



LIFE
IS
HARD

GOD
IS
GOOD

Focus of Week 1: We all have pivotal moments in our life where what was is no longer. Where the dreams and hopes we held have change. Israel found itself at one of these pivotal moments in 586 BCE when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, enslaved the people and deported many to Babylonia. Lamentations is the emotional reflection of that event.

Connect:

Story Cards (Select one. Appoint a time keeper to ensure everyone has a chance to share.)

1. Pick a card that captures what's going on in your life right now. Why did you pick the card you picked? (2 min per person)
2. Pick a card that captures your relationship with God right now. Why did you pick the card you picked? (2 min per person)

Lamentations describes the raw and honest journey of the people of Israel with God.

3. What has been one high point in your life? What has been one low point? How did these moments impact your view of God?

Discuss:

Lamentations is a powerful book, but a complicated one. The emotional responses to loss and grief are often cyclical and unpredictable, surfacing unexpectedly. It is not easy to draw out theological implications of suffering. This book recounts a specific event and a specific moment in time. However, a whole community holds in esteem and has relied on this book as a guide for proper lament, prayer and grief. The complexities of this book require wrestling. Stick with it. The conversation may be tricky, but if approached with maturity, will lead to a deeper faith and a better understanding of the human experience.

Read Lamentations 1:1-6

4. What stands out to you from these verses? What image of Jerusalem do you get from the descriptions?
5. What are the people of Israel mourning? Read 2 Kings 25:1-21 for a historical account of the event.
6. According to Lamentations 1:1-6, what was Jerusalem like before the events of 586 BCE? What were they like after these events?
7. Do you see any suggestions for why this might have happened? What do you think of the explanation it offers?
8. How would you describe the relationship between God and Israel at this point?
9. How have challenges and suffering affected your relationship with or view of God? How do you think Lamentations might help you in the midst of suffering or grief?