



## Week Five: *Prayer of Lament*

### 1. It's easy to turn to God in blessings, but what about times of pain?

*"Why did I not perish at birth, come forth from the womb and expire?"* Job

*"Why is my pain continuous, my wound incurable?"* Jeremiah

### 2. Prayers of lament are filled with complaint and protest, questions and anger, cries of despair and doubt

*"How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?"* Psalm 13

*"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!"* Psalm 130

*"My soul is utterly terrified; and you, O Lord, how long?"* Psalm 6

*"My God, I cry by day, and you answer not; by night, and you send no relief."*  
Psalm 22

### 3. Faith and lamenting go together

*The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.'* Luke 17

### 4. Prayers in the Bible begin in pain and desolation ...

*"How long, O Lord? I cry for help but you do not listen! I cry out, but you do not intervene! Why do you let me see ruin and look at misery?"* Habakkuk 1

### 5. ... then God gives a revelation in the person's spirit ...

*Then the LORD answered me and said: 'Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint; if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.'* Habakkuk 2

### 6. ... and the prayer ends in expressions of hope and trust.

*"Lord, I have heard your words; I stand in awe of your deeds. O Lord, repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in your wrath remember your mercy!"* Habakkuk 3

## Questions for Reflection

1. What are your thoughts or creative ideas about this week's prayer practice?
2. What's one area of pain, frustration, or lament in your own life?
3. What's a short list of unanswered prayers others can continue to pray for? Share them with a friend.

Pick one of the exercises below, or do all three, depending on your week and what you're emotionally up for.

### Exercise 1: Pray the lament psalms

- Pick a lament psalm and use it as a 'liturgy' to give voice to your prayers
  - Ex: Psalm 3, 6, 10, 13, 22, 25, 44, 57, 60, 79, 80
- Don't just read/pray it and move on. Sit in the discomfort and let God comfort you. Don't be scared to feel, even to feel deeply, and to meet God in any emotional pain.

### Exercise 2: Write your own lament psalm

- Get a journal or paper and write your own lament psalm.
- Remember: prayer isn't a place to be good; it's a place to be honest. Nobody else ever has to see this. Simply write out your dreams, doubts, hopes, fears, questions, confusion, disillusionment, disappointment, etc.
- Then pray your lament psalm to God.

### Exercise 3: Journaling

- Get a journal if you don't already have one.
- Make a list of unanswered prayers in your life.
- Go over each one, hovering over each for a moment, and see if the Spirit stirs anything in your heart.
- Write out how it feels to live with unanswered prayer. It's helpful to write your journal *to* God, like a letter, getting everything off your chest.

**Note:** Feel free to pick just one of the three exercises.