

## **Psalms of Lament**

John Calvin-Preface to the Psalms

“I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, “An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul;” for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated.”

Calvin-“In a word, whatever may serve to encourage us when we are about to pray to God, is taught us in this book. And not only are the promises of God presented to us in it, but oftentimes there is exhibited to us one standing, as it were, amidst the invitations of God on the one hand, and the impediments of the flesh on the other, girding and preparing himself for prayer: thus teaching us, if at any time we are agitated with a variety of doubts, to resist and fight against them, until the soul, freed and disentangled from all these impediments, rise up to God; and not only so, but even when in the midst of doubts, fears, and apprehensions, let us put forth our efforts in prayer, until we experience some consolation which may calm and bring contentment to our minds.”

Mark Vroegop-“Lament is the honest cry of a hurting heart wrestling with the paradox of pain and the promise of God’s goodness”. (Vroegop, Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy, p. 26) “The space between brokenness and God’s mercy is where this song is sung.” (Vroegop, p.28)

Psalms 43:1,2-Vindicate me, O God and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me?

Psalms 55:1-6-Give ear to my prayer, O God and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! Attend to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan, because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest....

Ps. 86:1-4-Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you-you are my God. Be gracious to me, O Lord for to you do I cry all the day. Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

### **1 Listening to the Lament Psalms**

- A high proportion of Psalms are Lament Psalms
- The Laments are not unchristian, they are distinctly Christian

### **2 Learning from the Lament Psalms**

- The pattern of Lament Psalms
  - Addressing God

Psalm 77:1,2-I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord.

- Crying out to God

Ps. 6:6-I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.

Psalm 44:23-24-Awake! Why are you sleeping O Lord? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?

Ps. 35:17-How long, O Lord, will you look on?

- Asking for help

Ps. 10:12-Arise O Lord; O God, lift up your hand....

Ps.83:16-18-Fill their faces with shame that they may seek your name... let them perish in disgrace that they may know that you alone...are the Most High.

Ps. 80:3-Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

- Responding in trust

Psalm 13

### 3 Learning to lament from the Lament Psalms

- Jesus and the Laments
- Learning to lament

Vroegop, Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy-Appendix 3

A list of lament Psalms