

Lament Psalms

Asking God the Hard Questions

**Psalm 55: "Why do
my friends betray me?"**

Session 12

5 December 2021

1st Baptist Church

Regina, SK

L4L Fall 2021

Instructor: Kelvin Friebe

Psalm 55 (KGF)

1) For God to Answer the Prayer ("me")

PETITION vv. 1-2a

- 1 [H2] Give ear, God, (to) my prayer,
and do not conceal yourself from
my supplication (for favour)!
- 2 [H3] Pay-attention to me and **answer** me!

Complaint gives
reason for the
Petition

COMPLAINT vv. 2b-8

"I" - complaint

- 2b [H3b] I restlessly-wander in my complaint
and I am unnerved.

"they" – complaint

- 3 [H4] because of the voice of (the) enemy;
because of the constraining-pressure of the wicked.
For they bring down upon me wicked-trouble,
and in anger they bear-animosity against me.

"I" – complaint

- 4 [H5] My heart writhes- in-anguish inside me,
and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
- 5 [H6] Fear and trembling have come upon me,
and shuddering has overwhelmingly-covered me.
- 6 [H7] And I said, "Who might give to me wing(s) like a dove,
(so) I might fly away and I might settle-down.
- 7 [H8] Behold, I would (flee)-far-away (in) wandering;
I would lodge in the wilderness.
- 8 [H9] I would hasten to my place of refuge
from (the) rushing-storm wind,
and from (the) tempest."

Complaint is reason
for the following
Petitions

Psalm 55 (KGF)

2) For God to Deal with the Enemies (“they” – 3rd person plural)

v. 3
Complaint gives
reason for the
Petition

PETITION v. 9a

9a [H10] Swallow-(them)-up, Yahweh!
Divide their tongue(s)!

Complaint gives
reason for the
Petition

COMPLAINT vv. 9b-11

9 [H10] Swallow-(them)-up, Yahweh!
Divide their tongue(s)!

10 [H11] For I have seen violence and contention in the city.
Day and night they go around her,
upon her walls,
and wicked-trouble and mischievous-work are inside her.

11 [H12] Engulfing-ruin is inside her;
and injurious-oppression and treacherous-deceit
do not depart from her town-square.

COMPLAINT vv. 12-14 (“you” – 2nd person singular)

PETITION v. 15a

15a [H16a] May death deceitfully come upon them!
(or, “Destructions [be] upon them”)
May they go-down to Sheol, (when) fully-living;

Complaint gives
reason for the
Petition

COMPLAINT v. 15b

15b [H16b] for evil is in their dwelling, (and also) inside them

Psalm 55 (KGF)

CONFIDENCE vv. 16-19a
(Assurance God will answer)

16 ^[H17] (As for) me, to God, I will call,
and Yahweh, he will save me.

17 ^[H18] Evening and morning and noon-time,
I will complain and I will murmur,
and he will hear my voice.

18 ^[H19] He will redeem, **in peace**, my soul,
from (those) hostilely-approaching me,
for in multitudes, they stand against me.

19a ^[H20] God will hear and he will **answer** them—
and (he is) the one sitting (enthroned) from of old - -

COMPLAINT v. 19b ("them" – 3rd person plural)
19b (in) whom there are no changes (of behaviour) for them,
and they do not fear God.

COMPLAINT v. 20-21
(“him” – 3rd person singular)

20 ^[H21] He has put forth his hands (i.e., conspired)
against those who were **at peace** with him;
he has defilingly-violated his covenant.

21 ^[H22] Smoother than butter was his mouth,
and (yet) his heart was hostile-aggression;
His words were softer than oil,
and (yet) they were unsheathed-(swords)

Exhortation vv. 22
[addressed to psalmist—2nd person singular]

22 ^[H23] Cast, upon Yahweh the-lot-given-to you,
and he will sustain you;
He will never give unsteadiness to the righteous.

CONFIDENCE v. 23a
(Assurance God will answer)

23a ^[H24] And (as for) you, God,
you will bring them down
to (the) pit of (the) abyss;
persons of bloodshed and deceit
will not live-out-half their days

23b And (as for) me, I will trust in you.

Psalm 55 (KGF)

1) For God to Answer the Prayer

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and do not conceal yourself from
my supplication (for favour)!

2 [H3] Pay-attention to me and **answer** me!

COMPLAINT

2b [H3b] I restlessly-wander in **my complaint**
and I am unnerved.

CONFIDENCE vv. 16-19a

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2) For God to Deal with the Enemies

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9a [H10] Swallow-(them)-up, Yahweh!
Divide their tongue(s)!

PETITION v. 15

15 [H16] May death deceitfully come upon them!
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Psalm 55 (KGF)

COMPLAINT vv. 12-14 ("you" – 2nd person singular)

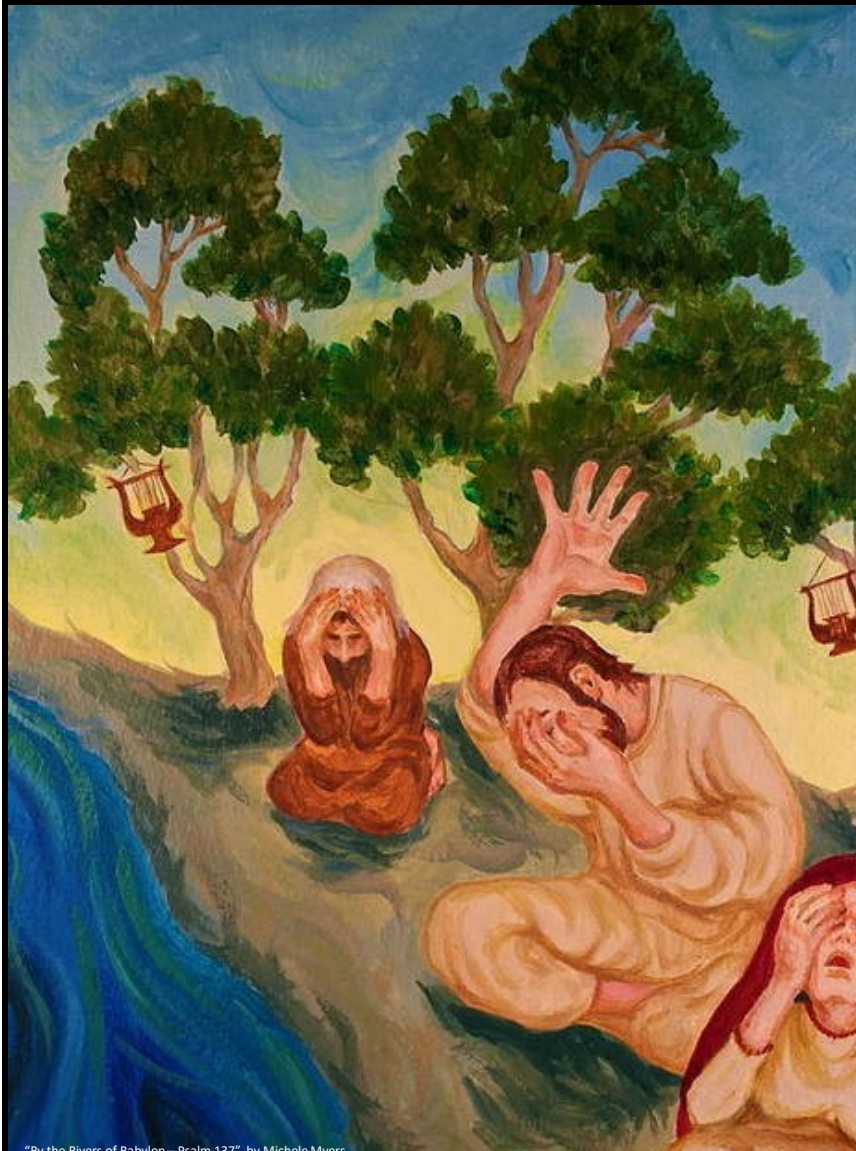
- 12 [H13] For it is not an enemy who reproaches me,
and (if it were, that) I would bear (it);
it is not one who hates me (who) arrogantly-lords over me,,
and (if it were, that) I would hide myself from him.
- 13 [H14] And (rather) it is you
--a person (who is) my equal (lit., "according to my valuation")--
my companion and my acquaintance.;
- 14 [H15] who, together we made sweet familiar-conversation;
In the House of God we walked among the throng.

COMPLAINT v. 20-21 ("him" – 3rd person singular)

- 20 [H21] He has put forth his hands (i.e., conspired)
against those who were at peace with him;
he has defilingly-violated his covenant.
- 21 [H22] Smoother than butter was his mouth,
and (yet) his heart was hostile-aggression;
His words were softer than oil,
and (yet) they were unsheathed-(swords)

Context of Lament Involves the Whole Community

- ▶ **Sometimes we
Lament the Actions of
those within the
Community against us**



"By the Rivers of Babylon - Psalm 137", by Michele Myers
<https://render.fineartamerica.com/images/rendered/default/print/6/8/break/images-medium-5/by-the-rivers-of-babylon-psalm-137-michele-myers.jpg>

Context of Lament Involves the Whole Community

- ▶ Some Situations must be Lamented by the Whole Community (*Communal Laments*)

Psalm 137 (NIV)

¹ By the rivers of Babylon
we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.

Context of Lament Involves the Whole Community

- ▶ **Even Individual Laments were also voiced in the
Context of Corporate Temple Worship**

Context of Lament Involves the Whole Community



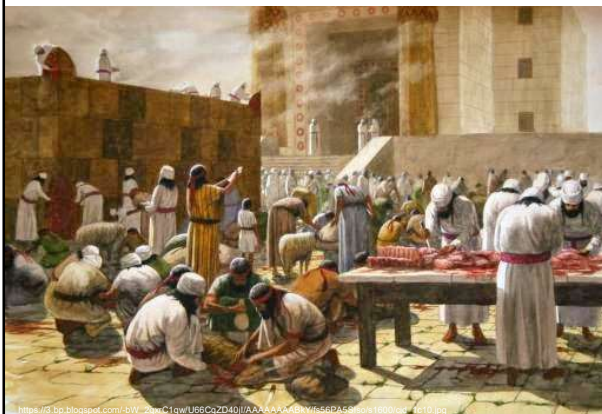
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► Even Individual
Laments were voiced in
the Context of Corporate
Temple Worship

Hannah
1 Samuel 1

¹⁰ In her deep anguish
Hannah prayed
to the LORD,
weeping bitterly.

Context of Lament Involves the Whole Community



► In the Lament Psalms, the Psalmists Vow to Thank God, in the Assembly, *after* God has answered

REORIENTED

God Delivers

DISORIENTED

Lament Psalms

Constituting Elements:

- Complaint
- Petition
- Confidence / Trust
- Vow to Praise

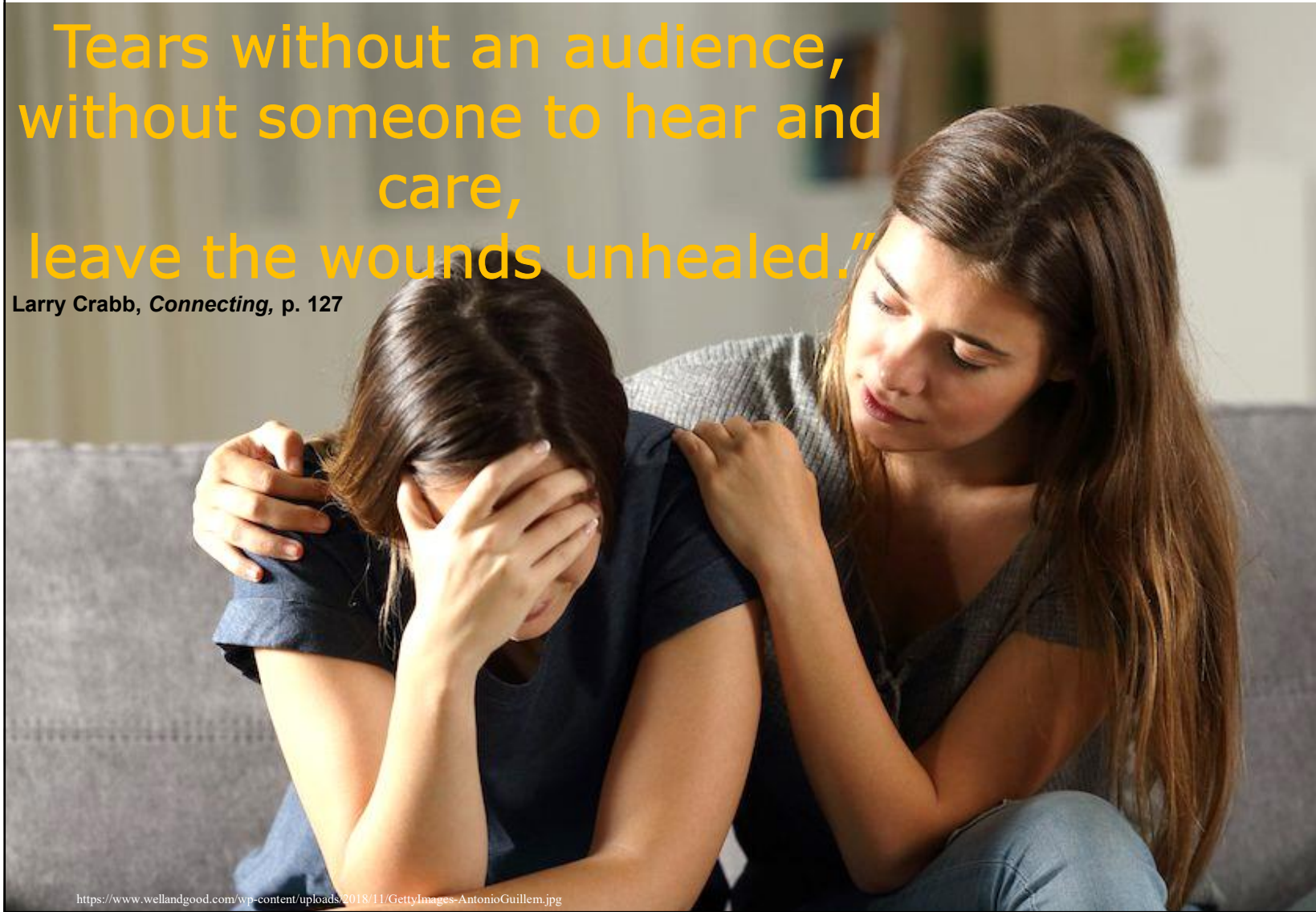
When God Intervenes / Delivers

Psalm 35:18 (NIV)
I will give you thanks
in the great assembly;
among the throngs
I will praise you.

Context of Lament Involves the Whole Community

Tears without an audience,
without someone to hear and
care,
leave the wounds unhealed."

Larry Crabb, *Connecting*, p. 127



<https://www.wellandgood.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GettyImages-AntonioGuillem.jpg>