

Lamentations — Lament & Hope

I often listen to movie scores and instrumental music while I'm working. When I sat down to write this companion on lament and hope, a beautiful song by composer Nicholas Hooper began. I recognized the song from a famous film immediately without looking at the title. I could see the scene in my mind, as the young students mourned over the sudden death of a beloved mentor and teacher.

My breath caught as the music swelled, and it was hard not to cry. Just *imagining* or remembering this lament by simply listening to the song that carried the emotion. This happens to me every so often when I listen to instrumental music, but more so when I attend live orchestras, musical productions, or concerts. Tears ran down my cheeks at a Candlelight Concert while hearing Hans Zimmer's "Time." There's just something about that point in a piece when the music swells—the violin strings tremble, the sound of the flute quivers, and even the bass strings seem as if they might break from the tension in the air.

I teared up at a high school assembly once when all the students started to cheer. There was something about the way the voices—the hearts—of everyone in that room blended together that created a truly beautiful and emotional moment. It was a powerful collection of united voices moving through the space.

Maybe this is why our lamentations are not meant to be carried alone. Just like when music swells, crowds cheer, or voices cry out, there is an interconnectedness that lies in a community of shared emotions. Yet, grief is an emotion we fear showing or sharing.

***Maybe this is why
our lamentations
were not meant to
be carried alone.***

***There is an
interconnectedness
that lies in a
community of
shared emotions.***

We may not have the right words, but we can sit and listen. We can even take a stand. We can make music with our hands and our hearts. Our cries and our songs. Our joys and our heartbreaks.

God shows up and the Spirit moves in such moments. Sometimes simply sitting in our silence with us, as we do with one another. Other times sweeping us up on the backs of the wind, bringing tears to our eyes and taking our breath away.

Oh, to be a people who take a stand not to shy away from such moments. Moments that opened us up to authenticity and vulnerability with one another. That showed us the beauty of the emotions we all feel. Emotions that all humankind feels, that God created, and that Jesus himself experienced.

When we hear the music created by cries as well as joy, we have a choice to listen or to not. We can choose to join in another's lament and carry some of the grief with them. We also have the choice to turn aside, to ignore our possible responsibility in their grief, or to scoff at questions like, "Do you not see this?" "How can this be?" "How can we let this be?"

Lamentations doesn't just show us how to lament—it also shows us how to hope.

I love when, after the music in a powerful score swells, nearly all the instruments but one or two suddenly drop out. It becomes a tiny light in the midst of the swirling emotions we just experienced. All that breath held in my chest can finally release; it feels like hope.

What hope is there in lament? The hope that God does not cast out His children forever. The hope that God is there, here, when the music swells, when it whispers, and even when it stops.

As we bear witness to grief and pain and lament, let us hear the Spirit. As we ask for forgiveness for our role in the chaos of the world, let us weep. As we hear the swelling of the cries of the world, let us be brought to tears.

Let us create a space to carry the music of both grief and joy. Let us learn what it is to experience this life through the melodies God created, and may our hearts swell as we find the harmonies to walk alongside Him during times of lament and times of hope.

***An exposed
underbelly of
inhumanity,
and do we say
or do a thing?***

PRAYER

A prayer to bear witness.

When I cry, may it be heard.

When my brother or sister cries, may it be heard.

When my neighbor cries, may it be heard.

*And when my enemy cries, across the divide, across the sea,
across the aisle, may it be heard.*

*Lay the blanket of lament upon us, that we may
create space and embrace the longest and darkest of nights,
for we know no one is cast away from You forever.*

*May we bear witness to the destruction and suffering,
calling out our own participation in the tears of the earth,
and in repentance cry together, "this should not be."*

Lord, when we do, may it be heard.

THE FOUR PILLARS

BEMA Discipleship is built on four pillars; a **Four-Pillared Perspective** to help us remember **to elevate the words of God** (not ours) and help us identify the principles that we see recurring in the story of God's people.

Here are some applications for this episode echoing the ideas of the four pillars:



TEXT

What stands out to you from the Text that you want to carry with you as you read the prophets? Try meditating and memorizing a bit of lament. How does it feel to sit in this?



COMMUNITY

How does your community react to lament and grief? With solutions and reasoning? Try sitting in silence, or with an instrumental track in the background, and just BE with one another.



DISCIPLESHIP

Who walks with you, in front or behind, holding space with you to lament? How do you model creating space for lament? How do you bear witness?



WRESTLING

What are your thoughts on the lament of Israel and Judah? How do you wrestle with the promise of God never casting one away forever? What sits uncomfortably about this?



Are you a music listener?

Listen along to our BEMA Music Playlists on Spotify.

Song suggestions? Send them to bemabesorah@gmail.com.



BEMA SESSION 2



MEDITATION & PRAYER

REFLECTION, APPLICATION & IMPACT

There are three emphases that we are always thinking about in terms of application at BEMA. These may be stated explicitly at times, but often we will want you to do the work of finding ways to connect the dots to the things we are learning. Much of this is what makes the work of BEMA distinct as a ministry of Impact Campus Ministries.

CREATING A SPACE SPIRITUAL FORMATION

*True success is developing intimacy with God. In Session 1, we encountered the idea of “Creating Space for God” in our lives. We believe that **if we do our part of creating that space, God will fill it** as He desires. You’re already doing this as you dive into the Text and jump into a place to discuss. God will meet you in these places! Look for places the Holy Spirit can do work in and through you as you go about your everyday life.*

CONSIDERING CAMPUS YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS

***We believe that young adults are shaping the future of this world.** Jesus modeled a ministry of discipling young adults, and that approach has and will work. If you are a college student who is listening, we want this material to be directly helpful to your pursuits. If you are not a college student, we want to challenge you to come alongside one and work together.*

SACRED STATION THEOLOGY OF WORK

*This isn’t only for church or Bible study; this is about what we do every day. How we do our job and how it may take advantage of or bring life to others is something God says is central to our presence in the world. Justice is very much something God cares about. Does our physical work (our 9–5 job) bring shalom or chaos? Does it exploit creation? The way we manage our employees, interact with customers or coworkers, care for our children, or create products can provide relief to others. **The work we do every day is sacred and matters!***