

## WHAT THE CHURCH CAN LEARN FROM LAMENTATIONS



### Before the seminar:

1. Read: Lamentations 3
2. Review the song “Great is Thy Faithfulness”

## SEMINAR 3: CONTINUING SUFFERING AND FAITHFULNESS

### A. Introduction

1. A critique of the song “Great is Thy Faithfulness”
2. David Smith: “Whatever merits this composition may have[,] when read without reference to the source of its opening lines, this is surely a dreadful misuse of Scripture, distorting the text from lamentations by compelling to serve an understanding of the life of faith completely at odds with the message of the book in which it is imbedded.”<sup>1</sup>
3. Why the lack/absence of lament in modern Christianity

### B. Outline of Lamentations 3:

1. Testimony of the Man who has seen affliction (vv. 1-24)
2. Words of advice from the “Man” (vv. 25-42a)
3. Lament (vv. 43-66)
  - a. Communal lament (vv. 43-47)
  - b. Individual lament (vv. 48-66)

### C. From lament to praise

1. “The man who has seen affliction” (Lam 3:1)
2. The man who has experienced resolution
3. Movement to praise in Lam 3:22-23
4. Turning point: “**This** I call to mind and therefore I have hope” (3:21)

### D. Words of Advice from the Man

1. God is good
2. God “does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men” (3:33)
3. So do not complain

### E. From praise to lament

1. Juxtaposition between confession and accusation – read: Lam 3:42
2. Return to lament – read: Lam 3:43-47
3. Weeping resumes – read: Lam 3:49-50

### Reflection questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, *Stumbling toward Zion : Recovering the Biblical Tradition of Lament in the Era of World Christianity*, 21.

1. What is the overall movement from lament to praise and then back to lament telling us about the life of faith?
2. What is Lamentations 3 telling us about healing and restoration?
3. What is Lamentations 3 revealing to us about the people of God?