



CAYA Series – 52 Stories of the Bible

LAMENTATION, CONFESSION AND FAITH

The book of Lamentations teaches us that there is an end to God’s patience with sin. It is a national lament in which Israel expresses their deep sorrow over sin. It starts by being honest about the cause of sin, not blaming anyone but themselves. But it concludes by expressing their faith in the God who forgives.

[<https://www.biblicaltraining.org/lamentations-authentic-confession-faith/major-stories-bible>]

LEARNERS WILL:

- Explain what it means to “lament” and the direction of its focus
- List and apply to your own life the steps to authentic confession
- Discuss the importance of being absolutely, painfully honest about our responsibility in our own sin and the God ordained punishment that comes as a result of our sin
- Share how you can help someone who is in the midst of pain and blaming God direct attention to him or herself
- Discuss how affirming your faith in God in the midst of your pain would be the right, best and most helpful thing to do

LAMENTATIONS: AUTHENTIC CONFESSION OF FAITH

THERE IS AN END TO GOD'S PATIENCE

All sin must be confessed! Judah refused to confess their sin, which means their sin must be punished. God used a Babylonian nation to destroy Jerusalem and conquer the nation.

Sorrow for sin often doesn't come until it is too late. The Book of Lamentations was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586.

Lamentations is a National Lament. It is an expression of deep sorrow for sin. It is confession for sin.

It's "National" in that the author speaks for the nation as a whole. Jeremiah is speaking for the whole nation. The lament focus is not on their punishment. The focus of the lament is on their sin. **Israel's sin forced God to punish them.**

If you want to know what *true biblical confession of sin looks like*, here it is.

Anonymous — tradition is that Jeremiah is the author

There are **5 poems of 22 verses**. The main point is right in the middle of the **66 verses**. It contains the central affirmation Jeremiah wants to make in the book.

This is passionate book.

Jeremiah has come to grips with the sin. Scripture shows Jeremiah as being very deliberate in expressing his sorrow for sin.

CONFESSION STARTS BY BEING HONEST

In Jeremiah, Chapter 1:1-4 he writes that things are really, really bad. Jeremiah is being totally, brutally honest. Things are really bad. Lamentations 3:45. Jeremiah is confessing.

"Brokenness" – someone not making false pretenses. Someone not putting on appearances. Someone who is honest and authentic and pouring out his heart to God. Its heart wrenching. Not holding anything back. Lamentations 2:11. Part of Authentic Confession is Honesty about the Cause. It's about saying "This is why things are so bad." He is bluntly honest about the cause for all

the pain going on. **We sinned — we deserve God's punishment — it is our fault!**

There is no (zero) victim mentality or pointing the fingers at others who may be at fault. He accepts full blame to what happens to him. The nation says through Jeremiah, “It is our fault.” Lamentations 1:5 & 20; 5:16. Part of authentic confession is honesty about the cause and Lamentations is blunt honest. They sinned. They deserved the punishment. And therefore will accept the punishment.

Now there were other people involved. Other forces at work, but never does he blame them. — Lam 2:14 (cf. 4:13-15a) There were false prophets of Israel, who instead of speaking God's truth, spoke lies. They tickled people’s ears. They did not expose the people’s sin. Therefore, their restoration was not possible.

There is no way to restoration and no way to wholeness with God unless there is confession of sin. The role of the prophet was to expose the sin so that people will see it and confess it and they would be restored. 1John 1:9. If we do not confess our sin there is no forgiveness. The prophets are supposed to point out the sin so that we can confess it.

God has no statute of limitations. If we refuse to confess our sins He will not forget our sins. Biblical preaching brings exposure of sin. And with exposure of sin through the power of God’s spirit, we are led to confession. And with confession and repentance comes divine forgetfulness. Scripture says He has removed our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west. He has forgotten our sins and he remembers them no more. We move into restoration. **It starts with the awareness of sin whether through prophets or preaching then it moves to confession. If you don’t have that then we can never get to restoration.**

There were false prophets who refused to preach and identify what the real problem was but Jeremiah never removes the blame off of himself and the people who actually committed the sin. Who is never blamed for anything evil? God never gets blamed for anything when it comes to true confession. It’s easy to blame God. The harder it gets, the more intense the situation gets it’s easy to want to place the blame on God. **Lamentations understands that it’s not God’s fault. It is my fault.** Lamentations 1:18. What is your view of God? God is in the right it is my fault. Jeremiah states that God is just doing what he says is will do. Deuteronomy 28 outlines the covenant. Lamentations 2:17. The punishment is my fault. God is doing what He said. God is not to blame.

God is Sovereign. God is absolutely in control. God is punishing me for my sins. He is not to blame. Lamentations 3: 4-6. God is in control. **He is**

punishing people for their sin just like He said He would and It is 100% my fault.

This is biblical confession and brokenness. This is the model for confession and brokenness. **True brokenness about being honest before God says: Yes, it is really bad. Yes, I have sinned. Yes, It I my fault. Yes, it is right for You to punish me, just like You said that You would.**

CENTER OF THE LAMENT IS JEREMIAH'S "FAITH"

All biblical laments are centered in a statement of faith. You see the laments in Psalms where the Psalmist wails and gnashes his teeth at how bad things are and how much it hurts and how the enemies are trying to kill him. But the next words are "You are my rock. You are my salvation." **It is in the midst of the hurt and pain that the Psalmist always cries out in faith. This is where his voice is the loudest.** After he states how he feels, then he confesses, then he proclaims what he knows to be true. What he knows to be true by faith.

In Lamentations 3:21-26 he makes a conscious, deliberate decision of the will. He uses his mind. He uses his heart to press forward in his faith. Our hope is not based in what we feel or on our emotions. Our hope is based in what we believe to be true. This pleases God. Scripture says "without faith it is impossible to please God." God wants us to respond in faith and to still say that I believe especially in the worst situation and in the midst of hurt and pain. Even when it has been self-induced or God ordained. Faith gives us hope in a difficult world. It gives us something to hang on to. To cling to what we know to be true which is the Character of God regardless of the circumstance. "Hesed" is he steadfast love that God has for his people. Even when God has to punish his people, his love never wavers. He is a God of mercy even when he has to punish his people. God is a faithful God. He will always be there.

It is in the midst of our pain and anguish that the voice that must cry out the loudest is the voice of faith. This voice says "I am going to hang on to God. I am going to hang on to what I believe to be true. I don't care what I feel like. I don't care what is going on. I don't care what the circumstances are. I know God is a God of steadfast love. I know he is a God of mercy. I know he is faithful. I know there is no other name, given among heaven whereby men must be saved and that name is Jesus Christ, and that is all I need. I am going to hang on to it." That is biblical confession. That is biblical brokenness.

CAYA Lesson “Lamentation, Confession and Faith

It’s all fine and good to talk about God's love, mercy, faithfulness, and salvation when everything is okay. But it is in the midst of pain that you really find out what you do believe.

BIBLICAL CONFESSION

Biblical confession and biblical brokenness is messy. It is a thing if the heart. But at the same time it is also freeing. It’s freeing when we finally bring our sin to light and say, “God, you have known it all along, but I am going to tell it so it is clear. I have sinned. I have done what is wrong. I deserve what is happening to me. Oh God, you are the sole source of my salvation. You and you alone hold the keys to restore my soul.” This kind of confession is freeing. It brings things to light. It breaks the power! There is no freedom apart from the confession of sin and repentance and faith in Him. None whatsoever.

[Small Group Activity]

Stories of the Bible CAYA Series

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

1. Have you ever known sin to go unpunished? Has there ever been sin without consequences?
2. Have you ever seen true lamenting? How did it make sin and confession more real to you?
3. What happens when you are not honest about sin and its obvious devastation? Can you think of a time when you tried to ignore it and it wouldn't go away?
4. Sometimes we play the blame game. How can we learn to be absolutely painfully honest about our own responsibility in our own sin and the God-ordained punishment?
5. Has blaming God ever helped you? How can you help someone else in the midst of pain and blaming God to direct attention to himself or herself?
6. Think through some difficult time in your life, perhaps even right now, and discuss how affirming your faith in God in the midst of pain would be the right and best and most helpful thing to do?