tragedy, he still sings a song of hope. The reason Jeremiah could sing of hope in the midst of despair was his faith in God’s eternal and unchanging nature.

Though the situation appeared utterly hopeless, he found hope by looking to God—the Creator and Ruler of all things—who remains faithful to His covenant.

In verse 1, Jeremiah prayed that God would not forget them; now once again, he pleads with God not to forget or abandon His people.

(lamentations 5:19) You, LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation.

(lamentations 5:20) Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long?

He pleaded with the firm belief that God would never forget or abandon them.

The only way for the people of Israel to be restored is to remember the throne of their Father and return to the embrace of God.

Jeremiah remembers that throne and earnestly prays for the restoration of Israel.

(lamentations 5:21) Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old

(lamentations 5:22) unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.

Jeremiah does not say, “We will return to You, so restore us,” but rather, “Turn us back to You, O Lord, and we will return.”

He confesses that the people can return only if God forgives them and draws them back to Himself.

This is a very important truth—repentance itself is only possible through God’s sovereign intervention.

The restoration of Israel cannot happen without God’s permission.

Jeremiah does not try to go ahead of God but humbly seeks the nation’s restoration under God’s sovereign authority.

The response to Jeremiah’s plea is not recorded here, but we can find the answer in the book of Hosea.

(Hosea 11:8) How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?

How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim?

My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.

(Hosea 11:9) I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man— the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities.

(Hosea 11:10) They will follow the LORD; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west.

(Hosea 11:11) They will come from Egypt, trembling like sparrows, from Assyria, fluttering like doves. I will settle them in their homes,” declares the LORD.

God’s words have always captivated my heart.

Every time I hear them, my heart feels as if it will burst.

I am overwhelmed by God’s love and cannot hold back my tears of gratitude.

In nights of agony and sleeplessness, when my pillow was soaked with tears, the Lord quietly came to me.

And He gave me this word.

That word from the Lord enabled me to see hope in the midst of despair.

It was through that word that I was able to endure those painful and difficult times.

The word of God was so great and powerful that it swallowed up all the pain of this world.

Through this word, I came to truly know that God is my loving Father.

And I resolved to live a life that bears witness to Him—to repay, even in a small way, the love and grace I have received from Him.

God, like the father waiting for the prodigal son, waits for His children who have left home.

No matter what sins that child has committed, the Father waits eagerly, longing for him to return and be embraced in His arms.

That is the heart of the Father.

God did indeed punish His people Israel for their sins through judgment, but His purpose was not their destruction.

He sought to discipline their sin and to give them a future and a hope.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,

When Jeremiah was still a child, he was called by God to spend his entire life proclaiming God's message to his own people, Judah.

But when they refused to listen to God's warnings and were destroyed because of their disobedience, Jeremiah wept bitterly as he looked upon his fallen nation and his suffering people.

The Lord, who once dwelled in the temple, had departed.

The people of Judah, who had lived in abundance under God's protection, were now starving to the point of boiling and eating their own children.

The temple was destroyed, and Jerusalem lay in ruins, with foxes wandering through it.

At this tragic sight, Jeremiah wept endlessly and sang songs of sorrow.

Yet Jeremiah did not stop at weeping or despairing.

He lifted his eyes to the eternal and unchanging God.

He believed that the faithful God of the covenant would surely remember and save His people Israel, and so he sang of hope even in the midst of despair.

He prayed that God would repay their enemies for the wrongs they had done.

God heard and answered the tearful prayer of Jeremiah—the prophet who had been called as a child, who endured persecution and suffering, and yet remained faithful to the mission entrusted to him.

The Lord said: "How can I give you up? How can I abandon you? My heart is moved within Me, and My compassion burns fiercely. I will not unleash My fierce anger. I will not destroy you again. I will gather you to Myself once more."

Are you in the midst of suffering right now?

Do you feel guilt and despair, believing your pain is the result of your own sin?

Know this—the one who gives you a heart of hopelessness and keeps you from returning to your Father is Satan.

Take courage and return to the Father.

He is waiting eagerly for you.

When you return, He will see you first, run to you, and embrace you in His arms.

He will put the ring back on your finger and restore you once again.

I pray that the fire of God's work of restoration will come powerfully upon this place at this very moment.

I believe that in the last days, God will gather all His children back to Himself.