

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

Phil O. Waldo
Lead Pastor



1224 Hancock Drive
Boone, Iowa 50036

Phone: 515 432-3329

Website: www.booneopenbible.com
E-mail: office@booneopenbible.com
pastor@booneopenbible.com

SERMON TITLE

From Gloom to Gladness

SERIES

Come Alive in 2025

DATE

3/2/2025

KEY SCRIPTURE

Lamentations 3:19-26

SYNOPSIS

When you're down and discouraged, look up to the Lord.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ FROM GLOOM TO GLADNESS

Lamentations 3:19-26

Lamentation = the passionate expression of grief or sorrow; weeping.

The Book of Lamentations is the collection of five poems or songs mourning the conquest of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah. It is a remarkable written work, because the first four of the five poems are written as acrostics. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used in succession to begin the lines and sections of those songs. "The use of the alphabet symbolizes that the completeness—the A to Z'—of grief is being expressed." (H.L. Ellison)

Most scholars agree that Jeremiah is the author of Lamentations, and he is often referred to as "The Weeping Prophet" because he wept openly about the sins of his nation. He was also depressed at times about the futility of his message, since the people didn't believe him. But, as he predicted, the nation of Judah was eventually punished by God when Jerusalem was destroyed and the leading citizens were deported to Babylon.

So, Jeremiah fully understood the feelings of gloom, despair and agony. (from TV's *Hee Haw*) And even though most of his life was filled with misery, he still found hope in the Lord. He went **FROM GLOOM TO GLADNESS** because of his faith in God.

Lamentations 3:19-26

19 I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. 20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. 21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: 22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." 25 The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Let's take a bit at a time...

19 I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. 20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

Earlier in the chapter he describes his situation – having seen the affliction of God's wrath, he felt abandoned and attacked by God as well as his own people. It seems as though he had been locked up with no chance of release. He had been mistreated and cast out. His body is worn out, his heart is broken, and he feels utterly defeated by all that he has seen and experienced. No wonder his soul is downcast! And, it seems the more he dwells on those things, the more discouraged he is.

That's the nature of depression – it's easy focus on the misery, but the more you do, the worse it gets. ☞ **Depression is a self-feeding downward spiral.** But the scripture tells us to not stay focused there...

Psalms 42:11

11 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.




Isaiah 43:18-19

18 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. 19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"

And, this is exactly what Jeremiah switches to here in Lamentations 3...

21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: 22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Jeremiah intentionally reminds himself of something different. While it is true that God has brought trouble upon the nation, it is also true that God, by nature, is loving and compassionate. There are  times that you have to **make yourself remember God's character**. He is full of mercy and faithfulness. He loves you more than you can imagine. Even if you brought on your own trouble, God has new mercy for you every day.

Actually, the word for compassion here is related to the womb, which suggests an inexpressible closeness. In **Isaiah 49:15** God says, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"

When I was a kid, if I wanted to play and rough-house, I went to Dad. But, if I needed some sympathy and "a kiss to make it all better," I went to Mom. And, that's sort of the picture here. God is our Father, but his love and compassion toward us is like a mom. So, Jeremiah reminds himself of God's **full** character – yes, he disciplines like a dad, but he is also sympathetic and compassionate like a mom. And, this realization stirs hope in the prophet.

Wiersbe... Here at the heart of this book we find one of the greatest confessions of faith found anywhere in the Bible. Jeremiah had been dwelling on his sorrows and the sorrows of his people, but then he lifted his eyes to the Lord — and this was the turning point. In the midst of sorrow and ruin he remembered the mercy of the Lord. We have failed Him, but He cannot fail us.

I have hope... Some think of hope as sort of wishing for something, but that's not what's being said here. Jeremiah is not just wishing for God's mercy. He is confident in the Lord's mercy, compassion and faithfulness. Even though the nation had walked away, God would not! **2 Timothy 2:13** says, "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful." NLT

Micah 7:18 describes more of God's character: "Who is a God like you, who **pardons** sin and **forgives** the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to **show mercy.**"

Psalms 30:4-5

4 Sing to the Lord, you saints of his; praise his holy name. 5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but **his favor lasts a lifetime**; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

So, remember God's full character – he is loving and compassionate; in his mercy, he pardons, forgives and redeems. He may discipline us, but it's only for a moment, while **his favor is forever**.



24 I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.”

Here again, we see the intentionality of Jeremiah as he directs his own thoughts. “I say to myself...” **2 Corinthians 10:5** reminds us to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” We must **☞ weigh our own thoughts on the scale of God’s Word. Tell yourself what God’s Word says.**

Philippians 4:8-9

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

☞ True peace comes from aligning with God’s Word. There’s even a popular guide for sharing something on social media that’s similar to this. It simply asks you to **THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE: T – is it True? H – is it Helpful? I – is it Inspiring? N – is it Necessary? K – is it Kind?** So, align your thoughts with God’s Word and continue to trust him.

25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Here, we see more of God’s character: he is good and he brings salvation. He is our portion: in other words, he is enough. Therefore, we should continue to put our hope in him; continue to seek him; and continue to quietly wait for him.

☞ Put your hope in God – keep the faith; **remain confident in God’s character!**

☞ Seek him – **look for God in every situation**; even when things are utterly depressing, what is God doing and saying in that circumstance? **Matthew 7:7** says, “seek and you will find.” Looking for trouble? You’ll find it. Misery? You’ll find it. Look for God. Look for hope. You’ll find it!

Quietly wait – this is more trust in God, but also includes the idea of silence. **Psalms 46:10** says, “Be **☞ still**, and know that I am God.” So, **shut up and listen!**

*Wiersbe... In times of trouble we need to imitate Jeremiah who looked away from himself to the Lord, and who waited on the Lord in patience and faith. Too often we look at ourselves and our problems and become so discouraged that we quit. Instead, we must “look away unto Jesus” (Hebrews 12:1-2) ☞ and let Him see us through. (NIV... **fix your eyes on Jesus**) It is difficult to wait on the Lord. Our fallen nature craves activity, and usually what we do only makes matters worse. Jeremiah waited on the Lord, trusted in His mercy, and depended on His faithfulness. He knew the truth of Isaiah 40:31 (NJKV), “Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”*