



## **“THE NEED FOR LAMENT IN TROUBLED TIMES”**

**SPEAKER: SOONG-CHAN RAH**

**DATE: JULY 31, 2022**

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.*

### **BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:**

#### **LAMENTATIONS 1:1-3, JEREMIAH 29:4-7**

Dr. Soong-Chan Rah uses the book of Lamentations to demonstrate to us the importance of lament. Often in churches, we want to focus on the joyous parts of life and what God has done for us. However, the Bible shows us that there is a proper time and place for lament, looking at and responding to the difficult and painful things in our world. Dr. Rah encourages us not to retreat, but to actively seek out and listen to voices in our world that we might otherwise ignore to see what beauty we might find lurking there.

**LEAN IN:** *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Who was your favorite band in high school? How would you describe their music and why did you like them so much?
2. Have you ever received a piece of wisdom or something valuable from an unexpected source? What happened?
3. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?
4. What is your favorite podcast to listen to, and why?

**LOOK DOWN:** *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What has happened in Lamentations 1:1-3? What events are depicted in these verses?
2. As you read through Lamentations 1:1-3, how would you describe the emotions that are portrayed in this text? How do you feel after reading these verses?
3. What instructions does God give to the people in Jeremiah 29:4-7? What does he tell them to do?
4. Compare and contrast the Lamentations passage with the Jeremiah passage? How are the moods of these passages different? How do the messages of these passages compare?

**LOOK OUT:** *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. The book of Lamentations is a biblical example of what lament can look like. What are some modern forms of lament, either in the church or the world at large? How do people express their sorrow over the suffering in the world? How do modern forms of lament compare to the biblical vision of lament that Soong-Chan Rah talked about in his message?
2. In his message, Soong-Chan Rah talked about how many churches physically retreated to the suburbs during the mid twentieth century. How do you see Christians/churches retreating in similar ways today?
3. How does the message that God gives to his people in Jeremiah 29 confront these actions of retreating? What do you think it might look like for the church and God's people to live out these instructions today? How is this related to the idea of lament?

## CONTINUED:

4. Soong-Chan Rah talked about the importance of listening to the voices of those who are marginalized. What might that look like in today's world? Whose voices need to be heard?

***Look In: These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.***

1. How do you react to suffering in the world? How has this message on lament encouraged or challenged you?
2. Do you have a tendency to retreat into Christian circles? Why or why not?
3. What might it look like for you to live out the instructions in Jeremiah 29 in your own life?
4. What voices in your own life do you need to give more credence to?

***LIVE IT OUT: These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. This week, experiment with the practice of lament. Find a way to express your sadness and sorrow over the suffering in your own life, the life of your family/community, and/or our world. Experiment with ways to do this like writing out your feelings, crafting a piece of poetry, reading some of the Psalms of lament, or listening to music that you feel embodies the spirit of lament.
2. If you find that you tend to retreat into Christian circles or avoid this process of lament, spend some time with God this week asking why that is. Pray that God would help you to see the world around you through his eyes and embrace the practice of lament.
3. Find a way this week to listen to someone you might normally ignore, dismiss, or just avoid. If you have trouble with this, ask God that he would give you ears to hear what He is trying to say to you through this person.