

A lament for a pastor

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now to the Old Testament reading to 2 Samuel and chapter 1, and we can read at verse 19. 2 Samuel 1 and at verse 19.

He said, Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places, how the mighty have fallen. And so on down to the end of the chapter. The context hardly needs any kind of introduction. It is clear that Saul and Jonathan have been killed in the battle at Gilboa. It is clear that David has received news of that. And it is clear that David has been moved by the news that he has received. And he writes this lament. And he does so for particular reasons. He does so first of all because he is comparing the now with the past.

[1 : 07] And we are here tonight and that is what we are doing. It is inevitable. We are comparing where we are now with the past. And when David was doing that, he was comparing the past as a time of great victory to the now, the present as a time of defeat.

And tonight, I think it is fair to say that we feel something like that. The success and the glory of the past. And tonight, the sense of loss.

The power and the defeat. These are the things that David was conscious of. But he was writing a lament for a particular reason.

He was getting into the grief of his people. And he was doing that so that as part of his motivational training of them, he was going to work on their grief.

And they were going to remember this moment. And they were going to never forget this moment. And they would go back to this moment in the future. Because this lament was going to be written.

[2 : 16] And they would go back to it. And they were going to be inspired by it. It was a time of a sense of loss. But it was to be their motivation and their inspiration out of that sense of defeat to go forward into a sense of victory.

And tonight, I'm persuaded that if there is anything your late pastor would want, it would be that you would be motivated to go forward from here and to serve God.

And we want to think of this lament tonight as part of coming into your grief. And helping you in your grief to reach out to God. And by reaching out to God, being motivated to carry on serving God.

What a great purpose. And what a great desire. And tonight, we want to look at something of the way in which David was going to achieve that.

A lament. That can bring about change. First of all, I want us to notice that here we have a private lament.

[3 : 34] And the private lament emerges from the very beginning of the lament. Where there is a reality that they are facing. And what is the reality? The reality is with regard to the glory of Israel.

And glory of Israel. Not in the sense of the shiny glory of the nation. But the glory of Israel in the sense of the splendor and the honor of the royal household of Israel.

And here is where all of the glory and the honor dwelt. It dwelt in the royal household. And David is moved to think of the royal household and the beauty of this household.

And when he does so, he is bringing together Saul and Jonathan. And he is talking about them together. And he sees them that they are the glory of Israel.

There is that beauty in them which God has given to them. He has filled them with that inner beauty. And they go forward and they are the royal figures that lead the people of God.

[4 : 38] And so often when we read of the kings in Israel. Saul himself, he was a handsome young man. He was the glory of Israel.

He was head and shoulders above everyone else. We read of David and he himself. He was of beautiful eyes and he was very handsome. And he was a man of God's own heart.

And here he had this beauty. The glory of Israel. The royal household where the honor dwelt. And with regard to this glory of Israel, there is this reality.

And the reality is that the glory of Israel is slain on your high places. He is going to Gilboa. He is going where this last battle took place.

And he is thinking of that place. And all he can think of is the way in which this glorious has died. It has suddenly evaporated and vanished and ceased to exist.

[5 : 47] And it happened on the battlefield of the Philistines. The glory of Israel is slain. And when he thinks of the glory of Israel on the battlefield at Gilboa, he thinks of two people who are great warriors for Israel.

And that's how he describes them. How the mighty have fallen. And the mighty in the Old Testament is the warrior.

The successful warrior. The person who is superior in battle. Who goes forward and who leads the people of God. And who destroys the enemies of the people of God.

And so he is bringing together these ideas with regard to Saul and Jonathan. And they are now gone. And tonight, of course, that's the reality we face here.

The glory of Israel. Raised up by God. To be your minister. And to be a shining light for him.

[7 : 02] And to serve him in the world. Endowed with great spiritual gifts. So that he, as a mighty man of God, was a great warrior.

And so as the royal household were responsible. In the Old Testament. To protect the people. Responsible to be a warrior on their behalf.

And responsible as a shepherd to watch over them and to gather them. And so tonight, that's the reality of this occasion that we are sharing together.

That the protector of the people of God is gone. That the warrior who fought the battles for the kingdom of God in your midst of thee is gone.

That the shepherd who looked after your soul. And who loved your lives. And who preached Christ to you. And wanted to gather you around the true shepherd.

[8 : 07] That he is gone. And it is that sense of that reality. That causes David to give expression.

To a lament that is, in this case, private. He doesn't want the enemies of Israel to know. That these great men of the royal household.

That they have gone. No, he makes this plea. Tell it not in Gath. Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon. Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. He wants to switch off all communication with the Philistines. He wants to shut down all of the technology.

He wants to shut down all of the media. He does not want news of this great loss. To go out into the world where the enemies of the people of God are going to rejoice.

[9 : 11] And where they are going to rejoice. Because a great warrior. And a great leader. And a great commander of the people of God. Is gone. And tonight.

I think it is fair to say together. That we want this lament to be private. We don't want a watching world. Who want to laugh at the church in any case.

We don't want them to hear. Of course they will hear. But we would love to guard the sense of loss. So that the kingdoms of this world would not see themselves as having victory.

Because of our sense of loss. Don't tell it. And Gath. Don't put it in the newspapers. Don't put it on your news channels.

Don't let social media and Gath know anything about this. Because this has so affected the children of God.

[10 : 16] The kingdom of God. The people of God. In Israel. He wants the news kept private. Because.

The Philistines know. That Saul was the one who struck his thousands. He knows that the Philistines know that Jonathan was powerful in battle.

And. And. And. There is that sense of. Of the Philistines. Rising up. Feeling the strength of. Because of the weakness. Of the moment.

That has arisen. Out in the mountains of. Gilboa. A private. Lament. If only we could.

Go on. And. Keep this to ourselves. Before God. For the sake. Of the kingdom of God. Because. A warrior.

[11:14] The glory. The honor. Of the name. Of the Lord of hosts. He is the one. Who has. Lost. The captain of.

Your salvation. In the sense of. Being your leader. And being your teacher. And being your shepherd. A private. Lament. Lament.

Secondly. There is a. Communal. Lament. This. Has. Affected. The community.

Of the people. Of God. And it has. Done so. Because. Again. The kind. Of people. That Saul. And Jonathan. Were. In verse 23.

Saul. And Jonathan. Beloved. And lovely. In the King James Version. Saul. And Jonathan. Were lovely. And pleasant.

[12:13] In. Their lives. They were. Full. Of. The love. Of God. It's the love. Of God. That's spoken of. It's that love.

Of God. Which. Is. Seeking. The good of others. Which. Which is spontaneous. And. Which is free. Which takes up. The whole of a person's being. And which takes up.

The whole of a person's being. And that person's activity. Because. Pleasure. Is taken. In doing. What brings. Well-being. To someone else.

And. Saul. And Jonathan. They were lovely. Or. They were. Loving. And. As. As. Those. Who. Who. Were. Loving. They were.

Also. Lovely. That is. They had. That. Necessary. Beauty. That.

[13:08] Only. God. Could. Give. Them. Anointed. Made. Beautiful. By. The. Spirit. Of. God. So. That. In. Them. There. Was. This. Inner. Character.

Of. Beauty. That. Would. Shine. Out. And. That. Was. Shiny. Out. Through. Them. And. And. That. Loveliness. With. Which. They. Loved. And. That. Loveliness.

Which. Grew. Out. Of. Their. Character. It. Was. Both. Of. Both. These. Things. That. That. Left. Them. Going. Out. On. Behalf. Of. This. People. And. Doing. So. With.

The. Bow. And. With. The. Sword. With. Military. Power. Always. Committed. To. God. On. On. Behalf. Of. God. For.

The. People. Of. God. They. Were. Lovely. And. They. Were. Pleasant. The. Bow. Of. Jonathan. Turned.

[14:01] Not. Back. The. Arrows. The. Particular. Arrows. And. The. Accuracy. Of. Them. And. The. Sword. Of. Saul.

That. Did. Not. Return. Empty. And. And. We. Come. Into. The. New. Testament. And. And. We. We. See. That. That. The. Arrow. Is. The. Word. Of. God. Itself. We.

See. That. That. The. The. Sword. Is. The. Sword. Of. The. Spirit. Which. Is. The. Word. Of. God. And. As. We. Think. Of. Of. Of. The. Communal. Lament. Which.

Led. David. To. Think. Of. Of. Of. The. Sword. God. And. The. Bow. It. Leads. Us. Tonight. To. Think. Of. The. Preached. Word. Of. God. And. The.

Grace. Of. God. As. We. Have. In. Psalm. 45. That. Was. Poured. Poured. Out. From. The. Lips. Of. The. Lord. Jesus. Himself. And. The. Arrows. That. Went. To. Purse. The. Enemies. Of. The. King. And. The.

[14:55] Sword. Of. The. Spirit. That. Paul. Speaks. Of. In. Ephesians. Six. All. Of. These. Elements. That. They. Come. Together. Tonight. As. We.

Think. Of. A. Communal. Lament. As. We. Think. Of. Powerful. Preaching. As. We. Think. Of. Words.

That. Carried. The. Weight. Of. The. Gospel. As. We. Think. Of. Words. That. Came. Like. Narrow. Into. The. Hearts. Of. The. Enemies. Of. The. Kingdom.

Of. God. The. Power. Of. The. Words. That. Came. By. The. Power. Of. The. Spirit. Of. God. And. Brought. People. Alive. To. God. And. The. Way.

In. Which. The. Words. Were. Surrounded. And. Carried. And. Prepared. Through. The. Power. Of. The. Spirit. Of. God. So. As. The. Word. Is. Preached. That.

[15:47] God. Is. Bringing. About. His. Own. Victory. Through. The. Preaching. Of. The. Gospel. And. It. Is. That. Sense. Of.

The. Powerful. Impact. Of. The. Glory. Of. Israel. That. Is. Lost. That. Leads. To. This. Communal. Lament. What. Is. David. Say. You.

Daughters. Of. Israel. And. Let's. Just. See. The. Daughters. Of. Israel. As. The. Daughters. Of. Sion. That. Really. Speaks. Of. Of. The. City.

It. Of. Of. Of. Jerusalem. Here. It. Speaks. Of. The. Nation. They. Are. The. People. Of. Israel.
 Daughter. Of. Israel. Weep. Over.
 Saul. Do you. Tonight. Tonight. Do you. Want. To. Cry. Because. Of. Your.
 [16:42] Signs. Of. Grief. Do you. Want. To. Pour. Out. Your. Heart. Because. Your. Heart. Is.
 Broken. David. Was. Saying.
 To. The. People. Of. God. Weep. Why. Were. They. Going. To. Weep. Because. Of. The. Impact.
 Of.
 Saul. And. Jonathan. On. Their. Lives. And. In. This. Case. In. Particular. Saul. Weep. Over. Saul.
 Who. Clothed. You. Luxuriously. In. Scarlet. And. To. Put. Ornaments. Of. Gold.
 On. Your. Apparel. And. That's. What. The. King. Did. He. Gave. Them. Clothing. And. He. Gave.
 Them. Provision. And. He. Ensured. That. They.
 Were. Clothed. In. All. This. Kind. Of. Beauty. And. And. The. Beauty. With. Which. They. Were. To.
 Be. Clothed. Was. A. Beauty. Which. Set. Them. Foot. To. Be.
 [17:33] Part. Of. This. Kingdom. Of. God. And. As. Those. Who. Belonged. And. Who. Were.
 Prepared. And. Provided. For. By. This. Great. King. They.
 Were. Clothed. Luxuriously. And. They. Were. Clothed. With. Ornaments.. That.
 Is. Greater. Than. The. Garment. Of. Salvation. And. Isaiah. Speaks. Repeatedly. About. The. Way.
 In. Which. The. People. Of. God. Are. Going. To. Be. Don. Their. Beautiful. Garments.
 And. They. Are. Going. To. Be. Don. The. The. The. Garments. Of. Salvation. Isaiah. 50. And.
 Isaiah. 61. The. Garments. Of. Salvation. And. Tonight. That.
 We. Think. Of. Tonight. As. We. As. We. Mourn. The. Passing. Of. Your. Pastor. That. In. The.
 Gospel. Of. Jesus. Christ. That. It. Was.
 [18:40] Preached. With. The. Aim. To. Bring. You. To. Be. Clothed. With. That. Glorious. Power.
 Of. God. And. Your. Salvation. In. Such. A.
 Way. That. You. Were. Made. Beautiful. In. The. Sight. Of. God. In. Such. A. Way. That. You. Were.
 Transformed. In. Your. Lives. In. Such. A. Way. That. You. Were. Lifted. Up. In. Your. Hearts. In.
 Such. A. Way. That. You. Became. The. Children. Of. God. Indeed. Daughters. Of. Israel. Being.
 Daughters. And. Sons. Of. The. Living. God. And. With. These. Luxurious. Garments. Ornaments.
 Of. Gold. And.
 I. Find. Gold. Used. In. One. Place. In. Particular. In. The. Old. Testament. I. Find. Gold. Used. In.
 The. Tabernacle. And. In. The. Temple. Everything. Is.
 [19:33] Gold. And. Scarlet. And. Purple. It. Speaks. Of. The. Passion. Of. Christ. And. The.
 Coming. Of. Christ. And. The. One. Who. Made. Himself. The.
 Temple. And. And. You. See. The. Way. In. Which. All. Of. The. This. This. This. Communal.
 Lament. That. That. The. New. Testament. Points. Us. To. Tonight. It. Has. To.
 Do. With. God's. Salvation. It. Has. To. Do. With. Being. Made. In. The. Image. Of. God. It. Has. To.
 Do. With. Being. Clothed. With. The. Beauty. Of. Christ. And. Changed.
 Into. The. Likeness. Of. Jesus. Christ. And. This. Was. The.
 Way. In. Which. David. Wanted. To. Lead. Them. That. They. Would. Be. Overlaid. With. Gold.
 That. They. Were. Overlaid. With.
 [20:24] With. Scarlet. They. Had. That. Beauty. And. What. Tonight. Is. The. Legacy. That. You.
 Have. Been. Left. What.
 Tonight. Is. Is. Our. Motivation. And. Your. Motivation. As. You. Lament. As. A. Community. Of. The.
 People. Of. God. Is.
 It. Not. To. Think. Of. Salvation. Is. It. Not. To. Think. Of. The. Glory. Of. The. Salvation. That. God.
 Has. Given. To. You. In. Christ. And. Is. It. Not. To. Think. Of. The. Glory. Of. Christ. Himself.
 That's.
 What. The. Gospel. Is. For. And. Every. Time. That. It. Was. Preached. To. You. It's. So. That. You.
 Would. Be. Clothed. With. It. It's. So. That.
 [21:16] You. Would. Be. As. Precious. As. Gold. In. The. Eyes. Of. God. And. So. That. By.
 Embracing. Jesus. Christ. As. Your. Savior.
 That. Your. Life. Would. Be. Made. Truly. Rich. And. Tonight. As. As. We. Mourn. The. Passing. Of.
 Of. Of. Your. Minister.
 Together. We. Do. So. Especially. With. A. Focus. On. The. Gospel. Which. She. Preached. And. If.
 There. Is. One. Thing. That.

That. Gospel. It. Was. That. You. Would. Be. Saved. And. That. You. Would. Be. Made. Like. Christ. And. That. Ultimately. That.

You. Would. Be. With. Christ. And. As. You. Mourn. As. A. Community. Ensure. That. That. That's. Where. Your. Mourning. Brings.

[22 : 11] You. To. That. Very. Place. To. Which. The. Message. Of. The. Gospel. Was. Bringing. You. To. The. Passion. And. Work. Of.

Jesus. Christ. A. Communal. Lament. That. All. Of. The. Direction. Of. God's. Word. And. All. Of. The. Power. Of. God's. Word. And.

All. Of. The. Revelation. Of. God's. Word. The. Way. In. Which. It. Reached. Out. To. You. Was. For. This. Great. Purpose. And. Let's. Be. Motivated. By. That.

Together. This. Evening. That. In. Our. Grief. And. Our. Sorrow. We. Will. See. Salvation. And. We. Will. See. Its. Preciousness. And.

We. Will. Want. It. For. Our.

[23 : 38] Our. Our. Our. places of Gilboa. I am distressed for you. My heart is in a tangle.

My heart is narrowed and shut in. I feel I'm pressed into a corner because of you, Jonathan. My heart is broken for you.

It's a personal sense of grief. It's a personal lament. And it is personal with regard to my brother Jonathan.

Of course they weren't natural brothers, but they were brothers. And they were knit together in a special relationship.

And we read of that special relationship in 1 Samuel chapter 18 where Jonathan loved David as his own soul. And where the soul of Jonathan and David were knit together.

[24 : 49] And where Jonathan made a covenant with David. And he made David swear by his love. love. And it was the relationship that was going to bind them together forevermore.

It was a permanent relationship. It was a covenant relationship. And on the basis of this relationship Jonathan was going to depend on David.

And David was going to depend on Jonathan. And they were going to show this special steadfast love in the relationship that they had towards each other.

And we see that later on when David is looking in chapter 9. Is there anyone left of the house of Saul to which I should show kindness for Jonathan's sake?

There was a personal relationship. It was a close relationship. It was a binding relationship.

[26 : 03] And it was one in which they depended upon one another. And tonight as we mourn the passing of Dr.

Ian D. Campbell there is a sense of personal lament. Because our hearts were in it with him and his heart was in it with us.

And that is entirely biblical. It's required and it's the mark of the people of God. And John in the New Testament is able to say that I know I passed from death to life because I love the brethren.

He is able to say that if I love the father that I must love the children of God also. And tonight in our personal sense of grief and our personal sense of loss we are thinking of the family of God to which we belong together and to which we still belong together with him.

He is still part of the family but he is not here with us. But we tonight lament because he is no longer with us here.

[27 : 29] but we do want to think tonight of the love that did bind us together. And without in any way diminishing our love for him and our personal relationship with him our relationship with him was particularly formed on the basis of his relationship with the Lord Jesus and our relationship with the Lord Jesus and that is the love that bound us together to form the kind of gospel friendship on which we built our lives together and through which so much of gospel fellowship and pastoral work and gospel counseling and everything else that the gospel does the basis on which all of these things took place and tonight you and I we have that personal sense of loss that for you individually and personally he was all that the gospel should be he was all that the love of the family of God should be and tonight your motivation and your help and your grief is to think yes of your love for him and of his love for you but to remember that that love is a love of God's family kind of love and that that is what bound you and bound us all together with him and in and in our personal lament let's make sure that we get here it's the only place we find our comfort that this is about the love of

God that's poured into our hearts individually and personally the same love poured into every heart that binds us together in him the tragedy of his loss says

David my heart is broken because he is gone but I think of his family and I think of family love and every opportunity that I can find as I will see in chapter 9 every opportunity that I can find to continue to show this love I will do so is there anyone left that I show kindness to them for Jonathan's sake the love has not come to an end the love is still there it's powerful and it's active and it's hurting of course it is but that's the cost of loving and nobody knows that better than our saviour himself but here is the love that binds you and I together and all of the people of God it's personal because it's family love and it touches the very core of my Christian experience and that relationship is also one that brings us to the crux of the whole matter your love love to me was extraordinary passing the love of woman it was extraordinary love because it was supernatural love it is extraordinary it's out there that stands above and beyond everything else if the glory of Israel stands shining above the rest of Israel because of the handsome beauty this particular special personal kind of love is in itself extraordinary God God did extraordinary things in Egypt with the plagues God did extraordinary things in bringing the children of Israel through the Red

Sea and bringing them across the Jordan in Joshua extraordinary love and that extraordinary love is the supernatural love that surpasses the love of woman what love is it it is nothing less than the love that comes from God the love that's displayed in the passion of Jesus and the love with which Jesus prays in John 17 that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and that brings us right back to the very place where love is displayed in the cross work of Jesus Christ that this is love that God sent his son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins to die for our sins on the cross at Calvary and what does

Paul say about his own personal place in that gospel which he preached the love of Christ constrains us we implore you on behalf of Christ in Christ's place when Paul went to preach he disappeared out of the picture himself and they saw the heart of God they saw the cross of Jesus Christ and they saw the redeeming love of God as it flowed into the world through the passion of Jesus and touched the lives and the hearts of the people of God and that's why Jesus prayed that prayer so that the people of God in the world would have this love poured out into them so that he would be in them as the father was in him so that everything would be about his redeeming love love and tonight we want to close with that sense of all of the love that that leaves us tonight broken in our hearts to think of that love as more than just our love for each other in that natural sense that can sometimes vanish but the love that we have for each other which is the love of God poured out into us and in our personal lament as we think of the gospel preached and as we think of your pastor who is no longer with us we want to go away remembering that when he preached it was to show you the glory of God it was to show you the love

[35 : 07] God poured out through the cross of Jesus it was so that you would go home and go and live and go to eternity and have this love in your heart and that's tonight our encouragement in our brokenness in our pain and in our sense of loss that this love is the redeeming love of God that it is like himself that it has no beginning and that it has no end and that it is always a redeeming love and so when we think of lamenting this evening there is a private lament that we want for ourselves there is a communal lament we share with each other because of the gospel and there is this personal lament that brings us to a relationship with your departed minister but that ultimately brings us to a passionate relationship with God and where the love of God finds us and has it touched our lives and has it transformed us from within a personal lament and I'm going to close with these words from that hymn by

George Matheson O love that will not let me go O joy that seekest me through pain I cannot close my heart to thee I trace the rainbow through the rain I feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be O cross that lift us up my head I dare not ask to fly from thee I lay in dust life's glory dead and from the ground their blossoms red life that shall endless be blessed be God for that gift and for that life and for that love and to me bless our hearts with a sense of the greatness of his redeeming love and of his supporting love as we journey on from here may God bless his word to us let us