

Tears Defying Gravity

Have you ever had one of those days; one of those days where you just want it to end? You're in a bad mood, no matter how much you try to smile it turns into a scowl.

- You roll over to turn the alarm off and hit your head on the corner of the bedside table.
- You go to pour your sultana bran into the bowl and all you are left with is the crushed up flakes at the bottom of the packet, you are forced to add skim milk because you are all out of regular, and then it just becomes mush.

I don't know what the story is for you. But even the nicest people can be forced into situations that just make them unbearable. For me, it's sunburn. Man I hate sunburn, when I am sunburnt just don't go near me, I'm just an angry person.

- Maybe it's when you don't do well on an exam
- Maybe it's when you get cut-off in traffic
- Maybe it's when you are sick

In that moment we just want to be alone. In these moments life sucks, the world sucks. The Bible is full of people who feel this way, but not just the surface level stuff, but have found themselves in situations where they have been cut to the core, feel betrayed – and it is in these moments that we find **prayers of lament**, which is what we are going to explore this morning.

Because when we are in these times of pain it effects the way that we relate, communicate, and engage with the people around us – and the same thing happens in our spiritual relationship with God. How do we communicate with God when we are at our worst?

Read: Psalm 74:1-8

- There are going to be times in our life when we feel like the author of this psalm.
- What a bold prayer. This is a psalm of lament. You can hear the anguish. Now lament my not be a word that you are familiar with, but the feeling behind it may be very common.
- A lament is a crying out, a passionate expression of grief, and it comes from a deep place within you from your core.

Lamenting isn't complaining or having a sook – prayer is crying out from the core of who you are. Appealing to God's character even when the circumstances seem to defy his presence. It's deep, raw, honest expression. It is a crying out when we feel like God has forgotten us.

- Psalms – lament is by far the largest category
- Not to mention the Book of Lamentations, Job – example after example of people who are crying out to God when life just sucks. The Bible really is a book of tears.

GOD DOESN'T JUST WANT US AT OUR BEST. HE WANTS US AT OUR WORST.

As I was reading these passages, as over and over again I saw the writers cry out to God, something dawned on me. When it comes to relationship, communication, when it comes to prayer: *God doesn't just want us at our best; God wants us at our worst.*

God doesn't just want us at our best, he wants us at our worst.

Not just when our circumstances are at their worst, but when we are at our worst. That's right, when we are frustrated, when we feel isolated, when we feel like God doesn't see us, when we cry out to God, "See this!", "Why have you forsaken me?" God wants us.

- Temptation at church:

This is so different to the way that the world functions, and perhaps even how the church behaves. Especially within Western society, **the temptation is to put on a brave face, we hold back.**

Guitar Story – sucking it up

- Temptation with God:

Rather than pouring out our heart to God, we keep it to ourselves and we let it take a hold on us. As if somehow this is righteous. **Frustration constipation.**

Read: Psalm 74:9-12

That story was just about a guitar, but what about the real stuff?

We don't need to look far to feel grief rise up:

- Bullying
- A young man self-harming – God, why won't you just affirm their value
- A member of a church with cancer – everyone is praying, but God doesn't heal them
- When I was in Nepal, a woman came into hospital with 80% burns on her body. Why didn't you stop that injustice God?
- Perhaps you are seeking a job with no success
- Perhaps a character trait, behaviour or impulse – and you are "God get rid of it!" but he doesn't.
- Doing the right thing, yet cheaters prosper
- Family breakdown

Prayer isn't just for the good times. Prayer isn't just for the hard times. Prayer is for the confusing, conflicting, the angry, the despairing times. Prayers of lament can and should be part of our dialogue with God.

GOD CAN TAKE IT

You need to know that in these moments. **God can take it.**

What is your picture of God?

- Is God unknowable, unfeeling...
- Does God sit beside you?

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Read: Psalm 74:13-17

A prayer of lament is when **we choose to go to God rather than to others**, rather than pulling away from God, we choose to open ourselves up to him.

Do we trust God enough to go to him at our worst?

ILLUSTRATION: THE YOUTH LAMENT

Read: Psalm 74:18-23

Laments always end in **hope**, in a with a trust in God's character.

As we pour out our heart it creates space for God to fill it. It is often in our moments of desperation that we find healing. It's ok to lament, it's ok to cry out.

God wants us at our worst.

APPLICATION

Application for **Monday**

- **Learn from the format of the psalm:** Address God, Get Specific, Get Personal, Remember God's Faithfulness, Declare Hope

But for this **Moment:**

- Is there anything you need to pass over to God?
 - What is breaking your heart?
 - What is taking up headspace?
 - What is the thing "as a good Christian" you don't think you're allowed to bring up?