

LAMENTATIONS

Session plan for RS2 and WORD, 19th November

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

To show that it's okay to be upset about our circumstances.

To show that even when our suffering is our fault, God brings us hope.

Materials

1. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.
2. Sed mollis aliquam nibh.
3. Pellentesque pellentesque dictum urna.

It's Okay Not To Be Okay

The point of this section is to show that lamenting is a legitimate and helpful response to the difficult parts of life. Pick 2 or 3 of the following:

1. Watch the Bible Project Video <https://youtu.be/p8GDFPdaQZQ>
2. Read Lamentations 1. Why is there all the imagery of grief and death? What has happened?
3. Recap the exile. Read 2 Kings 24-25. This is an incredibly low moment for Israel.
4. How had Israel got to this point? Are they allowed to be upset about the consequences of their sin?
5. Think about a time that we have felt like this. What makes us lament today? Share some testimony. How is being upset good for us?
6. Lamentations 1:18 summarises the whole book - how can God be good when life is rubbish, and seemingly his judgement?
7. Lamentations 5:19-22. What's the issue? Why are the Israelites so unsure about their relationship with God? Why do they feel God has abandoned them? Is this a bad thing?

Is There Still Hope?

The point of this section is to think about how we can still have hope in the dark times of life. Pick a couple of the following:

1. Read Lamentations 3:19-27 and 3:52-60. How is God still seen as good in the middle of all of the bad?
2. Share some testimonies of how hope grows in the difficult times.
3. If judgement is about God clearing sin away from us, how can we be hopeful in judgement?
4. List some promises that God has made - either in the bible or to you as individuals. What makes them true? How can we trust God's promises? It all has to do with him and his character - our circumstances and actions make no difference to whether or not God is God.
5. Tell a story of a gardener, similar to the gardening scene in *The Shack*. A gardener sees an overgrown patch of thistles and brambles. He can imagine the beautiful garden that he wants to plant there, so he sets about creating it. But first, he must rip up the roots, and cut down the vines and burn away the weeds to prepare the ground for the beautiful flowers. If he didn't first deal with the weeds, he could never grow the fruit and flowers. But the preparation was hard work. It is long days, sharp knives, fire..... but it is good. It's the same with God's judgement. It can be painful, and involves a lot being removed from a situation, but it is so God can reach the mud and plant seeds of good fruit and beautiful flowers.

Prayer

1. Thank God that we can trust him.
2. Thank God that we can be open with him in our suffering, even when it's a consequence of our own actions.
3. Thank God that he listens and cares for us - he cares for us enough to stop us from damaging ourselves too much for too long.
4. Ask God to give us hope when life is hard.
5. Ask God to give us the freedom to express ourselves when we are upset or in pain - either through prayer, song, conversation, journaling etc.
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