

## Corporate experience of lament

### Mark Vroegop's 4-stage outline of Biblical lament<sup>1</sup>

1. Turn to Prayer
2. Bring our complaints
3. Ask boldly
4. Choose to trust

### Read Psalm 77

### Sing – Where are you, Lord?<sup>2</sup>

Leader: How long, O Lord, will you forget us forever?  
People: How long will you hide your face from us?  
Leader: How long must we wrestle with our thoughts and sorrow fill our hearts?  
People: Look upon us and answer us, O Lord our God  
Leader: We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground.  
People: Rise up and help us; rescue us because of your unfailing love.  
Leader: May your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need.  
People: Help us, God our Saviour, for the glory of your name.  
Leader: Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.  
People: From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

### Prayer<sup>3</sup>

Our heavenly Father, you know our hearts. We are those who are lost and ruined by the Fall. We represent all kinds of griefs, and sorrows, and burdens.

Oh God, you know the particular suffering that exists in this room. In our bodies, our minds, our emotions, we have felt the curse of the Fall. And God, we confess to you—this is hard. Oh God, surely You see the daily, moment by moment battles—the despair, the pain, the loss of perspective, the endless and seemingly ineffective treatments. Oh God, surely you hear the cries and prayers of your people, in all this—as we pray for ourselves, for our loved ones, for our children.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*; 2019

<sup>2</sup> © Matt Bennington 2019 – sheet music available from <https://www.christchurchcambridge.org.uk/music>

<sup>3</sup> Taken from <https://www.9marks.org/article/what-does-a-prayer-of-lament-sound-like>

And yet, so often those answers seem to come so slowly—or even not at all. Oh God, we know your promises to work good in our trials, but Lord we confess, oftentimes, we just don't see it. It just doesn't make any sense. So God, help us. Do not abandon us. See our suffering and act, in your mercy.

Oh God, we are a people who have seen death. Many here this morning grieve the death of a spouse, the death of a child, the death of a friend. We miss these loved ones. Our hearts ache. And the nights are long and lonely. Oh, Lord, we know from your Word that death was not initially a part of your creation. We know that death is your judgment on sin. But Lord, we pray, do not abandon us in your judgment. Because you more than any of us feel the wrongness of death. You are the God of life.

Oh Lord, do not forsake us. Do not leave us in our sorrow. Please show us the light of your face.

We mourn that we are not with you now. In our suffering, we are again and again reminded of that separation, reminded of our sin, of the judgment we deserve, of your wrath against our sin. So God, please be merciful to us. Do not allow Satan to use our suffering to deceive us. In the midst of our suffering, hold on to us.

Oh God, we believe that you have provided the greatest answer to our suffering in the resurrection of your Son. Impress upon our hearts the truth and hope of the gospel. Help us to hear the comfort of the gospel louder than the condemnation of our pain. Help us to see Christ, our suffering Savior, our sympathetic High Priest. Cause our hearts to be satisfied in Him.

Be merciful to us. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

**Sing – Be still my soul**