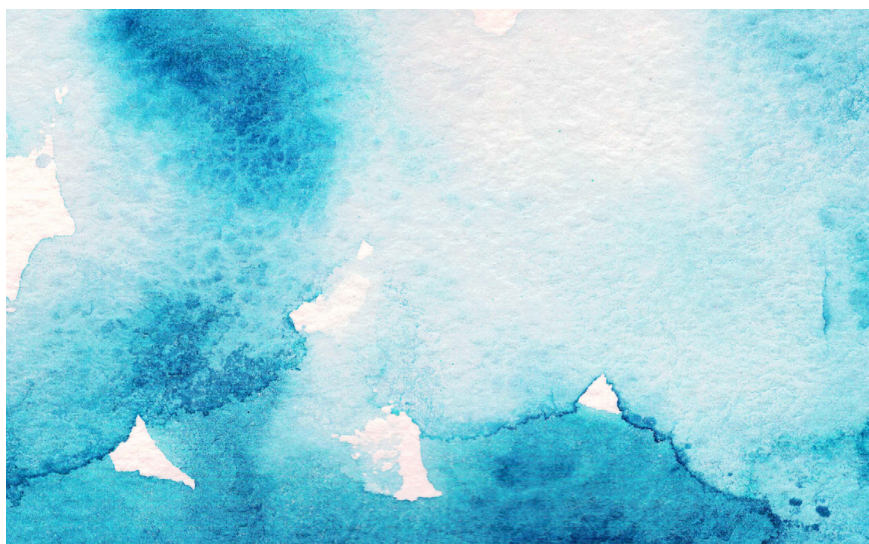




LAMENT

A prayer for times like these



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We are living in a time of great turmoil. People around the world are suffering deeply – from fear, violence, sickness, neglect, and much more.

If you are human, you will feel sadness, grief and sorrow. Thankfully, we do not have to bear our pain all alone. God made us with the need to grieve our losses, to cry out or weep when we are sad. And God gave us a tool that can help in times like these.

When life feels too painful to bear, the Bible encourages us to practice a powerful kind of prayer called a *lament*.

What is lament?

A lament is a way of expressing our pain to God. There are many examples of laments in the Bible. Trauma after trauma happened to God's people both individually (abuse, rape, abandonment, murder) and as a community (wars, captivity, displacement, famines). The Bible tells us that people found comfort in bringing their pain to God and being completely honest about how they feel. **When we cry out, God always listens.**

How to lament

One way to deal with the hard things that happen in our lives is to create a lament of our own.

Lament can be done in words, music, dance, drawing, or any other kind of creative expression. Whatever form your lament takes, it is a way to start telling your story, naming your feelings, and releasing painful memories. **Psalm 13 shows us one way lament can be done – and how you can do it, too.** (Dozens of other psalms are laments as well. Some are for individuals, like psalms 22, 31, and 88; and some are for whole communities, like psalms 44 and 90.)

PSALM 13: A BLUEPRINT FOR LAMENT

PSALM 13 (Good News Translation)	HOW TO LAMENT
<i>How much longer will you forget me, Lord? Forever?</i>	STEP 1. CALL OUT TO GOD. Whatever name you use, call out to God by name. You may want to remember times when God was there for you in the past.
<i>How much longer will you hide yourself from me? How long must I endure trouble? How long will sorrow fill my heart day and night? How long will my enemies triumph over me?</i>	STEP 2. TELL GOD ABOUT YOUR PAIN. Put all the pain you're feeling into words. It is okay to cry and rage at God. Your anger cannot hurt God's feelings. Your pain will never frighten God away.
<i>Look at me, O Lord my God, and answer me. Restore my strength; don't let me die. Don't let my enemies say, "We have defeated him." Don't let them gloat over my downfall.</i>	STEP 3. ASK GOD FOR HELP. God already knows what you are going through. It helps to be completely honest and ask God for the help you need. "Help!" is a prayer all by itself.
<i>I rely on your constant love; I will be glad, because you will rescue me. I will sing to you, O Lord, because you have been good to me.</i>	STEP 4. AFFIRM YOUR TRUST IN GOD. Even if you aren't sure you trust God, your willingness to face God through lament shows some trust. That is enough. If you can talk to God, it means you haven't given up. To end your lament, remind yourself of this.

Create your own lament

You can use these steps to bring your pain to God anytime you are hurting. It's okay to let out all your feelings, questions, and frustrations in your lament. If you want more space to write or draw, use a separate piece of paper.

STEPS	MY LAMENT
Call out to God.	
Tell God about your pain.	
Ask God for help.	
Affirm your trust in God.	

Your lament can be private, just between you and God. Or, if it feels right, consider sharing your lament with someone else you trust.