

Speaker: Ross Owens

Date: September 27, 2026

Scripture: Lamentations 3:19 to 24

Sermon Title: My Worship Will Not Be Silenced.

Around 1797, a young girl named Isabella Baumfree was born into slavery in New York. As a child, she was sold away from her family and endured the cruelty of slavery. Later, as a mother, she bore five children and experienced the anguish of having her young son Peter illegally sold away from her.

Isabella knew grief, injustice, and pain. But her suffering did not silence her faith. After a coming to Christ, she eventually changed her name to Sojourner Truth and spent much of her life speaking boldly about her faith and against slavery.

In a later account of one of her speeches, she is remembered as saying, “None but Jesus heard me.”

Her pain was real, her pain ran deep, but her faith still had a voice. And she used it to talk to God.

Scripture gives us a name for bringing that kind of pain honestly before God while still trusting in Him. It is called lament.

Today, I want us to look at biblical lament and the way it can lead us toward worship. I have entitled this message,

My Worship Will Not Be Silenced.

When we hear the word lament, we often think of sadness, grief, or complaint. But biblical lament is something deeper. It can be defined as

Biblical lament = A faithful response to suffering that brings our pain honestly into the presence of God.

It is the courage to bring our questions, disappointment, and confusion openly before Him. Lament does not deny what hurts, and it does not pretend everything is okay. It names the pain while continuing to turn toward God’s character, presence, and faithfulness.

We see this throughout Scripture.

in Psalm 13:1, David cried, “How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?”

in Psalm 22:1, David prayed, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”, which are words Jesus Himself would later pray from the cross.

Job also refused to pretend he was okay. After devastating loss and physical suffering, he said:

“I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul.” **Job 10:1, NIV**

These were not people simply walking away from God. They were bringing the full weight of what they were feeling directly to Him. Which reminds us:

Biblical lament is not the absence of faith. It is faith refusing to walk away from God in the middle of suffering.

That distinction matters because lament is sometimes confused with complaining. Scripture shows that bringing a complaint to God is not necessarily wrong. Psalm 142:2 says, “I pour out before him my complaint.” Biblical lament can include complaint. The real danger is grumbling.

Grumbling fixates on what is wrong; lament brings what is wrong to God.

And few places in Scripture highlights this more clearly than Lamentations 3.

The book of Lamentations has traditionally been associated with the prophet Jeremiah, although the book itself does not identify its author. What we do know is that it was written in the aftermath of Jerusalem’s destruction. Because of the people’s persistent rebellion against God, Jerusalem had fallen. The city was devastated, and the people were left with death, hunger, displacement, and overwhelming grief.

The first two chapters paint a painful picture of that devastation. Chapter 1 portrays Jerusalem almost like a grieving widow who is empty, humiliated, and mourning what has been lost. Chapter 2 makes clear that this suffering was connected to God’s judgment against persistent rebellion and unfaithfulness. The chapter forces us to confront the seriousness of sin and it reminds us that sin has consequences.

Then we come to chapter 3, where the perspective begins to shift. The writer takes us from the devastation of the city to the anguish within his own soul. He describes not only what has happened around him, but also the suffering taken place within him.

And then, right in the middle of that pain, something begins to change. He begins to remember something deeper than his suffering. He remembers who God is.

in Lamentations 3:19 he says:

**I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.
Lamentations 3:19**

Here in the NIV, it uses the word “bitterness.” However, other translations use the word “wormwood,” which more accurately reflects the Hebrew imagery. See, Wormwood was a plant known for its extremely bitter taste, and gall also described something bitter and unpleasant. In other words: his suffering was so deep that he could almost taste it. He is not denying the pain or pretending it did not happen. He is naming it honestly.

He goes on to say,

**I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.
Lamentations 3:20**

His suffering is not a distant memory. He remembers it deeply, and his soul is weighed down by it. I strongly believe that his soul was downcast because sorrow has become more than an event around him; it has become a weight within him. The devastation of Jerusalem is not merely something he sees, it is something he carries, and the weight of his grief is changing his posture. Listen, pretending everything is okay, is not okay. When life is rough, we cannot ignore it thinking it will go away. That’s pushing it down. But know pushing pain down is not the same thing as processing it with God.

Processing pain with God means naming what hurts, bringing it honestly into His presence, and allowing the Holy Spirit to meet us in our weakness.

Pushing it down says, “I am fine. It does not bother me.” Or over-spiritualizing your pain by saying, “I’m okay, this too shall pass.”

However, processing it with God says, “Lord, that hurt me more than I want to admit. Help me respond in a way that honors You.”

Lying to yourself and others that everything is okay does not help. Why? Because...

Pain buried is still pain carried.

Bringing our pain to God does not mean every wound heals instantly or every circumstance changes. It means we stop pretending, stop carrying the burden as though God is not present, and begin letting His truth and power shape how we walk through it.

Stop pushing what God is trying to pull. Stop holding on to what God is trying to heal.

Begin processing it by crying out to the Lord in lament and watch the Lord change your perspective.

That is exactly what begins to happen in verse 21.

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:
Lamentations 3:21, NIV

The Hebrew phrase for “call to mind” is stronger than something simply popping into his head. In simple terms, he is saying, “I bring this back to my heart.”

He does not say, “Suddenly I felt better.” He does not say, “My circumstances changed.” He deliberately brings back into his heart what suffering pushed out.

In Scripture, the heart often refers to more than emotion. It includes the inner person, our thinking, will, and understanding. So when the writer says, “This I call to mind,” he is redirecting his heart toward what he knows to be true about God. There are times when we have to remind our hearts of what pain has caused us to forget.

So, what does he bring back to mind? The answer begins in the next verse.

Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

Lamentations 3:22, NIV

The Hebrew word for “great love” is *hesed*. It can communicate steadfast love, loyal love, mercy, and covenant faithfulness. It is love that remains committed.

God’s *hesed* is not sentimental affection. It is His faithful commitment to His people because of who He is.

Think about the setting. Jerusalem has experienced God’s judgment. The city is devastated. The people are grieving. Yet the writer understands that God’s judgment has not canceled God’s character. He is still holy. He is still just. And His steadfast love is still true. Therefore, we are not consumed.

The writer goes on to say...

Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

Lamentations 3:22

The Hebrew word for compassion carries the idea of deep tenderness and mercy. When he says God's compassions never fail, the point is that they are not exhausted. They do not run dry.

He is saying this in the middle of devastation. The grief is still there. The loss is still real. Yet God's compassion has not run out.

Then he adds, "They are new every morning."

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
Lamentations 3:23

Now, that does not mean every morning brings better circumstances. When the writer opened his eyes, his situation was still a mess. Things were not new. But God's compassion was. See, yesterday's pain had not exhausted today's mercy. God's compassion was still present, still sufficient, still available for another day. Sometimes God does not give us a new circumstance in the morning. Sometimes He gives us fresh mercy for the circumstance that is still there.

And because the writer remembers these truths, he can say,

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:
Lamentations 3:21

The Hebrew word translated "hope" in verse 21 can also carry the idea of waiting. In fact, the same verb appears again in verse 24, where the NIV says, "therefore I will wait for him." Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. It is intentional trust that knows how to wait on a faithful God.

Then something beautiful happens at the end of verse 23. The writer has been talking about God, but now he speaks directly to God:

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness
Lamentations 3:23

That is an expression of worship.

His circumstances have not changed. The grief is still real. But in the middle of his pain, he turns toward God and declares what he knows to be true: God is faithful.

Hope-filled worship is not pretending the pain is gone. It is declaring that God is still God while the pain is still present. Hope-filled worship does not require resolution.

The writer does not say, "My circumstances have changed, therefore I have hope." Jerusalem is still in ruins. His losses are still real. His soul has been downcast. But he remembers the *hesed* of the Lord, His steadfast love that does not fail or run dry, and therefore he has hope.

That is the foundation of hope-filled worship. We worship not because life is easy, but because God is faithful. We worship not because we can see the outcome, but because we know the One who holds us in the middle of it. We worship not because every question has been answered, but because the steadfast love of the Lord has not ceased.

Hope-filled worship says, “God, I do not understand what You are doing, but I know who You are. I cannot yet see how this will turn out, but I know Your love has not failed. I may be carrying grief, confusion, or fear, but I will still turn my heart toward You.”

That is the invitation I want to give you today.

Maybe your worship does not sound like celebration right now. Maybe it sounds like a whisper. Maybe it comes through tears. Maybe all you can say is, “Lord, I am hurting, but I still believe You are good.”

That is hope-filled worship.

Hope-filled worship does not wait for life to get easier before it praises God. It rises from the confidence that, even here and even now, the steadfast love of the Lord has not ceased.

So bring God the pain. Tell Him the truth. Remember His *hesed*. Remember His compassion. Remember His faithfulness. And let hope give your worship a voice.

The writer of Lamentations – his pain was real. Sojourner Truth’s pain was real. But their faith still had a voice. You can too. Your worship may be loud, or it may be a whisper through tears. But because God is faithful, it does not have to be silenced.

Make this your confession:

My worship will not be silenced.