

## **A Time to Grieve: A Lamentation for the Loss of Lament**

Our life experience inevitably includes deep loss and suffering. Christ offers us the gift of lamentation in order to help us through such times as these. This talk explores what lamentation is and how it is meant to function in our experience of grief.

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### INTRODUCTION:

Most Christians see the practice of lamentation as inconsistent with the life of faith.

We need to see lamentation as the Lord's gift to us in order to help us through times of grief.

Four realities connected to the practice of lamentation:

#### **1. Lamentation arises out of a real tension.**

We feel ourselves to be between two poles that are in apparent contradiction:

- (i) Our confession about the nature of God and His promises
- (ii) The reality of experience that appears not to match up with our confession and affirmation of faith.

#### **2. Lamentation arises out of a vital and living faith**

The expression of lamentation is not bad faith.

It expresses our commitment to our confession even in the midst of the apparent contradiction.

In effect it expresses to the Father that we want Him to live up to His good name and promise.

This makes it very different from cynical despair.

**3. Lamentation is rooted in real experience rather than the merely theoretical.**

Deep suffering pushes us to test belief and practice it in real life.

The practice of lamentation can lead to a deeper experience of spiritual reality.

**4. Lamentation functions with the use of questions addressed directly to the Lord.**

(i) How long, Oh Lord?

(ii) Why?

(iii) Where are you?

We have permission to ask all of these questions in times of grief and suffering.