

J.J.

THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE (Expanded Edition)

Lamentations 3:20-23

(first preached in Summer Camp June 5, 2010 then on April 14, 2013 as part of Saturday Morning Devotion)

*Lamentations 3: 20 I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.
21 Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:
22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
23 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

Pray

INTRODUCTION :

Former heavy-weight boxer James (Quick) Tillis is a cowboy from Oklahoma who fought out of Chicago in the early 1980s. He still remembers his first day in the Windy City after his arrival from Tulsa. "I got off the bus with two cardboard suitcases under my arms in downtown Chicago and stopped in front of the Sears Tower. I put my suitcases down, and I looked up at the Tower and I said to myself, 'I'm going to conquer Chicago.' "When I looked down, the suitcases were gone."

Sometimes, that is what happens to us. We are full of great expectations and then the rug is pulled underneath us.

Examples : Everything is going well in your life and then suddenly someone in your family gets sick. Or you are just getting back on your feet when it comes to finances, and then you lose a job. Or you think your relationship is doing great and suddenly, your spouse or your partner suddenly says, they will have to leave you.

We become discouraged. That's the time we become so downhearted and so downcast. What do we do during these times?

These are the times we remember about God's love for us.

Background : Lamentations means "loud cries". It was written by Jeremiah after the nation of Israel was bloodily captured by Nebuchadnezzar. It was hard for Jeremiah to see this.

*Lamentations 3: 20 I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.*

Application : All of us one time or another or even today is undergoing trials and the one who wrote this, Jeremiah, was remembering this. He was even thinking that God was against him and **it is but natural that we become depressed, we become discouraged.**
SO WHAT DO WE DO?

*21 Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope*

Etymology : “call” recall (shuwb) to bring back

Application : When you are down, depressed and discouraged, what we do is not stop being depressed but we have to “deliberately” bring back or put into our mind these things and it will revive us again...

What is it that will revive us again?

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,

This is the one that Jeremiah recalled in his mind.

Story : Karl Barth, famed theologian was once asked, “What is the greatest thought you ever had?” His answer : “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” – Dale Galloway “Rebuild your life”

Etymology : “cheched” – mercies KJV, but cheched not only means love...but GREAT LOVE... “zeal” ...it’s a passionate kind of love that will not leave you.

In short, we are in His mind always.

*Psalms 139 : 1 O LORD, you have searched me
and you know me.*

*2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

*3 You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.*

*4 Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely, O LORD.*

*5 You hem me in—behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.*

*6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.*

*7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?*

*8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

*if I settle on the far side of the sea,
10 even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.*

Note : We have to bring back into our minds that God knows what we are undergoing through, God knows what we are feeling and GOD LOVES US SO MUCH

Illustration : June 2010, I was really down. We were in the midst of Chicay's third time battle with cancer. I was really so, so, so down and I was walking towards the car and I was looking into the heavens and suddenly a pastor just called me from out of nowhere saying that God has put me in his mind the whole day. His call was in perfect timing and he said that God just wanted to say that "Mahal na mahal ka ng Dios" That surely gave me encouragement.

***Now, here's what I want to tell you,** as David Redding says, "God is crazy about you."
And the proof of that is the cross. God loves us so much that He was willing to give His Son to die on the cross for us.

Biblical Illustration : The Prodigal Son should be titled "The Lovesick Father"

we are not consumed,

Etymology : we are not consumed "tamam" finished; destroyed

LISTEN TO THIS : What is God saying here? God is saying, "Don't worry, what you are experiencing right now **is not the end of the story.**" He is saying, "I have a purpose for this."

Quote : Let God do as he likes. If you are ever going to be wine to drink, you must be crushed. Grapes cannot be drunk; grapes are only wine when they have been crushed.
— Oswald Chambers

Why are we sure that what you are undergoing right now is not the "end of the story"?

Proof? Remember on Friday, He died on the cross and was buried. The enemy thought it was the end and that they have won BUT ON SUNDAY, HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

Story : One time I was so down in the Philippines and I was telling this to my best friend. He did not say, "Kaya mo yan." But I remember what he said which he heard from someone. "It's only Friday. Sunday is coming."

Let's remember that when we are undergoing trials and sufferings : It's only Friday. Sunday is coming.

THREE THINGS ABOUT GOD'S GREAT LOVE :

I. THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE NEVER FAILS

for his compassions never fail.

Etymology : Compassions “racham” tender affections, the seat of emotions
Do you see this? It's tender affections.

That's why in the Bible, it says...

Zechariah 2:8 for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye--
You are called the apple of God's eyes.

Mother's Love Illustration : The best kind of tender affections is not displayed between husband and wife, it's best displayed between a mother and a child. **I love it when I see my kids milling around my wife.** It's an image in my mind that I will cherish forever and yet look at what God says in Isaiah 49 :

*Isaiah 49: 15 “Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.
16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;*

Hindi kita malilimutan
Hindi kita pababayaang
Nakaakit magpakailanman
Sa 'king palad ang 'yong pangalan
Malilimutan ba ng ina
Ang anak na galing sa kanya
Sanggol sa kanyang sinapupunan
Paano Niya matatalikdan
Ngunit kahit na malilimutan
Ng ina ang anak niyang tangan
Hindi kita malilimutan
Kailanma'y 'di pababayaang (Song)

He knows what we're undergoing through.
for his compassions never fail.

Etymology : never fail “kalah” to cease not.

In short, His passionate love for us never ends and will never stop, will never cease
When we encounter problems,

God has asked us to remember. The Bible is full of instructions to remember how He opened up the Red sea and how He sustained them in the desert, how He sent food of manna and quail and how He made water flow out of a rock.

Story : One time, my wife and I were encountering some **problems, and then I remember telling this to her. “When did God fail us?” We looked back. He never did.**

Never... He never failed us.

Us, we might fail Him but He will never fail us. But even if we fail in loving Him, He will never fail in loving us.

*Jeremiah 31:3 The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying:
“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love;*

***Now look at this word picture :**

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

STORY BIRD AND A KID. A bird when it gets hurt and you try to embrace, it flies away. When a child gets hurt, it embraces the father tighter. Are we like the bird or the child? Now I want you to do something, close your eyes and imagine God embracing you right now.

II. THE LORD’S GREAT LOVE IS ALWAYS FRESH

23 They are new every morning;

Etymology : new “chadash” = fresh

Illustration : We love anything new. We love the smell of a new car or the feel of a new dress. We love taking a shower after being so dirty and smelly the whole day. We love the feeling of freshly laundered blankets.

God is a creative God. He wants to show His love for us in a new way everyday. It might be a good day or even a bad day but here’s what the Bible says about it.

Psalms 118:24 This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Illustration : I love looking out the window every morning because every morning is different. One day it will be bright and sunny, another day it will be dark, cloudy and cold, another day, the birds will be singing, or days when the trees are covered in ice and glittering or the sun touching your cheeks....it’s God’s way of catching your attention and say, “My child, do you see my glory”.

The problem : We are so consumed about worrying or about thinking about our own needs, wants, problems, and sometimes we are so in a hurry to appreciate we fail to see the so many blessings that God is showering us every day.

It ALL DEPENDS ON PERSPECTIVE.

Get the right perspective. When Goliath came against the Israelites, the soldiers all thought, "He's so big we can never kill him." David looked at the same giant and thought, "He's so big I can't miss."

For the others, they saw Goliath as a problem. David saw it as an opportunity to glorify God and what a blessing he's so big he cannot miss.

It's the same with us, it depends on how we wake up everyday and look at situations.

Story: When I was spiraling down, I was so focused on the darkness and the problem but there was a brother who I know was praying for me...that's a blessing. And then I knew the church was praying for me...that's a blessing. There was a couple who took me in, didn't ask questions but just showed their love me...that's a blessing.

Application : When we change our perspective, we will realize God's love for us is fresh every morning.

III. THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE IS EVER FAITHFUL

great is your faithfulness.

Etymology : *great* "rab" many,many...abounding

Niagara Falls Love : One of the touristy things you can do at Niagara Falls is to bring your friends or relatives to experience `The Maid of The Mist`. It will bring you so near to the falls that you will feel its power falling into the water (est 2 trillion liters of water per hour compared to Toronto uses 1.23B liters per day of water. Imagine this, a bath shower is around 9 to 15 liters per minute or around 900 liters per hour)

So remember, when you are visiting Niagara Falls or bringing friends there...remind yourself or your friends...that's how great is God's love and faithfulness to us.

This is the faithfulness of God to us. It will never run dry.

*Psalm 103 : 8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding (rab) in love.*

Etymology : *Faithfulness* "emuwnah" steady; it never falters; never goes hot or cold

In order to remember God's faithfulness, it is tied to Him being eternal. It means, He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT GOD'S FAITHFULNESS – it doesn't depend on you if he will be faithful or not. Faithfulness is one of His characters.

2 Timothy 2:13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

FIREMAN ILLUSTRATION : I always love telling the story of the fireman`s grip. The fireman when he rescues someone and uses his grip, doesn`t hold the hand of the one being rescued, he holds the arm, so even if the one he is rescuing loses his grip because of failing strength, he is still holding him. That`s how God holds us.

Yes, sometimes, we will be discouraged, so discouraged that we give up on Him but God doesn`t give up on you.

CONCLUSION :

We have been talking today about the Lord`s Great Love. But do you know who God`s great love is... YOU!

*John 3:16 For God **so loved** the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Change that word “the world” with your name.

REMEMBER THIS : YOU ARE GOD’S GREAT LOVE. Proof? He gave His own Son Jesus Christ for you.

**THIS IS THE ESSENCE WHY OUR LORD INSTITUTED THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD.
IT’S NOT A RITUAL. IT’S A REMINDER OF HOW MUCH HE LOVES US.**

GOD LOVES YOU.

S.G.D.