

G O D I S FAITHFUL

Owasso First Assembly of God

Pastor Bruce McCarty

Nov. 22, 2020

God is Faithful to the Suffering

Lamentations 3:19-26 (NLT2) 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**: ²² **The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease.** ²³ **Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.** ²⁴ I say to myself, **“The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!”** ²⁵ **The LORD is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him.** ²⁶ **So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD.***

1. God never promised we would be able to avoid problems, but he does assure us of deliverance and victory. **Psalm 34:19 (TLB)** *The good man does not escape all troubles—he has them too. But the Lord helps him in each and every one.*
2. Suffering is the main focus in two Old Testament books, Job and Lamentations.
3. Both books are labeled as a theodicy, defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil
Job is a about a righteous individual and Lamentations is about a sinful nation
4. The entire Bible is filled with examples of suffering.
5. When we suffer God is faithful.

1. Difficult times bring deep sorrow and uncertainty

1. Lamentations is a collection of 5 poetic laments for the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.
2. The five poems could be titled: a. The nations disgrace b. The city's desolation c. The prophet's distress d. The Lord's discipline e. The remnant's desire
3. The entire book is filled with words that describe a dire situation.
4. The Israelites were suffering because of their blatant and continual sins.
5. God is faithful to keep His word concerning sins outcome.

2. Difficult times can be fertile soil for growth

Prosperity is pleasurable but adversity is beneficial

1. Actions have consequences.
2. Disobedience leads to devastation and ruin.
3. Correction is needed when in error.
4. There is always a path back to restoration and it begins with contrition and repentance.
5. We need a fresh awareness of the severity of sin and the holiness of God.
6. Restoration often is a journey.

3. Difficult times should teach us to cling to God

1. God is our ONLY hope.
2. Faithfulness to God will be proven in testing.

Job 23:10 (NLT2) *“But he knows where I am going. And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold.”*

3. Seeing the problems in life in view of eternity keeps us grounded.

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NLT2) *For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!*

4. Lamentations doesn't end with resolution.

4. Difficult times should encourage us to be patient with others

1. Pray with those who are suffering.

James 5:13-16 (CSB) ¹³ *Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises.* ¹⁴ *Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.* ¹⁵ *The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.* ¹⁶ *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.*

Encourage with the goodness of God.

2. Encourage those who are suffering.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (ESV) ³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,* ⁴ *who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

3. Help those who are hurting. When you've done it to the least, you have done it for Jesus. Mt 25:31-46

Key questions to consider when suffering:

What is God doing through this?

How will I choose to respond to my problem?

Where will this road take me?

What are my resources to get through this season?

Let God faithfulness be the fuel of your faithfulness—Psalm 116:10

(CEB) *I have remained faithful, even when I said, "I am suffering so badly!"*

Arthur T. Jones says there are four words for tough times, "**Have Faith in God!**"