

The Lament of David

As we saw 1 Samuel 30 come to an end, it marked the conclusion of 15 years of running for David. The Philistines have overwhelmed the armies of Israel on Mt Gilboa, the son's of Saul have died including David's beloved friend Jonathan.

Saul has been severely wounded and asked his armor bearer to run him through with the sword; which he refused to do. Because he knew of the cruelty of the Philistines, Saul fell on his sword and died.

David returns after his victorious rescue of his family and the families of his men and receives the news. No more threats, no one chasing him, the running is over and it would seem he would be relieved. On the contrary, he and his men tore their clothes and mourned for his enemy and his friend. (He grieves equally for both)

David would write the following "lament", just one of many he would write in the Psalms. This was a time of processing and expressing grief and sorrow. David's recorded Psalms contain both laments and celebrations. Both teach us something about God and are very necessary for us. Make no mistake this isn't just a crafty or political move, David at his core is truly heart broken. In our country we don't process or grieve death very well.

We all believe that God starts or births things, but do we equally believe that he stops things as well?

"David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, 18 and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

19 "A gazelle lies slain on your heights, Israel.

How the mighty have fallen!

20 "Tell it not in Gath,

*proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
 lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad,
 lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.*

21 "Mountains of Gilboa,

*may you have neither dew nor rain,
 may no showers fall on your terraced fields.[b]
 For there the shield of the mighty was despised,
 the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.*

22 "From the blood of the slain

*For there the shield of the mighty was despised,
the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.
22 “From the blood of the slain,
from the flesh of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.
23 Saul and Jonathan—
in life they were loved and admired,
and in death they were not parted.
They were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.
24 “Daughters of Israel,
weep for Saul,
who clothed you in scarlet and finery,
who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.
25 “How the mighty have fallen in battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your heights.
26 I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;
you were very dear to me.
Your love for me was wonderful,
more wonderful than that of women.
27 “How the mighty have fallen!
The weapons of war have perished!” (2 Samuel 1:17-27)*

Lament: A Passionate Expression of Grief or Sorrow

David’s first act as a king was to call a day of mourning. We can’t let ourselves rejoice over the failure or even the death of an enemy. But what is a Lament?

“Lament in the Bible is a liturgical response to the reality of suffering and engages God in the context of pain and trouble. The hope of lament is that God would respond to human suffering that is wholeheartedly communicated through lament” Soong-Chan Rah

A lament is a passionate expression of our grief or sorrow. Although in some cultures it may feel awkward it is also very necessary *or* the “chickens will come home to roost” at some point.

Also a quick note about a part of our passage that could be confusing. It says in verse 26: *“Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women”*. Don’t see this through the lens of our culture, but see it through the lens of the culture at the time. There was a deep, covenant relationship between these two men that included physical expressions such as hugging or a kiss on the cheek of those from same sex.

Laments Bring the Pain into God’s Presence

We realize that we’re part of a much larger story with a much larger and more mysterious God, the God who says, “My ways are not your ways” (Isaiah 55:9)

larger and more mysterious God, the God who says,
"My ways are not your ways" (**Isaiah 55:9**)

But who simultaneously declares, "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (**Jeremiah 31:3**)

And will complete the good work that I started in your life "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 1:6**)

Laments increase the amount of compassion in our hearts

"The degree to which I learn to grieve my own losses is in direct proportion to the depth and quality of my relationship with God and the compassion I can offer others." **Peter Scazzero**

- Changes the way we **Look** at people:

We make most judgments about people within 20 to 30 seconds. As God told his prophet Samuel that he looked differently at people.

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."
(1 Samuel 16:7b)

"Racism is a problem of sin, not skin."

"He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean." (**Acts 10:28**)

"Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." (**Acts 10:34-35**)

- Changes the way we **Listen** to people:

We learn far more by listening, it will allow us to hear the hurt and pain behind the words.

*"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be **quick to listen, slow to speak** and slow to become angry,²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."* (**James 1:19-20**)

"Listen for the hurt not just to the words"

"Show proper respect to everyone..." (**1 Peter 2:17a**)

- Changes how we **Love** people:

Jesus: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."
(John 15:12)

"My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism." **(James 2:1)**

"If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right." **(James 2:8)**

"In the end, its not the words of your enemies it is the silence of your friends that causes you the most harm." **Dr. Martin Luther King**

As the Church of Jesus we don't have the choice to be silent, but we have the opportunity to be redemptive.

Lord help us to truly listen to other people and actually hear them.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What was your initial reaction to reading how David responded in a "lament", even though the death of Saul ended his 15-year run from a threat of death?
- 2) Pastor Randy taught us that a "*Lament: a passionate expression of grief or sorrow*". Please refer to your notes on pages 2 and 3 and discuss what "lament" means to you.
- 3) The next thing we learn about Lamenting is that it: *Brings the Pain into God's Presence*". Take a look at this section and scriptures on page 3. This is a beautiful truth that reassures us during times of loss, sorrow and grieving. Please discuss not only what this means but share possibly an experience in your life when your lamenting brought your pain into God's presence.
- 4) We next see that our "*Laments increase the amount of compassion in our hearts*". Please discuss this important point as well as the quote from Peter Scazzero on page 3.
- 5) Lastly, please discuss the specific ways that this will change important areas of our lives:
 - Changes the way we **Look** at people
 - Changes the way we **Listen** to people
 - Changes the way we **Love** people