

## **Great is Thy Faithfulness**

*Lamentations 3:22-24*

### **Introduction**

The major point of my message this morning is that: Because God is faithful, we can and must hope in Him.

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### **Lamentations 3:22-24**

- 22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;  
his mercies never come to an end;  
23 they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
24 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,  
“therefore I will hope in him.”
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### **Exposition**

#### **I. Background**

The morning’s passage is a glimmer of hope in the midst of despair. Like the declaration of **Habakkuk 3:17-18**, which states, “Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation,” so also **Lamentations 3:22-24** offers hope in rather hopeless time in the life of the people of Israel.

#### **II. A Hope that Rest in God’s Faithful Mercy (Vss. 22-24)**

According to one writer, the speaker in verse 22 “bases his renewed hope on the infinite compassion of the LORD.” The first word of verse 22 is the Hebrew word, *hesed*, which refers to God’s covenant mercy that He shows to His people. We translate the word, *hesed*, as *steadfast love*, which Duane Garrett says, “describes the disposition and beneficent actions of God toward the faithful, Israel his people, and humanity in general.”

For those who are students of God’s Word, the speaker’s testimony to the faithfulness of God’s mercy should not come as a surprise. When God was revealing Himself to the Israelites after the Exodus, God testified to His own faithfulness. In **Exodus 34:6-7**, we read of God passing before Moses, declaring the certain of His presence with the people as they move forward into the Promised Land. The LORD says to Moses,

The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.

The LORD's point to Moses was that He could be trusted if the people would obey and follow His instruction. However, with the promise of blessing with obedience and the revelation of God's patience to the stubborn people, the LORD also noted that He would not "clear the guilty" and that subsequent generations of Israelites would pay the price of the sins of their forefathers.

So, as we turn our attention back to **Lamentations 3:22**, we recognize that the speaker is not introducing something new about the LORD. He has always been faithful. Any hardships that the Israelites had endured in the land and in exile were the result of God being faithful to His promise to bless those who obey Him and discipline those who disobeyed Him. The LORD was faithful in mercy and in discipline. However, the LORD is more inclined to mercy and love than He is to judgment. While the LORD will certainly judge those who are guilty, He desires that none should perish but that all should come to repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**). Furthermore, the LORD takes not pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they would turn from their wickedness (**Ezekiel 33:11**).

The fact that God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked is confirmed by the fact that though the Israelites had turned aside to wickedness, there was still a remnant left that could testify to the steadfastness of His love and the ceaselessness of His mercy.

In fact, the ceaseless mercy of the LORD is described as "new every morning" in verse 23. Now, I want you to think with me about the newness of God's faithful mercy toward us. In verse 23, according to one scholar, the word "*new* does not refer here to something that never existed before, but rather to a fresh renewal of what has been experienced before."<sup>1</sup> With "each new day the proofs of God's grace flow from his compassionate nature (Keil, 414). Each new day dawns with the possibility of covenant renewal for a punished people. This opportunity lasts as long as God lasts since it is grounded in his personal character."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, while you may have royally messed up a week ago, a day ago, an hour ago, the mercies of God toward you have not been exhausted. The opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation persists. Like Tim Keller has said before, "While we are more sinful than we could ever imagine, we are more loved than we could ever dream."

And this reality should drive us to the same declaration that it drove the speaker in Lamentations, "Great is thy faithfulness!" In other words, any when I don't perceive it, God is still faithful. He is faithful during times of plenty. He is faithful during times of little. He is faithful in the midst of my success. And He is faithful in the midst of my suffering. There is no shadow of turning with Him. He does not change. He is unshakeable in His faithfulness toward His people, even if we fail to see in those terms at times. That is what this meant for the speaker in Lamentations. While the whole book is concerned with lament over the struggle and the pain (which should not be minimized or ignored), the LORD was still faithful.

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<sup>1</sup> William David Reayburn and Euan McG. Fry, [\*A Handbook on Lamentations\*](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 86.

<sup>2</sup> Duane Garrett, [\*Song of Songs/Lamentations\*](#), vol. 23B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 414–415.

So, for some of you who are here this morning, you have been tempted to question the faithfulness of God because your life has been exceedingly difficult lately, this passage serves to remind you that even in the midst of the trial, God's faithfulness to you is great. His mercy toward you is always available. His promise for you forever secure. Your life, as **Colossians 3:1-4** tells us, is hidden with Christ in God. No circumstance in this life will ultimately threaten the goodness that God intends toward you in His Son, Jesus Christ. Nothing is able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus (**Romans 8:31-39**).

Yet, there are others who are here this morning who have been tempted to ignore the faithfulness of God because your life has been relatively smooth and easy as of late. You feel like things have gone well for you because of your efforts. You pride yourself in your ability. Yet, what does God's Word say? **James 1:17** says that "every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of light, in whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." And Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 4:7, "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" So, back to **Lamentations 3:22-24**, if you have been blessed with ease and plenty, should you not bless God for His faithfulness to you? If, then, you insist on boasting, make your boast in the LORD!

Whatever our situation, whatever our circumstance, whether we are in the Promised Land or in the Exile, great is the faithfulness of God toward us! Which means we must not place our hope in the things of this world or allow our hope to be shaken by the circumstances that we face in this world, but rather, we must place our Hope in the one who is, as verse 24 tells us, our portion.

Like the Psalmist in **Psalms 16:5** says, "The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; O' Lord, you hold my lot!" For the speaker in **Lamentations 3:24**, it is the LORD, not the things that this world offers, who is his portion. In other words, it is not that the LORD gives me what I need. No! Instead, it is the LORD who is the One that I need! With David, we sing, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple" (**Psalms 27:1, 4**)

And why should we desire such a thing? Why should we long to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD? To declare that His faithfulness is great? It is because He is our portion in whom we can place our hope! Because He is faithful, we can hope in Him.

## **Conclusion**

And because God is faithful, we not only can hope in Him, but we must hope in Him. It is here that we encounter the greatest example of God's faithfulness to us. It is seen in the work of redemption. That is, God demonstrated His faithfulness when God the Father sent Christ the Son to die in the place of sinners to redeem them from the slavery and condemnation of sin and reconcile them to Himself through the work of God the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead and unites sinner to Christ by faith alone.

Instead of abandoning sinners and justly judging them for their rebellion against Him, God sent His Son into the world in fulfillment of the promises that He made to Abraham so that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through one of his descendants.

The offspring of Abraham who would bless the world was none other than Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul described God's faithfulness to fulfill this promise in **Galatians 4:4-7**, stating, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father! So you are no longer slaves, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.'"

Through Christ Jesus, we are heirs of the promise that God made to all who would trust in Him. It is the promise that God would be our portion, which is what Paul calls our attention to in **Philippians 3:7-9**, when he writes, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I might gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."

Thus, those who have been saved by Christ, who know the faithfulness of God, will hope in Him, even in the midst of our despair. Even in the midst of our sorrow, we wait for the LORD who will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

Have you hoped in this faithful God today? Have you turned away from everything like Paul in order that might know Christ? If you have not, this morning, as we close, I invite you to call upon the Jesus today and ask Him to have mercy upon you.

It is simple. Simply admit to God that you are a sinner in need of His grace, that you are now trusting in Jesus to be your righteousness before Him and to have paid the penalty of your sin and ask Him to have mercy upon you. God's Word promises that He is faithful and just to forgive all who call upon Him in faith with repentance. I invite you to do this today as I close us in prayer...