

GOD IS FAITHFUL

THE LESSON: LAMENTATIONS 13

There are times when life feels like a “valley of tears”. Sorrow and sickness are a part of the human experience, common to each one of us. It is during these challenging times that we must choose to turn *to* God rather than *away* from him. When we do, like so many before us, we will find that he is *faithful*.

Scripture is filled with role models for us in this respect. The Apostle Paul wrote about a “thorn in the flesh” which he begged God to remove, though he recognized that this source of pain kept him from becoming conceited, and that God’s grace was enough, and moreover, that God’s power was “made perfect” in Paul’s weakness (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). The Old Testament book of Job tells the story of a righteous man who went through great calamity and testing. In the middle of this, he still found the faith to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

The book of Lamentations was written by Jeremiah, a man sometimes referred to as the “weeping prophet”. The situation in which he wrote was grim: the people had ignored prophetic warnings about their sin and had fallen under the judgement of God. As a result, the city of Jerusalem had been subjected to a long siege and then conquered, the temple had been looted, and many people taken captive. Much of the book of Lamentations recounts the devastation and suffering of the people. But at the heart of the book, in the midst of all of this, we find the words that inspired the refrain of the famous Evangelical hymn, written in 1923, “Great is Thy Faithfulness”:

“Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning, new mercies I see.

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided. Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!”

As we read these words of hope and praise, keep in mind the context in which those words are found.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Whom do you know that is sick? Begin by praying for them, that God would comfort them and if it be his will, heal them. Ask him to show you what you might be able to do to be a source of encouragement to them.

Almighty and immortal God, the giver of life and health: We beseech thee to hear our prayers for thy servants, for whom we implore thy mercy, that by thy blessing upon them and upon those who minister to them of thy healing gifts, they may be restored, according to thy gracious will, to health of body and mind, and give thanks to thee in thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (PRAYER FOR THE RECOVERY OF A SICK PERSON, BCP PAGE 55)

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LAMENTATIONS 3: **LOVE, MERCY, AND FAITHFULNESS**

¹⁹Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!

²⁰My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.

²¹But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

²²The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;

²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

²⁴“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

²⁵The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.

²⁶It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.