

June 28, 2015  
Lamentations 3:22-33

Proper 8B  
Great is Thy Faithfulness

*Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Three years ago in the beginning of June our life changed. Before that we lamented. We cried out to God. "How long, O Lord?" You see before Hannah and Miriam came quite quickly together we suffered those silent pains of the question of "Will we ever have a child of our own?" It was a silent pain, a silent grief. Not many people knew what to say when we told them, yes even the church. Yet through those two years of struggle and silent pain, God's faithfulness was there. He never left our side, He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He constantly showed His love to us, even when other didn't. We did lament before God. We suffered from this due to the sinful world and the consequences of sin in the world.

Now in the book of Lamentations Jeremiah rightfully records the laments of God's people in Jerusalem and Judah. They are expressing regret for their sin and they are crying out in grief for the sufferings that have come upon them.

You and I live in a world that is broken and cursed. We live in a world that is full of pain, full of sorrow, full of grief and mourning. We don't have to go far to see this. You see this in your own lives. Grief, sorrow, and pain are there. Perhaps you've had an unexpected hospital visit. Sickness has taken you down a step or two. Your spouse suffers through cancer. Your children have wandered away from the straight and narrow path and are squandering their lives in wild and perverse living. You still mourn the death of a parent, grandparent, child, spouse, or friend. Maybe you or a family member battle the silent pain of infertility, miscarriage, or yes even abortion. You sit in darkness because you are struggling with a secret sin. You have no idea where to turn. You even see the consequences of sin in your own life. Lack of sleep, because you lay awake at night thinking about it. Lack of appetite, it's constantly there and bothers your stomach to the point where you don't want to eat. You have become short with your words. You just want the pain in your life to be over.

Those are just a few things that come to you personally. We cry to God in sorrow for where our nation is right now with the loss of morality, family values, and a whole host of other things. Marriage in the eyes of the law has been redefined to so that same sex couples can be "married". Marriage is no longer defined in our country as one man and one woman until death parts us. It's no longer the fundamental building block of our country for the procreation and rearing of children. We cry out "How Long, O Lord?" Transgenderism has received national attention over the last few weeks. Every day you turn on the news and there's another murder, sexual assault, domestic disturbance and so forth. You can see that sin is running rampant in the world, and the consequences of sin are experienced by all. The consequences will be even more in the days, weeks, and months to come with the legalization of sin.

We are very good at crying out to God with our Laments. Much like Jeremiah is in Lamentations and if you read the book of Jeremiah, you see Laments there as well. David and the other psalmists take up the art of Laments in the psalms. We suffer because of our sinful natures. At points God even allows us to suffer, even as He did to Judah and Jerusalem as He allowed Babylon to come in destroy Jerusalem. God punished Jerusalem, Judah, but did not forsake them. Are the consequences we face because of our sin, punishments from God? Hasn't the punishment already been given to Jesus on the cross? Christ did suffer the wrath of God our punishment, but yet we still have consequences because of our sin, but yet there is hope.

There is hope because God does not forsake us as Jeremiah says, "The Lord will not cast off forever." There is hope because, God is a God of love. God loves you with such a perfect and abiding love. We see this in our sermon text for this morning, a text that is hard to find law, but is filled with pointed Gospel. A gospel that comfort, a gospel that gives hope, a gospel that gives life. A gospel that gives hope and a reason to rejoice even amidst the struggles, pains, and griefs of our time. This weekend as Christian people we hurt because the Supreme Court is trying to play the Supreme Judge.

Jeremiah describes God's love for you in at least seven different ways. Even amidst the pains, sufferings, griefs of today, God still loves you. Let's take a look at this comforting and impressive Gospel message through Lamentations 3. Rev. Francis Rossow writes this: "It is the totality and the ceaselessness of the listing that overwhelm us with the goodness of God."

First, God's love never quits. It is eternal. *"His mercies never come to an end."* God's love for you is an amazing gift. He loves you through thick and thin. He loves you when you stray and He loves you where you are close to Him. God loves you no matter what, it will never end. When the church begins to suffer and we will now more than ever, God LOVES YOU! Remain steadfast.

Second, God's love is abundant, in fact, it is infinite. <sup>32</sup> *but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love;* <sup>1</sup> His love for you is beyond what you can imagine. It's an abundance of love. An abundance that carries us through.

Third, God's love is creative, never dull. *"His mercies...are new every morning."* This doesn't mean that his love for ceases at the end of the day. It means that his love and mercy for you are renewed every morning, and you experience new ways that He loves you on a daily basis. What a blessing this is! We even see it as Luther says in the Small Catechism, "In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the cross and say: 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer...Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (La 3:32). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest.” God’s love comes to you in unique ways every day. God even shows his love for you in unique ways. Remember the promise to Noah that he would never destroy the world with a flood. That was marked with a rainbow.

Fourth, God’s love is dependable. “*Great is Thy faithfulness.*” Indeed, God is faithful to his promises. God is faithful to you, even when you are not faithful to Him. He stands by your side no matter what. He won’t leave you when you hurt Him. His faithfulness is amazing. Our sermon hymn says it quite well: “Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, my Father; There is no shadow of turning with Thee. Thou changest not: Thy compassions, they fail not; As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.” Even though we may be unfaithful to others, and others are unfaithful to us. God will forever be faithful. Even when our country continues to fail us, God is always faithful. God is faithful to His Church and will carry us through.

Fifth, God’s love is not destructive; to paraphrase Shakespeare here, “God’s kindness never kills.” <sup>33</sup> *for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.* <sup>2</sup> God’s love never kills, it only makes alive. God’s love makes alive the children of man through the life of Christ.

Sixth, God’s love is responsive. <sup>25</sup> *The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.* <sup>3</sup> This doesn’t put a requirement for God’s love. God responds to His people in love. God responds in love. Even as we object to the ruling of the Supreme Court and well we should, God responds to those Supreme Court Justices out of love. He responds to us in love, even when we sin and fall short.

And finally number seven, God’s love constitutes an inheritance. “*The Lord is my portion.*” God loves you so much that He gives you an inheritance that will never spoil or fade, but is kept in heaven for you. This inheritance is your eternal salvation. An inheritance that you received at your Baptism, continue to receive through Absolution and the Lord’s Supper and will fully receive when the Lord returns in glory.

God’s love is amazing, it’s steady and unchanging. This is God’s love for you. He gave His love for you as He gave His Son for you. God responded to your sin in love by sending His Son for you. His Son, Your Savior, Jesus Christ bore the yoke of your sins. He bore the yoke of the cross for you. Christ also put His mouth into the dust in humility, He gave His cheek to be struck. You remember, He was scorned and insulted, and shame was heaped upon Him. Christ Jesus even raised His own lament to His Father saying, “My God, MY God, why have you forsaken me?” God forsook His Son. He cast Him into Hell. He did this so that He could restore us. Yet the Father did not reject Him forever, but raised Him on the Third Day. He showed how faithful He was, is, and will be forever.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (La 3:33). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (La 3:25). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

God's wrath at sin for the believer ended at the cross when Christ cried out "It is finished." Is there any greater demonstration of the faithfulness of God and His loving kindness for us than what happened here on the cross in His sufferings and death? Is there any more joyous exclamation of God's faithfulness and His Loving Kindness than "Alleluia Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!"

The God who has done this for us, named us heirs, sent His Son to die and rise again for us, who has accomplished forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life for us—this God is the object...really He is the foundation of our Hope. Great is Thy Faithfulness!

Great is Thy Faithfulness! Indeed it is. God's anger does end, it passes away. God's loving kindness, his "chesed" triumphs over all bitterness, despair, grief, sorrow, pain, mourning, and hopelessness. God's loving kindness will bring you through even those silent pains, those silent laments. He will have mercy and does have mercy in accordance with the abundance and greatness of His faithfulness. His anger has a conclusion, as Jerusalem saw. But his compassion and mercies are never ending, new every day, as certain as the rising of the morning sun. Your suffering will never have the final word! God's eternal loving kindness and faithfulness will! Great is Thy Faithfulness! The Supreme Court will not have the final word on anything, whether it be the 1973 decision that legalized murder or the 2015 decision that legalized same-sex marriage. God will always have the final word! Great is Thy Faithfulness! God's Word and His Faithfulness to the Church is amazing. As we continue to enter these dark and latter days we need to bind ourselves to His Word, to each other, and be prepared for a battle. Be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is in you. Be prepared to live in persecution, it's coming. God will remain faithful to us and will carry us through.

In Jesus Name! Amen!

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.*