

HOPE IN HOPELESS CONDITION

A Sermon Outline

Presented to

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Memphis, Tennessee

As a Requirement in

Jeremiah and Lamentations

Course #421

By

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May 26, 2023

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Text: Lamentations 1 - 4

Thesis: To caution brethren about what sin does to the sinner and to point to the hope in God.

INTRODUCTION

1. Have you ever been in a situation of hopelessness only to realize that there is hope after all.
2. The people of Judah came to their senses and realized their poor condition in sin.
3. They lamented because they had lost hope, but God knew the thought He had for them (Jer. 29:10-13).
4. Jeremiah wrote Lamentation to bring their attention on their condition and the hope God provides.
4. In this lesson we shall consider four main points:
 - a. The condition of Jerusalem (Lam. 1:1-4).
 - b. Hope despite the condition (Lam. 3:22-26).
 - c. The response to the condition (Lam. 3:40-47).
 - d. The reason for the condition (Lam. 4:11-13).

DISCUSSION

I. THE CONDITION OF JERUSALEM (Lam. 1:1-4).

- A. Sin had robbed the city of its people and glory (Lam. 1:1-6; 2:1).
 1. Sin is a thief like the devil and it comes in only to steal (John 10:10).
 2. The people of Jeremiah's days had allowed sin into their city, and it robbed them of the inhabitants. When they were finally carried into captivity, the city became desolate (Lam. 1:3-4).

3. The glory of their temple and city as well as the supposed purity of their livelihood were soured with the mingling of uncircumcised Gentiles in Babylon (Lam. 1:6).
4. Sin has power to enslave and that was the condition the Jews found themselves in at the time Jeremiah wrote Lamentation (Lam. 1:6-7; Rom. 6:15-17).
5. Sin forced Adam and Eve out of the glory which God gave man in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:17-19; 22-24).

B. Sin had robbed the city of its joy and peace (Lam. 1:4-11).

1. Jeremiah warned them of the false prophecies of peace and the need to return to God, but they heed not to God's warning (Jer. 6:11-15).
2. Finally, after sin is finished, it brought forth weeping and tears on their cheeks (Lam. 1:2,16).
3. The women could not hold their tears as the sons, husbands and fathers were killed or bound to be carried away. Sin is indeed a great robber of joy and peace.
4. The people could no longer sing songs of joy about the city (Psa.137:1-9).

C. Sin caused the city to lose its friends and to make its enemies glad (Lam. 1:2,19-21).

1. It is only human for people to be so much interested in associating with the winning side.
2. The people of Judah were lamenting because they were the losing team; they lost their glory, people, and belongings to Babylon.

3. Therefore, their allies fled, and their friends hid their faces. Their partners dissociated themselves from the Jews (Jer. 20:4-6; Lam. 1:19-20).
4. Their enemies rejoiced and joined Babylon to destroy them (Oba.12-14, Lam. 1:21).
5. Sin has caused them to lose their friendship with God, hence they had no help when they needed Him the most (Jer. 11:11-14; Lam. 1:21).

D. All people who continue in sin have fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23).

1. The wages of sin is death which is a spiritual separation from God (Rom. 6:23; Isa. 59:1-2).
2. Sin makes man dead and to live without hope or God (Eph. 2:1-3, 12).
3. Friendship with the world is enmity with God, hence a loss of glory (Jas. 4:4).

II. HOPE DESPITE THE CONDITION (Lam. 3:22-26).

A. God extends mercy toward sinners all the time (Lam. 3:22-23).

1. God is merciful, and His mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:22-23).
2. The condition of the people of Judah was in a bad shape because of sin but God did not utterly destroy them.
3. The severity of God was not compromised but at the same time He was a kindhearted Father (compare Jer. 27:10-15 to Jer. 29:14; 31:8-10; Ezek 11:17).
4. God has been merciful to all manner of people.
 - a. He was merciful toward David and the nation (2 Sam. 24:14, 16).
 - b. He was merciful to Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:1-4, 9-20).

- c. He was merciful to the people of Nineveh (Jonah 3:6-10; 4:1-2).
 5. God is still merciful and looks up to mankind to come to Him for mercy through Christ (Heb. 4:14-16).
- B. There is hope for the people because of the multitude of His mercies (Lam. 3:22, 31-33).
 1. The people had lost hope and thought there was nothing God could do.
 - a. But the Lord is God the Gatherer (Zeph. 3:19-20).
 - b. God gave them hope for the future of their children (Jer. 31:16-17)
 2. God was their portion and needed them to trust in Him even in punishing them (Lam. 3:24).
 3. They were in serious affliction so it is understandable that they would see no hope around them, but God promised a new beginning for them.
- C. There is hope for those who wait on the Lord (Lam. 3:55-58; Isa. 40:28-31).
 1. It is difficult to wait for relieve when caught in affliction.
 2. These people at Jerusalem were attacked, they needed an immediate rescuer, but the Lord wanted them to wait upon Him (Lam. 3:25-26).
 3. Isaiah admonished that there is a blessing in waiting on the Lord (Isa. 40).
 - a. God is alive and gives power to the hopeless (Isa. 40:28-29).
 - b. God renews the strength of those who wait on Him (Isa. 40:30-31)
 - c. They that wait on Him shall not fail (Isa. 40:31).
 4. God promise the people of Judah a hope of being redeemed when they call on Him (Lam. 3:55-59).
- D. God so loved the world today and has provided hope for all mankind (John 3:16-18; 14:1-3).

1. Jews and Gentiles had both sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3:9).
2. But we were freed from sin, that we should become slaves of righteousness through the hope Jesus provides (Rom. 6:16-18; Eph. 2:13-17).
3. Through faith in the gospel and obedience unto baptism, a man is given a hope of eternal salvation (Titus 3:4-8).
4. Jesus gave the ultimate promise of hope that He will return for a perpetual freedom from sin and predicaments of all men who obey (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

III. THE RESPONSE TO THE CONDITION (Lam. 3:40-47).

A. They came to their senses (Lam. 3:40-43).

1. The people of Jeremiah's time came to their senses and the realization of what rebellion against God has brought them.
2. Like Nineveh, the people of Judah realized their sinful works (Lam. 3:40)
3. Like the prodigal son came to himself, so should every man who is not obedient to the God of heaven (Luke 15:17).

B. They prayed but felt their prayers were hindered (Lam. 3:44).

1. They called on God for liberation, but help was coming from nowhere.
2. Sin causes man to lose their relationship with God and prevents communication with God (Isa. 59:1-4).
3. God has not moved; He is still on His throne yet present at everywhere at the same time, but sin hinders us from linking up with Him.

C. They called for repentance and return to God (Lam. 3:40-41).

1. They collectively called for turning to God (Lam. 3:40; Jonah 3:6).
 2. This was long overdue, for the sound of the call to repentance has gone forth from generations to generations yet they have not returned to God.
 3. The same call is made unto us today to repent for God's judgment is coming on all mankind (Acts 17:30-31).
 4. God is calling on all people to turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:18).
- D. All men need to return to God to change mankind condition (John 1:11-13).

IV. THE REASON FOR THE CONDITION (Lam. 4:11-13).

- A. They were experiencing God's wrath because of their rebellion (Lam. 4:11-12).
- B. They were in that punishment because of the sins of the prophets who prophesied falsely to them (Lam. 4:13; Jer. 5:31, 29:8-9).
- C. They were in that condition because of their vain worship resulting from the iniquities of the priest (Jer. 5:30-31, 29:9; Lam. 4:13-15).
- D. Their iniquities have turned away good things from them (Jer. 5:24-25).
- E. They were in that condition because they chose to rebel against God in the midst of the Lord's admonition.
 1. They loved false prophecies (Jer. 5:31).
 2. They rejected the Lord's admonition to walk in the old path (Jer. 6:16).
 3. They did abominable things in the house of the Lord and sacrificed their children in their idolatry (Jer. 32:33-35).

CONCLUSION

1. Sin has serious consequences which puts a man in hopeless condition.
2. The people of Jeremiah's day lamented as a result of the severity of God on disobedience.
3. In this message, we have studied following about Judah.
 - a. The state of affairs of the people and their city, Jerusalem.
 - b. The hope of redemption despite their condition.
 - c. Their call for repentance as a response to their condition.
 - d. The reason why those things happened to them.
4. It is worth noticing in the book of Lamentation that God warns before He wounds.
5. Yet, if man returns to God, He will return to man to give mankind hope in our hopeless condition (Jas. 4:8-10).