

Need to Rehearse Truth

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 February 2023

[0 : 00] Thank you, ladies. Limitations chapter number three is where we'll spend the remainder of our time tonight. You know, when young people learn to sing a song, maybe this is the first time they sing it in church, but if you memorize a song that has great truth like that, it would be rare.

It won't be the last time they sing that song. And as I look up here, I wonder at what may happen throughout their lives where that song will be used to bring great comfort to them. Here in Limitations three, I want to remind you of this truth, which is this.

When we lament, we express our sorrow and what we feel, but we're also supposed to rehearse the truth which we believe. We need to rehearse the truth in which we believe.

Chapters one and two so far, one, two, three, and four are an acrostic. 22 verses in one and two, 66 verses in three, 22 verses in four, and 22 verses in five.

Chapter one would be like ABC, two would be like ABC, this one would be like AAA. BBB, the next one would be like ABC, and the last one isn't in across the quarter, even though there's still 22 verses.

[1 : 07] Beautiful poetry expressing a lament as in exile, they've been taken by Babylon here, and the city of being destroyed.

Chapter one was as a woman crying out. Lady of Zion is crying out. The picture is just so, so dark. Chapter two gets even darker as it speaks about the wrath that is coming because of the sin that God is slow to anger, but he is not unmoved.

And as they have the consequences of their sin, that's where we were at last time, some time ago. So this was a 12-week series, and it's been several, it's been much longer than that. It's been like a three-hour tour that went much longer than that.

We've had so much going on on Sunday nights, people coming and going. But I would tell you that I remember Lamentations 2, and it was just so quite heavy that I was not eager to get back to it. But it's in the middle of Lamentations 3 is the part that we're both, we're most aware of.

If you know any passage in Lamentations, it's going to be found out of this middle section of Lamentations 3, most likely. Before I get to Lamentations 3, I want to remind you a little bit about what we find in the Bible when it comes to lamenting, how it's a uniquely Christian thing that we get to do.

[2 : 20] In Psalm 42, 3-5, it says, My tears have been my meat day and night, while they were continually saying to me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me, for I have gone with the multitude.

I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that kept holy day. Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

And why art thou thus granted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. That question that is asked, why art thou cast down, O my soul?

The suffering that we have in life brings us to a point of meditation, where we should be listening to our heart and asking questions. Why are you down? What are you thinking?

What is true about God? Suffering brings us to a place of meditation and thinking. In the book that I've referenced often, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, it says, chapter heading, says, hope springs from truth rehearsed.

[3 : 21] Love that so much. Hope springs from truth that is rehearsed. In the high school class, I consider, as I considered the night, as this group of mostly middle school girls were up here singing, is that how much truth are we helping the pack into their hearts right now that on a dark day will need to be rehearsed?

You memorize it on the good day, but someday that song may mean so much more even to them than it does tonight. And in the midst of those dark moments, I hope that you will find the courage and the conviction to say that you will call in the mind what God is like, that you will rehearse that He is true.

You will rehearse and recite to you, yourself, what you know to be true about God's Word and about Him and His character. I pray that you would dare the hope during those times.

That's the question I ask as we get started. Are you rehearsing the truth in your life? If you're going through difficulty, what is the message that you're meditating most on?

What is the thing that you're most preoccupied with? Because suffering not only is it traumatic to us, but it should be clarifying. During times of suffering, it ought to be clarifying to us. We're going to end our service tonight singing the song, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*.

[4 : 38] If I was a singing preacher like Jeff Bush, I would sing it for you right now. But God says you can either sing, preach, or be good looking. You can only get two out of the three. And so I can't sing tonight, all right?

All right. Just kidding. And so, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*. It goes, Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness. Morning by morning, new mercies I see. All I have needed, thy hand hath provided.

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me. And that imagery there of just thinking, you know, you're suffering, but then you can look out and you can just be so grateful. We did that a little bit today at 430. Just share what you're being grateful for.

Nothing guards the heart better than gratitude. A heart, if you're not yielded, if you're yielded to the Holy Spirit, then you don't have a criticizing, complaining tongue. It's one of the ways that you know that. And it's one of the ways I quickly identify in my life that I'm not being yielded to the Spirit as the complaining that comes from me.

But in this psalm, it says to look out, see all these things that you're grateful for, but there's times that you look out and all you see is destruction. All you see is the consequences of sin. So, Jeremiah is not just reflecting in his heart, but he's pushing his heart towards what is true despite what his eyes can see.

[5 : 48] He's rehearsing what is true so that his hope will rise. He is looking out to a city that is just completely destroyed. So, here in *Limitations 3*, everything builds to the point.

Chapter 4 and 5 lead, continue in this devastating scene, but there's a change in heart that takes place here in chapter number 3. The theological center, if you will, of this book.

Let me demonstrate to you before we read, starting verse number 19, the contrast. We see Jeremiah struggle with sadness over God's actions. Look at verse number 1 of *Limitations 3*, if you will.

It says, Jeremiah is struggling with sadness here.

It's a judgment that God has become personal and overwhelming. There's no peace. Verse number 17, there's no endurance or hope. There is this grief. It just seems to be relentless.

[6 : 59] There appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel. There's nothing that seems to be good that's going to come from this. He has just personally stricken with grief. Now, towards the end of the chapter, Limitations 3, 38.

Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good. Wherefore, doth the living man complain a man from his punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God and the heavens.

A little farther, it says in verses 55, it says, And I called upon thy name, O Lord, and out of thy low dungeon thou hast heard my voice. Hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in a day that I called upon thee, and thou sayest, fear not.

58, O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul. Thou hast redeemed my life. Two different perspectives that are being seen here. And do you hear the difference?

What has changed? And you're going to see it following in verse number 19. When I get to verse 21, I want you to read it with me, okay? If you'll follow along with me. I'll read verse 19 and 20, and you join me with verse number 21.

[8 : 06] Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul has them still in remembrance and is humbled in me. Verse 21, this I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

It is the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is our faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Therefore, though I hope in Him.

The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he has borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust. If so be there, may be hope.

He giveth his cheeks to him that smiteth him. He is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever. For though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion according to the multitudes of his mercy.

[9 : 05] For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. What is changed here was said in verse number 21. It's a turning point. It says, The destruction of Jerusalem sends a message, but it's not the entire story.

His mind, he recalls what is true about God. It's creating hope. This is only the second time the word hope is used in limitations. First time it's used in a positive context.

The same song that we'll sing tonight, it says, Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars and their courses above, joineth all nature and manifold witness to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Every season, summer, winter, springtime, and harvest. When you are abundant and you're being blessed, or when things are difficult for you, you can still recall the mind and you can still have hope.

Because our hope is based on who he is and not in the circumstances that are in front of us. So you live through suffering by what you believe and by not what you see or feel.

[10 : 14] And this is why lamenting is so helpful and uniquely Christian. It mourns the things that have happened, but it's anchored our grief in God's character. We find it all throughout the Bible.

In this Lamentations 3, we find references to different portions of the Bible, such as Job. And he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Habakkuk 3, 17 says, Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruits be in the vines. The labor of the olives shall fall, and the field shall yield no meat.

The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will join the God of my salvation. 1 Peter 4, 12, 13. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which has tried you, as though some strange things happen unto you.

But rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. Take your circumstances that you're going through, and say whatever that it may be.

[11 : 20] If it isn't the fig tree not blossoming, or if it's the fiery trials that are going on, or it's the great loss of Job, your story can also have, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will join the God of my salvation.

God's Word here calls us to put our trust in God over and over when the circumstances of life are just too painful. Even though it's hard, hard doesn't mean that it's bad, because our God is good.

Limitations 3, 26 and 27, I've just been so blessed by it over this week as I've thought about it. It says this, It is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord, for it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

It is good for me to wait upon the Lord during a time of suffering. It is good for me when I cannot rearrange the things in front of me, and to say that they're good, to say that I'm going to anchor my thoughts in the God of heaven.

So if today you're suffering because of your own sin, or because of the sin of this world, or because of someone else's sin, there is great hope that is available to you. If your heart is saying that it is hopeless, you should argue back with it.

[12 : 29] How many of you, if you don't, I would ask how many of you speak to yourself, okay? Every one of you do, all right? You really do. It's something that we do. We do have arguments. We have debates with it. We have, we think about what's going on.

You say things to yourself, and you're like, that's not true. No, your wife does not make this because you dislike it. All right, I'm just kidding. Whatever it is, all right? I don't even know. I'm moving on, all right?

And so whatever lie, okay, turkey meatloaf, one time early on when we were first married, turkey is not a replacement for anything, all right? That's the lesson that we learned. But she didn't hate me because she made turkey meatloaf.

She just made a series of bad choices, all right? And she saved, you know, \$1.17. But we don't do that anymore. But whatever it is, you know, you begin to think these things about whoever or whatever, and you first think about things that aren't true about other people, but then it progresses.

And then you begin to think things about God that are not true. And so argue, fight for joy, fight words of God with the words of the accuser of the brother.

[13 : 32] Hope springs when the truth about God is rehearsed. So quickly here, four things that I want to encourage you to rehearse from this passage. First off, verse 22. It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Therefore will I hope in him. They are new every morning. God's mercy never ends.

God, the mercy here, is available to us because it's rooted in the character of who he is. The circumstances of your life may cause you to be tempted to conclude that you're permanently on God's bad side, but that is not the case.

His mercy is rooted in who he is and not in your circumstances. T. Wayne and Amanda, you're taking your internship overseas. It makes me think of a time when I was in Peru.

I didn't speak Spanish. Still don't speak Spanish, all right? But I really, I got there long enough, and we were at Machu Picchu, and I'd ordered a sandwich, and they told me that I already had my sandwich, but I knew that I didn't have my sandwich.

[14 : 37] My stomach knew that I didn't have my sandwich, and I wasn't lying about it, but I didn't have all the words that I needed to make the argument that I wanted my sandwich. And so I reached across the counter, and I tried my very best to grab a hold of the guy and tell them, I need my sandwich, okay?

Yo, Carol's sandwich right now, all right? And I was desperate for that sandwich, all right? You see all these pictures of Machu Picchu, that's great. It's a ton of walking, all right? And so I was quite hungry, and I was just so desperate for it that I ordered that sandwich.

I was desperate, but that man said, I understood enough to him to say, we don't have any more sandwiches. We are out of sandwiches. I was so hopeless, all right? There was no more sandwiches in life.

And what a horribly weak example that we have here in the fact that you know what is desperate, and then you just believe it doesn't exist anymore. You just say, I remember a time when I was hopeful.

I remember a time when that was true. But not in this case, not in this scenario, not any longer. That God's mercy must have been run out. But I want to tell you to remind yourself, we heard this truth, that God's mercy, it never ends, because it's rooted in who He is.

[15 : 47] This word is used by God after the failure of the Israelites and with the golden calf. The ultimate hope for the people of God is not their ability to keep His commands, but God's ability to keep being God.

The ultimate hope for all of us is not our ability to keep God's command, but it's on God's ability to keep being God. After those people failed in a very huge manner, Exodus 34, 6, That is still who God is.

You're not messing that up. You do not play that big enough role in this world. You can't stop God from being God. And the foundation of this is everything. Verse 24, The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.

Therefore will I hope. The same way the psalmist says, My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is my strength. His faithfulness is greater than my faithfulness. His forgiveness is greater than my trespasses.

And His mercy is greater than what we really deserve. You are not exalting the mercy of our Lord. Remind yourself of that. Secondly here, God is not wasting our waiting.

[16 : 58] I'll just share two of these with you tonight. First of all, His mercy, it never ends. And then second here, verse number 25, The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him.

To the soul that seeketh Him, it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man. And I argue and say, No, it's not.

I say, God, now, let's move on now. Lesson learned. Check that box. I got what you want from me. But the Bible tells you that it's good that a man should wait for the salvation of the Lord.

Don't just think about the salvation from our sins for all eternity. Yes, that's a proper use of the word salvation. But it's a saving you from your present troubles. The place that you're in and you're waiting for God to save you.

And the Bible says, Trent doesn't say, because Trent says the opposite, all right? I'm not a politician. I'm speaking about myself in third person, okay? I'm telling you, I won't tell you that it's good. I didn't come up with that because I agree with you.

[18 : 01] No, this doesn't feel good at all. But God says that it's good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for salvation of the Lord. And it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. And he sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him.

There's a lot of good that is here. Three verses right in a row start off with the word good. It is good unto them to wait. It is good that a man should hope. It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.

And so what does it mean to wait? It means that you place your hope in God, that you look for him, not looking anywhere else to be satisfied, not looking any other place for the answers.

It means that you're trusting that God is the one who can deliver you or that situation, even though it's so difficult, but your entire confidence rests upon him and him alone.

Psalms 62, one says it like this. Truly my soul waiteth upon God from him cometh my salvation. And that's what you say while you wait. That's what you say.

[18 : 58] And you'd say, God, I find my confidence and I trust in you. And I will wait here, Lord, because I know that only in you do I have any confidence. You don't decide to be a trickster.

You don't decide to devise a plan to get out, but you wait for him. We wait upon the Lord because he is God and we are not. And isn't it the reality which makes waiting so difficult?

Waiting feels as if we're doing nothing, but that's not the case at all. Confidently waiting in the Lord and trusting in him is nothing passive at all. We're actually doing one of the greatest things that a Christian can do, which is to put your trust and hope and confidence in God.

Verses 28 and 29 tells us that there can be continued pain in that waiting. He sitteth alone, and he keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He put us his mouth in the dust, if so be there, may be hope.

He giveth a cheek to him that smiteth him. He is filled full of reproach. There is pain and there's still suffering in the waiting, but we wait for him. But that doesn't mean that the story is over.

[20 : 03] It also doesn't, and our God is always good. We'll pick up the last two at another date. But hope springs when truth about God is rehearsed. It's really nice when one of you men pull me close and say and encourage me in the things of God and you remind me of that.

It's good when friends get together when the faith in you is louder than the faith in me. When you tell me the things that I ought to know that are true. It doesn't matter if I have the opportunity to spend the next 50 years of my life telling you this truth.

I still need you in my life reminding me of these things because there's a fight for truth that takes place in all of our hearts. And so hope springs when the truth about God is rehearsed.

Are you this morning or this afternoon, this evening, whatever time it is today, if you find that you're just, that there is no hope, that you're constantly being discouraged, I want to remind you that there's so much about God that deserves to be rehearsed.

God's mercy never ends. God does not waste our waiting. The story is not over and our God is always good. Let me ask you some closing questions before Stephen comes up here and we sing about our God and His faithfulness to us.

[21 : 15] Have you spent this last week or last month listening to and rehearsing the wrong narrative in your head and in your heart? What did it do for you? Did you solve the problem?

Were you able to move on? You weren't able to, were you? There's some problems that are such at a foundational level that they're not going to be solved. You're not just going to talk them out, but you have to pay attention to the words of God and what it says about Him.

So have you spent last week listening, rehearsing the wrong narrative in your head and heart? Can you make the turn from the very hard circumstances to trusting in God's goodness? Even before the circumstances change, would you begin to worship God and trust Him?

Because there's nothing about our God that has changed. And can you rehearse the truth tonight and you remind your heart what is real and true and what is right? Could you do that tonight in your heart?

Could you take some time and could you rehearse the truth and what's going on? Could you say that it's of greater value to you than anything that your eyes can see? Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, of how many people that come into this room tonight, Lord, I would imagine there is not many struggles that could be carried in here.

[22 : 30] Father, I pray for the young ones that are in here tonight as they've watched and they see us, pray for people and they listen to the Bible being taught. They hear us speak about troubles and maybe they don't recognize it in their life.

But even now, Lord, I pray that they would stockpile the truth of your word. That the words that they would memorize in scripture, Lord, in Awana and in family devotion would be the truth that they would rehearse at difficult times.

Father, in like manner, there has been much truth about you that has been hidden in our hearts. From Sunday school teachers and different people investing in us, reading our word and meeting with you throughout the day, you have made yourself known to us and we know that you are good and we know that you are right and that you do all things justly.

So, Father, I pray right now for my brothers and sisters as they pray and as they consider, may the truth of you tonight be greater to them than any of their circumstances.

May the goodness of you, Lord, be greater than any of the badness that they see with their eyes and may they rehearse the truth about you tonight so their hope would be anchored in who you are.

[23 : 44] for all. Let me know what's happening here and what do you want to let me see that you need a room for me to let them know and what they look like in the gooditié.