

Practicing Lament¹ - following the Psalm 22 pattern

Laments are prayers that face the brutal facts of our world, the pain points of our lives, and the challenges of our callings, and invites God right into the swirl of that disturbing moment as the one who is the primary and responsible actor during each crisis. (Tod Bolsinger)

Turning*²: inviting God into your place of pain

"My God, My God" (vs. 1)

- Speak to God in first person. Choose a name for God that could be relevant to your situation (e.g., Father, Lord of universe, My Leader, etc)
- Tell him the general nature of your plea – in one phrase, why are you coming before him? Let it be emotional.

Complaining*: unpacking to God your crisis

"Why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?" (vs. 1)

- Detail what has happened, how it has impacted you.
- Put words to your experience. Use words that describe your emotion (sad, hurt, angry, anxious, jealous, fearful, shame, lonely, etc)

Asking*: what you are asking God to do

"Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help." (v. 11)

- Plead for God's intervention.
- Be specific. These requests may change in the future – but they represent your current need – even if they aren't "publicly acceptable."

Trusting*: holding to what is true

"Yet you are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them." (vv. 3-4)

- What are some of the truths you KNEW (in a heartfelt way) about God before this all came about?
- Make a statement of your choice to believe, even if you don't fully feel it. (Keep in mind that lament is not a "quick fix" or "light-switch" approach to dealing with pain. It's not a means of suppressing your pain. Over time, as you continue to process your lament, you can anticipate your felt-sense of trust will increase. It's ok if you don't "feel" it right now.)

¹ This material is adapted from the Empower Program – see District Office for more information 1

² The four descriptive words come from a resource I highly recommend: Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy (Mark Vroegop)