



BY STREAMS OF LIVING WATER

A Six-Part Worship Series on the Psalms

4. Tears of Lament

Pastor David Flowers

Sermon Series Focus

For the most profound and enduring prayers of all time, both Christians and Jews look to the Psalms.

These timeless writings become our words when we have none. With vivid word pictures that capture our imagination, and in the beautiful artistry of the language, we will discover that the Psalms are empowering for faith as we learn to sing and pray them together in sincere devotion to God.

Sermon Series Purpose

- Deepen our individual and corporate prayer lives through the reading and study of the Psalms, as well as expand our appreciation for biblical literature
- Understand and experience a wider variety of personal and corporate prayer (e.g. desire, praise, confession, lament, justice, thanksgiving, etc.)
- Rediscover the power of faith that is not meant to be solely expressed intellectually, but emotionally as well; seeing that music, art, ritual, and passion are holy

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1. Soul Thirst (desire & longing)
2. Duty & Delight (praise & gratitude)
3. Clean Hearts (confession & renewal)
4. **Tears of Lament** (disorientation & lament)
5. Rains of Justice (vengeance & vindication)
6. Giving Thanks (thanksgiving & hope)

Tears of Lament

- Psalms of lament provide a pattern of prayer for desperate times. We do not hide our misery from God; we do not pretend that all is well. Instead, we name our grief, acknowledge our misery, and shed bitter tears.
- The prayer of lament is cathartic. Naming our woes and crying out to God opens a pathway to new awareness of God's presence. This is especially true when we lament together through soulful art in the community of faith.
- Through our honest expression and tears of lament, God's healing grace becomes palpable, and we find strength to continue to be faithful in the midst of struggle.

John, Revelation 21:1-5 NIV

¹ Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said,
“I am making everything new!”

Psalm 102:1-5 NLT

¹ LORD, hear my prayer!

Listen to my plea!

² Don't turn away from me
in my time of distress.

Bend down to listen,

and answer me quickly when I call to you.

³ For my days disappear like smoke,
and my bones burn like red-hot coals.

⁴ My heart is sick, withered like grass,
and I have lost my appetite.

⁵ Because of my groaning,
I am reduced to skin and bones.

Psalm 102:6-11 NLT

⁶ I am like an owl in the desert,
like a little owl in a far-off wilderness.

⁷ I lie awake,
lonely as a solitary bird on the roof.

⁸ My enemies taunt me day after day.
They mock and curse me.

⁹ I eat ashes for food.
My tears run down into my drink

¹⁰ because of your anger and wrath.
For you have picked me up and thrown me out.

¹¹ My life passes as swiftly as the evening shadows.
I am withering away like grass.

The Science Behind Emotional Tears

- It is the only physiological function that humans have that other animals don't have
- Emotional tears contain more proteins that are believed to release hormones and relieve stress
- People feel better after crying; feel less angry, and less sad
- Tearfulness evolved in the eyes as a strong emotional cue to others that a person is in pain or needs help
- Tears can be seen up close, but not far away

William H. Frey, PhD. Alzheimer's Research Center at the HealthPartners Institute for Education and Research in St. Paul, MN

“When we recall the painful past in a safe environment, we weaken that memory's association with the parts of our brain that drive fear and anger. We rewire our brains to take the punch out of those wounds, and finally allow them to heal. I think that's why people who've been hurt have to return to their stories over and over. They have an instinctive drive to share once they feel safe. As long as that doesn't become an obsession, it's healthy. Forgiveness and grief are helpful in living a whole, healthy life.”

Mike McHargue

<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/problem-grief-avoidance>

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

Jesus, Matthew 5:4 NIV

Jeremiah, Lamentations 3:22-26 NIV

- 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.
- ²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."
- ²⁵ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;
- ²⁶ it is good to wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

“Rejoice with those who rejoice;
mourn with those who mourn.”

Paul, Romans 12:15 NIV

Paul, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 NRSV

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.



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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org