

10 July 2020

Dear Church family and friends,

Jeremiah's laments follows the prophetic book named after him. He was known as the "weeping prophet." For what did Jeremiah weep? God used the Babylonians to execute his judgement on Jerusalem for their blatant and consistent turning away from God. Jerusalem had been completely ransacked and as a consequence many Jews were taken as prisoners to Babylon. From a deep sense of sympathy and empathy, Jeremiah wept for his beloved and the loss of their irrecoverable past. I believe this is a portal for us to enter Lamentations. We too, are lamenting the loss of our irrecoverable past and with a deep sense of grief.

What are tears? Well Pastor, tears are drops of salty fluid. Another question—what are the origins of tears? A baby cries for food or from a wet diaper. Our dogs cry to go outside. We've all laughed until we cried. Tears can originate in the eyes of our heads but also in the eyes of our hearts. A friend of mine noticed his daughter crying. He asked "are you crying?" She responded, "No daddy. My tears are just washin' out my heart!" Out of the mouths of babes...

I believe we too are experiencing our hearts being washed out. We are grieving the irrecoverable past. We grieve the loss of the fundamentals so important to corporate worship. Acts 2:42 tells us "they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers."

We grieve the corporate aspect of not being able to share God's gift of "koinonia," the sacred fellowship of the people in whom the Spirit of God uniquely resides. We miss the corporate sharing of reminding one another and confessing together what it is we believe. We miss the intimacy of breaking bread together both outside and inside our homes, as well as the reverent sharing of the Lord's Supper, together. We miss being able to pray for/with and among the gathered people of God. We join with Jeremiah in our grief-weeping over our irrecoverable past.

Though our grief is as varied as the number of individuals in our community of faith, there is one unchanging, constant truth which binds us together. Together with God and with each other. The Palmist tells us the "sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken heart, a broken and contrite spirit, O God, you will not despise." We bring our broken hearts and contrite spirits to God and there realize God remains sovereign. God mourns and grieves with us. It's in our mutual lamentation that we experience God at work bringing about a new sanctity, apart from these difficult times, we may not have grown into. God's heart is broken by the very things which break our hearts. Yet, God is near to the broken-hearted bringing about the transformation totally unique to God's Spirit alone.

Yes, we grieve our irrecoverable past. And in the very next breath, God wipes away our tears while ushering us into a brand new day. Weeping lingers for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

Dear family, God remains sovereign and in complete control even during our times of grief... I weep with you. God weeps with you even as the Holy Spirit is birthing a new day and time among us and within us.

Grace and Peace, my beloved church family.



Pastor Sam