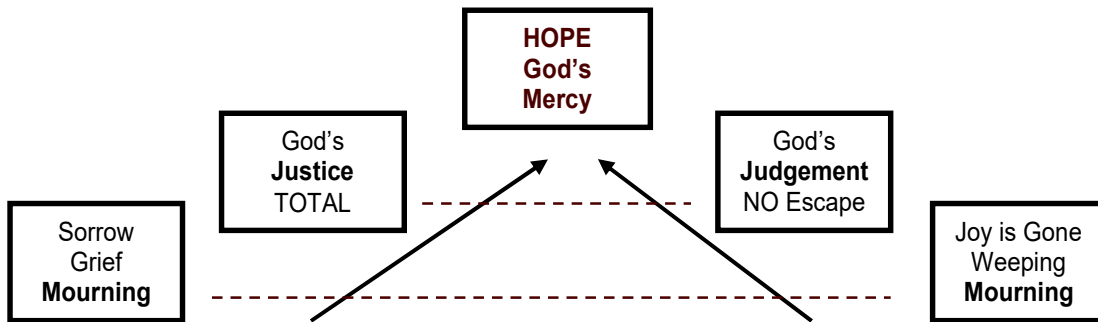


Desolation Chaos HOPE? ~ Lamentations 3:19-23

→ Scripture Reading Lam. 3:17-23

INTRODUCTION

→ Fire 1 → Fire 2 → Fire 3



The GUILT of Jerusalem ~ Lamentations 4:5-6, 12-13

⁵ The people who once ate the richest foods now BEG in the streets for anything they can get. Those who once wore the finest clothes now search the garbage dumps for FOOD. ⁶ The GUILT of my people is greater than that of Sodom, where utter disaster struck in a moment and no hand offered help. (NLT)

¹² Not a king in all the earth - no one in all the world - would have believed that an enemy could march through the gates of Jerusalem. ¹³ Yet it happened because of the sins of her PROPHETS and the sins of her PRIESTS, who DEFILED the city by shedding innocent blood. (NLT)

Jeremiah 23:11 (NLT) Even the priests and prophets are UNGODLY, WICKED men. I have seen their despicable acts right here in MY own Temple, says the LORD.

IMPLICATIONS

→ The godly followers of God SUFFERED along with the Wicked

Jeremiah 38:2-4 (NIV) This is what the LORD says: 'Whoever stays in this city WILL DIE by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever GOES OVER to the Babylonians **will live**. He will escape with his life; he will live.'³ ...This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it.

⁴ Then the officials said to the king, This MAN should be put to DEATH. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is NOT seeking the GOOD of these people but their ruin.

Those who were FAITHFUL to God SUFFERED along with the Wicked

LAMENT... The Bible Project

- Reminds us it is OK to Cry out AGAINST Suffering
- Helps us PROCESS our EMOTIONS
- Gives a Voice to our CONFUSION and ANGER
- Draws attention to what is WRONG
- Asks God to DO SOMETHING

Jerusalem EMPTY and DESOLATE ~ Lamentations 5:15-19

¹⁵ Joy has LEFT our hearts; our DANCING has turned to MOURNING. ¹⁶ The garlands have fallen from our heads. Weep for us because WE HAVE SINNED. ¹⁷ Our hearts are sick and weary, and our eyes grow dim with tears. ¹⁸ For Jerusalem is empty and desolate, a place haunted by jackals. ¹⁹ But LORD, You remain the same forever! Your throne continues from generation to generation. (NLT)

Judah was not suffering because her God had been defeated by the stronger gods of Babylon. Judah's God was the only true God, and He had caused her calamity. Yet this same God who brought about her destruction also had the power to bring about her restoration. BKC

IMPLICATIONS

→ God is STILL God - He is SOVEREIGN forever

¹⁹ But LORD, You remain the same forever! Your THRONE continues from generation to generation. (NLT)

DARING to HOPE ~ Lamentations 3:19-23

¹⁹ The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. ²⁰ I will never forget this awful time, as I GRIEVE over my loss. ²¹ Yet I still DARE to HOPE when I remember this: (NLT)

²⁰ I continually think about this, and I am depressed. (NET)

²¹ But this I call to mind; therefore I have HOPE: (NET)

²² The FAITHFUL LOVE of the LORD NEVER ends! His MERCIES never cease. ²³ Great is his FAITHFULNESS; His mercies begin afresh each morning. (NLT)

TAKE AWAY ??

→ Choosing to HOPE - takes COURAGE

^{3:20} I will NEVER FORGET this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. ²¹ Yet I still DARE to HOPE...

There is strength within the sorrow; There is Beauty in our tears
And YOU meet us in our mourning; With a love that cast out fears.
YOU are working in our waiting; Sanctifying us
And beyond our understanding; Your teaching us to TRUST
Your plans are still to prosper; You have NOT forgotten us
You're with us in the fire and the flood; You're Faithful forever
Perfect in love; You are Sovereign Over us

→ HOPE Requires ACTION - to REMEMBER Who God IS

²¹ Yet I still dare to HOPE when I REMEMBER this: ²² The FAITHFUL LOVE of the LORD never ends! His MERCIES never cease. (NLT)

Nehemiah 4:14 (NIV) ...Don't be afraid of them. REMEMBER the Lord, who is GREAT and AWESOME...

→ We have HOPE because God's Faithfulness Never Ends and His Mercies are Always NEW

²³ Great is His FAITHFULNESS; His mercies begin AFRESH each morning. (NLT)