

Lament Psalms

Asking God the Hard Questions

Psalm 38:

**“Is the suffering
caused by my sin?”**

Session 9 – 14 November 2021

1st Baptist Church – Regina, SK

L4L Fall 2021

Instructor: Kelvin Friebe

Circumstances of being “Disoriented”:

1) Caused by the Psalmist’s Sin:
Penitential Psalms

2) *Not* of the Psalmist’s Doing:
Protestations of Innocence



*“Life is the
Pits!
Why, O Lord?”*

God Delivers

*Spiritual
Questioning*

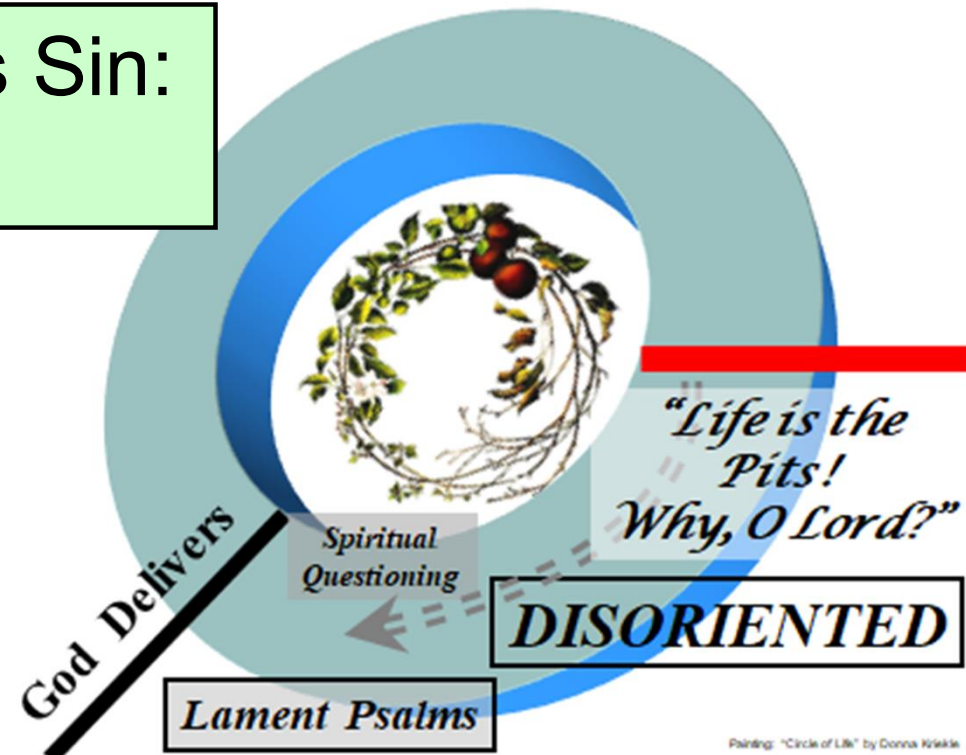
DISORIENTED

Lament Psalms

Circumstances of being “Disoriented”:

▶ Caused by the Psalmist’s Sin: Penitential Psalms

- ▶ Sometimes Circumstances of Disorientation are brought about because we have sinned & our suffering is part of a punishment that we justly deserve
- ▶ When that is the Case, the avenue out of Disorientation into the restored relationship with God in Reorientation is Acknowledgment & Confession of our sin & Seeking Forgiveness, Cleansing, & Restoration



Circumstances of being “Disoriented”:

▶ Caused by the Psalmist’s Sin:
Confession of Sin

Penitential Psalms

Psalms 25

38

41

51

130



*“Life is the
Pits!
Why, O Lord?”*

God Delivers

*Spiritual
Questioning*

DISORIENTED

Lament Psalms

Psalm 38 (KGF)

PETITION

1 ^[H2] Yahweh, do not in your wrath rebuke me,
nor in your anger discipline me.

Complaint – vv. 2-8

CONFIDENCE – v. 9

9 Lord, before you is all my desire,
and my sighing, from you, is not hid.

Complaint – vv. 10-12

Attestation of Innocence – vv. 13-14

CONFIDENCE – vv. 15-16

15 Because for you, Yahweh, I have hopefully-waited;
(as-for) you, you will answer, Lord my God.

Complaint – vv. 17-20

PETITION

21 ^[H22] Do not forsake me, Yahweh;
My God, do not be far from me.
22 ^[H23] Hasten to help me, Lord, my salvation.

Acknowledgement of Sin – vv. 3-5

3 ^[H4] There is no soundness in my flesh
in-light-of your indignation;
there is no wellbeing in my bones
in-light-of my sin.
4 ^[H5] For my iniquities have passed-over my head;
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.
5 ^[H6] My wounds stink (and) fester,
in-light-of my foolishness.

13 ^[H14] And as-for me, like a deaf-person, I do not hear;
and like a dumb-person
(who) does not open his mouth.
14 ^[H15] And I have become
like a person who does not hear,
and there are not in his mouth
(any) rebuking-retorts.

Confession of Sin – v. 18

18 ^[H19] Indeed, my iniquity, I will declare;
I will be anxiously-concerned about my sin.

Psalm 38: Complaint

	vv. 2-8	vv. 10-12	vv. 17-20
“You”- Complaint	2 ^[H3] For your arrows have penetratively-descended into me, and your hand has descended upon me.		
“I”- Complaint	3 ^[H4] There is no soundness in my flesh in-light-of your indignation; there is no wellbeing in my bones in-light-of my sin. 4 ^[H5] For my iniquities have passed-over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. 5 ^[H6] My wounds stink (and) fester, in-light-of my foolishness. 6 ^[H7] I am bent (and) bowed down, exceedingly; all the day, (mournfully-)dark, I walk (about). 7 ^[H8] For my loins are filled with burning; and there is no soundness in my flesh. 8 ^[H9] I am numb and I am crushed, exceedingly; I loudly-growl out of the moaning of my heart.	10 ^[H11] My heart flutters-away; my strength forsakes me; and the light of my eyes-- also that is no-longer with me.	17 ^[H18] For I am ready to stumble, and my pain is before me always. 18 ^[H19] For my iniquity, I declare; I am anxiously-concerned about my sin.
“They”- Complaint		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Friends” 11 ^[H12] My loved-ones and my companions— from before my stricken-disease they stand (aloof); and my close-relatives stand far-off. ● “Enemies” 12 ^[H13] And they set traps, the ones seeking my soul; and the ones seeking my harm, speak destructive-ruin, and deceptions, all the day, they utter. 	“Enemies” 19 ^[H20] And/but my enemies are without-cause numerous (or, “my enemies [seeking my] life are numerous”) and multiplied are the ones-hating me falsely. 20 ^[H21] And the ones-repaying evil in-return-for goodness act-as-adversaries against me, in-return-for my pursuing good.

Deals with the various Dimensions of Sickness:

(2) Physical implications

(* not always clear whether these are meant literally [i.e. of physical distress] or figuratively [i.e., of emotional or spiritual distress])

- 3 There is no soundness **in my flesh** . . .
there is no wellbeing **in my bones** . . .
 - 5 **My wounds** stink (and) fester . . .
 - 6 I am bent (and) bowed down exceedingly; . . .
 - 7 For **my loins** are filled with burning;
and there is no soundness **in my flesh**.
 - 8 I am numb and I am crushed, exceedingly;
I loudly-growl out of the moaning of my heart.
 - 10 My heart flutters-away;
my strength forsakes me;
and the light of my eyes –also that is no-longer with me.
 - 17 and **my pain** is before me always.
- also ● 11 my **stricken-disease**

Deals with the various Dimensions of Sickness:

(3) Emotional, psychological ramifications:

(* it is not always clear whether the psalmist is describing “symptoms” resulting from the sickness that he is experiencing or describing the emotional distress caused by his disturbed conscience because of his awareness of his sin)

- 4 like a heavy burden, (my iniquities) are too heavy for me.
- 6 I am bent (and) bowed down, exceedingly; all the day, (mournfully-)dark, I walk (about).
- 8 I am numb and I am crushed, exceedingly; I loudly-growl out of the moaning of my heart.
- 18 I am anxiously-concerned about my sin.

Deals with the various Dimensions of Sickness:

(4) Social dynamics

(a) Friends:

Abandonment / Being Alienation from them

- 11 My loved-ones and my companions—
from before my stricken-disease they stand (aloof);
and my close-relatives stand far-off.

(b) Enemies:

Malicious Actions & Speech

- 12 And they set traps, the ones seeking my soul;
and the ones seeking my harm, speak destructive-ruin,
and deceptions, all the day, they utter.
- 16 “Lest they rejoice over me,
when my foot slipped, over me they exalted.”
- 19 And my enemies are without-cause numerous
(or, “my enemies [seeking my] life are numerous”)
and multiplied are the ones-hating me falsely.
- 20 And the ones-repaying evil in-return-for goodness
act-as-adversaries against me,
in-return-for my pursuing good.

Deals with the various Dimensions of Sickness:

(1) Spiritual aspect

- ▶ sickness may be an indicator of “sin”,
thus the sickness is correction, discipline, judgment from God

1Yahweh, do not in your wrath rebuke me,
nor in your anger discipline me.
2 For your arrows have penetratively-descended into me,
and your hand has descended upon me.

- ▶ thus the need for (a) acknowledgement of sin
 - 3 There is no soundness in my flesh
in-light-of your indignation;
there is no wellbeing in my bones
in-light-of my sin.
 - 4 For my iniquities have passed-over my head;
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.
 - 5 My wounds stink (and) fester,
in-light-of my foolishness.
- ▶ thus the need for (b) confession of sin
 - 18 Indeed, my iniquity, I will declare;
I will be anxiously-concerned about my sin.

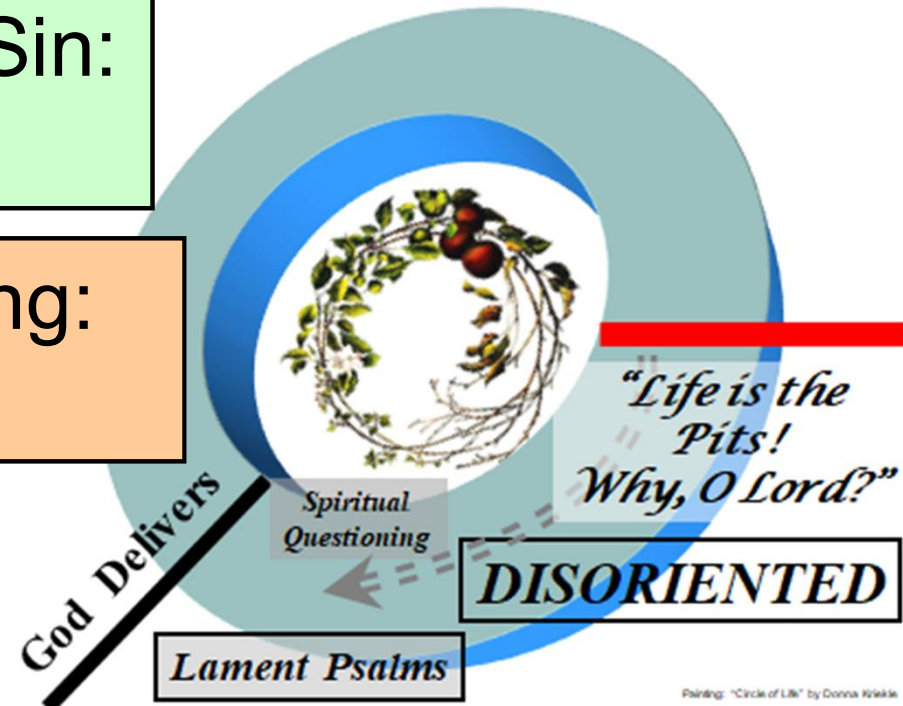


Circumstances of being “Disoriented”:

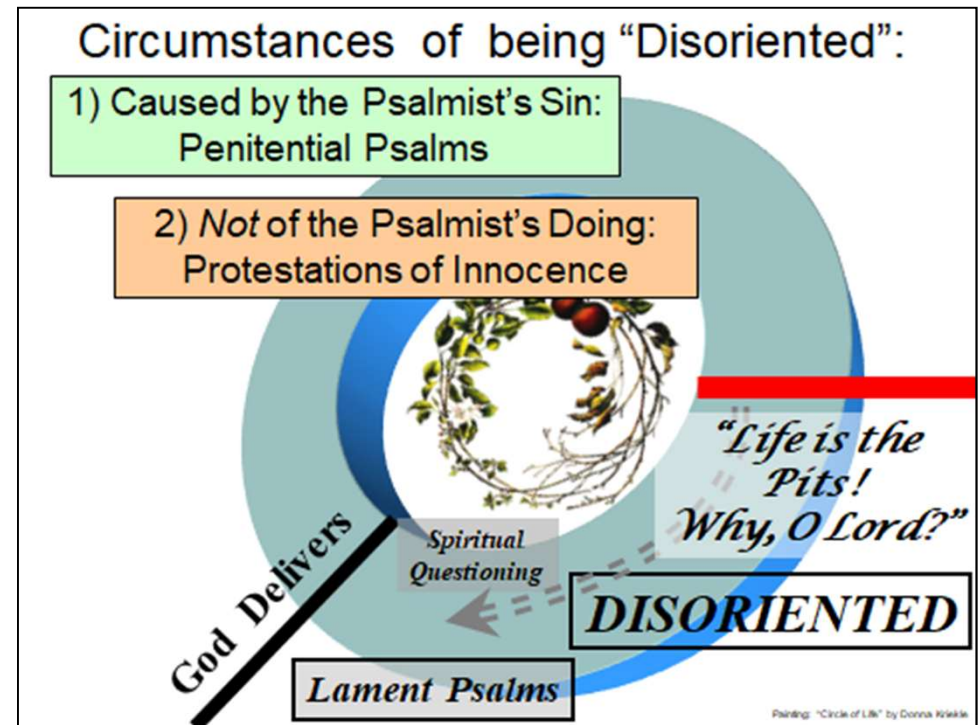
1) Caused by the Psalmist’s Sin:
Penitential Psalms

2) *Not* of the Psalmist’s Doing:
Assertions of Innocence

- ▶ Both arise out of & reaffirm the covenant relationship with God & the psalmists’ desire to live & function within that covenant relationship either
 - by living in faithful adherence to the covenant
 - or ● by seeking forgiveness when the covenant is violated
- ▶ Both theologically affirm that
 - God is a God who justly executes punishment against sin
 - God is a God who forgives sins, when requested



- ▶ because both of those are true:
- ◆ when disorientation occurs, we cannot automatically assume



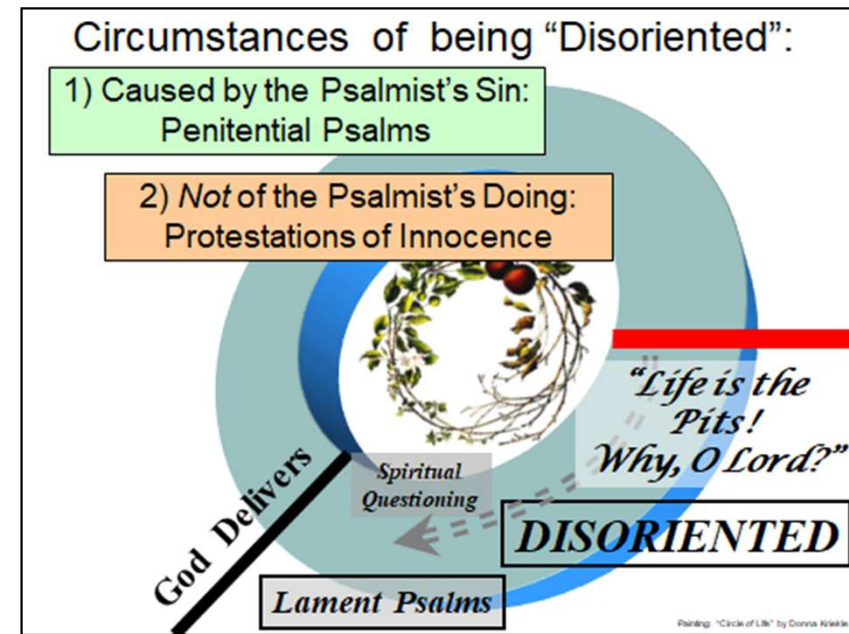
either, that:

- we must have sinned or been disobedient in some way, & thus what is happening is a form of punishment or discipline

or, that:

- we have not sinned (and are suffering "innocently"), & thus bear no moral responsibility for what has happened

▶ since, when disorientation happens, we cannot automatically assume either our innocence or our guilt



- ▶ it therefore seems mandatory that we go through a period of discernment to gain an understanding related to the "disorientation" as to whether it is a divine response to our sin or whether we are "innocent"
- ▶ once that discernment has occurred, then we can respond appropriately either lamenting while asserting our innocence or lamenting in confessing our sin & seeking forgiveness