

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 24 June 2018 Value of Lament

Pray that God would help us to take seriously the sense of loss even grief that we experience in life, not only in losing loved ones but other tangible losses – to give place to acknowledging these rather than bottling them up but also that we would fully recognise the many good things that we are left with. Pray for an openness to God with our emotions and to his unfolding of future possibilities.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). 2 Samuel 1 :1,17-27.

Background We have jumped considerably from our look last week at David and Goliath. A lot of water has gone under the bridge. David progressed as a military commander, he found favour in court – but Saul’s jealousy came into play and David had been on the run for fear of his life. David hears of the loss in battle of both the King and his son Jonathan (his best friend). He mourns the death of both – though it is plain that his grief for Jonathan is much more personal. We can discuss the idea of public as opposed to personal grief but one thing that comes through this poetic lament is David’s grief. What is left unsaid at this point is the implications of the double bereavement for him. Perhaps his personal grief for the son tempers what might otherwise have been a cause for rejoicing, if not at Saul’s death then at the end of his time on the run.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. Few people would choose a lament as their favourite genre of music or of poetry. The lament conjures up images of tears and grief, of sad occasions and venues. Living in Scotland mention of a lament is almost certain to turn our thoughts to bagpipes, perhaps a solo piper playing the Flowers of the Forest. Share any recollections you have of a bagpipe lament. How did it make you feel? Positively or negatively.
2. David writing in 2nd Samuel waxes eloquent about his grief and loss a) for the king b) for his friend Jonathan and c) for others who have been killed in combat. What differences are apparent in his grief for each? How might our loss be expressed differently for a) some famous person whose death has touched a nation eg Princess Diana? A personal loss of someone close to us? And the loss of life in the armed forces or emergency services? What is the place for community acknowledgement of this eg Remembrance Day?
3. On Sunday we were thinking not only about giving place to grief and loss of people but we touched on loss of other things – job, home – might also be status, reputation, church buildings, tradition, even shops and banks closing. How can we sensibly acknowledge and express these “losses”? What difference does it make to express our emotions? It is seen to be acceptable to show grief at the death of a loved one but how about other losses?
4. There is another side to all this talk of loss. Without taking away the significance of loss the fact that we are feeling loss suggests that there was something of real value in for example loving the person who has died or having good memories/experiences in the past. How might it help us to give proper account of these positives? How about some focus on what we still have?
5. What part does faith play in all this? What positive differences might aspects of faith make? God doesn’t make all our grief disappear but the gospel is based on transformation of grief into life – not least Jesus’ death and resurrection. How might this affect our outlook to loss and coming through it positively?

Prayer Lord thank you that real as our losses are you are always there for us, able to take our hurt and grief and make something positive of it all. As your Son died to give us life in all its fullness help us to entrust our deepest hurts to you believing that you are able to transform them in your love. Amen.