

Questions for this Week's Panel

Each week's brief panel with members of WEPC serves to get the discussion going with your group, family or friend. Most of these questions will be revisited as you continue the conversation in the next section.

- **Introduce yourselves**, and share one thing about your work, family, or involvement at WEPC.
- Is there anything in particular from Chapter 8 that especially **spoke to you**, or stuck with you?
- "Lamentations concludes with three prayers that serve as directional markers for the journey ahead...what to pray when the future is not clear" (142). This week, we will consider each of those prayers.
 - 1.) **"Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us; look, and see our disgrace!"** Lamentations 5:1
 - "Central to this appeal is the feeling of shame...an appeal for God to remember while at the same time rehearsing the pain" (143-4). Think about suffering in your family or community. How is it **faithful & helpful to "rehearse our pain"** as we ask God to remember?
 - 2.) **"But you, O LORD, reign forever; Your throne endures to all generations."** Lamentations 5:19
 - Jeremiah draws strength in remembering that God was sovereign over the suffering of God's people. Share a time you **struggled to believe** that God is sovereign, or time when God's sovereignty was a **comfort** to you.
 - 3.) **"Restore us to Yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old."** Lamentations 5:21
 - How do you know if God is **restoring and renewing you**?
 - "The sorrow of loss can lead us to the Man of Sorrows" (150). How has **lament led you to the Good News** of Jesus Christ?

Lamentations 5

¹ Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us;
look, and see our disgrace!

² Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,
our homes to foreigners.

³ We have become orphans, fatherless;
our mothers are like widows.

⁴ We must pay for the water we drink;
the wood we get must be bought.

⁵ Our pursuers are at our necks;
we are weary; we are given no rest.

⁶ We have given the hand to Egypt, and to Assyria,
to get bread enough.

⁷ Our fathers sinned, and are no more;
and we bear their iniquities.

⁸ Slaves rule over us;

there is none to deliver us from their hand.

⁹ We get our bread at the peril of our lives,
because of the sword in the wilderness.

¹⁰ Our skin is hot as an oven
with the burning heat of famine.

¹¹ Women are raped in Zion,
young women in the towns of Judah.

¹² Princes are hung up by their hands;
no respect is shown to the elders.

¹³ Young men are compelled to grind at the mill,
and boys stagger under loads of wood.

¹⁴ The old men have left the city gate,
the young men their music.

¹⁵ The joy of our hearts has ceased;
our dancing has been turned to mourning.

¹⁶ The crown has fallen from our head;
woe to us, for we have sinned!

¹⁷ For this our heart has become sick,
for these things our eyes have grown dim,

¹⁸ for Mount Zion which lies desolate;
jackals prowl over it.

¹⁹ But you, O LORD, reign forever;

your throne endures to all generations.

²⁰ Why do you forget us forever,
why do you forsake us for so many days?

²¹ Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored!
Renew our days as of old—

²² unless you have utterly rejected us,
and you remain exceedingly angry with us.

Questions for Group or Individual Study

As you continue the conversation, this section has questions to reflect on this week's chapter, Scripture passage, and your own heart. Don't feel pressure to work through all of these questions, but choose several that work for you.

- The book of Lamentations shows us that God works through even the most difficult pain & suffering. Why are we often **reluctant to step into the pain** of others people's lives, or into the pain of a community?
- "Lamentations concludes with three prayers that serve as directional markers for the journey ahead...what to pray when the future is not clear" (142). This week, we will consider each of those prayers.

1.) **"Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us; look, and see our disgrace!"** (5:1)

- Why does Jeremiah **call on God to "remember"**? Doesn't He already know?
- "Central to this appeal is the feeling of shame...an appeal for God to remember while at the same time rehearsing the pain" (143-144). **Read Lamentations 5:2-18**. What are **some of the shameful and painful marks of disgrace** that Jeremiah recounts before God?
- Think about suffering in your family or community. How is it **faithful & helpful to "rehearse our pain"** as we ask God to remember?

2.) **"But you, O LORD, reign forever; Your throne endures to all generations."** (5:19)

- Jeremiah returns to the bedrock belief in God's eternal reign. **What is the "sovereignty of God"?**
- Share a time you **struggled to believe** that God is sovereign.
- Share a time when God's sovereignty was a **comfort** to you.
- **Read Acts 2:23-24**. The apostle Peter draws strength in remembering that God was sovereign over the universe's greatest suffering—the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. **Why is this truth so deeply encouraging to Christians?**

3.) **"Restore us to Yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old."** (5:21)

- **Read Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Ezekiel 36:26-27**. What does God reveal about **"restoration"** in His Word?
- How do you know if God is **restoring and renewing you**?
- "The sorrow of loss can lead us to the Man of Sorrows" (150). How has **lament led you to the Good News** of Jesus Christ?

This is our final study guide for Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy. We encourage you to continue to read through Part 3: Living with Lament to learn more about applying what we've learned together this summer.

Questions for Children

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are questions to ask as you read the Bible together.

- Read Lamentations 5:1. Are you in trouble? Jesus loves you! Ask Him to remember to help you.
- Read Lamentations 5:19. Are you scared? Jesus loves you! Thank Him for being our strong King.
- Read Lamentations 5:21. Do you need help? Jesus loves you! Ask Him for everything you need today.

Pray & Lament

- *Pray for God to remember our trouble & disgrace*
- *Rejoice that the Lord is sovereign*
- *Pray for Gospel restoration & renewal for our church and community*