

RESILIENCY: *Setting Free our Lament*

We are living in unprecedented times—a health pandemic filled with economic uncertainty and unresolved racism. This added to each of our own personal challenges in daily life.

Grief upon grief.
Uncertainty upon uncertainty.

Lament is that raw pain and unresolved grief from deep within. Unexpected turn of events unleashed by the spread of the deadly coronavirus leaves us unsettled, weary, and aching for better days.

Please. Can we speed-dial through lament? Unfortunately, there is no quick fix.

And no, God did not send these times to punish us or teach us. But, from this, we can grow in wisdom, maturity, and grace. By the grace of God, hope can take root and blossom with a beauty borne only from the struggle.

Where to begin?

- 1) Acknowledge the lament is real.
- 2) Accept that lament does not leave easily or quickly.
- 3) Name the lament so it does not get stuck deep inside, robbing us of hope and joy.
- 4) Have courage.

Linger with this resource

Use this resource alone or with a small group. Ponder the questions on a retreat or over a long weekend. Do not rush the process. The very nature of lament is one of depth.

BIBLE FOCUS: Each of the following worksheets is grounded in a psalm—but not the familiar, up-tempo psalms used at worship for praise. Instead, the psalmist cries from the pit of being. These less-familiar psalms of lament touch our weary bones and remind us that we are not alone in our struggles.

Yet, how can the psalmist who sings glorious praises also cry out in lament? Different writers? Maybe. Or, perhaps it is the same person, living in unprecedented times, wondering how life got to be so unfair. Perhaps the psalmist is someone like us, trying to sort out life—a life filled with both joy and sorrow.

FAITH PRACTICES: During tough times, we lean on God in ways we never imagined. The ebb and flow of the faith practices found in the Affirmation of Baptism provides a framework which can order our days. These faith practices are referred to as the five gifts of discipleship.

RESILIENCY tips

OTHERS

Live among God's People

HOPE

Hear the word
Proclaim good news

MEANING

Serve as Jesus
Strive for peace and justice



LAMENT of NOW

 Name the laments, cries, and struggles of living now—in these times.

HEAR THE WORD

While on the cross, Jesus prayed Psalm 22. Take a moment to reflect on the opening verses of this psalm.

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

²O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

 Do you relate? How so?

Psalm 22 continues:

³Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

⁴In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

⁵To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

 This psalm which was prayed by Jesus on the cross includes both lament and trust. What does it mean for you to hear that others, even Jesus, have also cried out to God?

RESILIENCY tips

OTHERS

Live among God's People: *We are not alone.*

 List those who you know are weighed down by lament.

 Who listens to you? Who else might listen? Select someone to contact for a "heart-to-heart" conversation in the coming days.

HOPE

Proclaim good news

 Create a gratitude list.

 What "good news" can be found on your gratitude list?

MEANING

Serve as Jesus

Strive for peace and justice

 Name those who reflect God's love to you.

 How might you say thanks to those who have extended loving kindness to you?



LAMENT of COVID-19

 Name the laments, cries, and struggles associated with the pandemic of coronavirus.

HEAR THE WORD

Psalm 57

¹Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,
for in you my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,
until the destroying storms pass by.

²I cry to God Most High,
to God who fulfills his purpose for me.

 Name any destroying storms which you face.

Psalm 57 continues:

⁷My heart is steadfast, O God,
my heart is steadfast.
I will sing and make melody.

⁸Awake, my soul!
Awake, O harp and lyre!

I will awake the dawn.

⁹I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to you among the nations.

¹⁰For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens;
your faithfulness extends to the clouds.

¹¹Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.
Let your glory be over all the earth.

 The psalmist uses the phrase "Awake my soul." Imagine one day hearing a song which might "awake your soul." What will that feel like? Describe that day.

RESILIENCY tips

OTHERS

Live among God's People: *We are not alone.*

 Name those in your life who share a lament about COVID-19.

 Name someone who you could share your true feelings about COVID-19. Make plans to contact that person.

HOPE

Proclaim good news of Jesus through word and deed

 List some good news related to COVID-19.

 How do you feel when you proclaim good news? Who needs "you" to proclaim good news to them? How can you make that happen?

MEANING

Serve as Jesus

Strive for peace and justice

 Give examples of how you might express love for your neighbor while keeping a safe physical distance during COVID-19. Choose one activity to do this week.



LAMENT of Racism

 Name the laments, cries, and struggles related to racism.

HEAR THE WORD

Psalm 61

Hear my cry, O God;
listen to my prayer.

²From the end of the earth I call to you,
when my heart is faint.

Lead me to the rock
that is higher than I;

³for you are my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.

⁴Let me abide in your tent forever,
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

 *Imagine not feeling safe—because of your skin color. Imagine finding refuge in the shelter of God—no matter your skin color. Compare and contrast those experiences.*

Psalm 61 continues:

⁵For you, O God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

⁶Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all generations!

⁷May he be enthroned forever before God;
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

⁸So I will always sing praises to your name,
as I pay my vows day after day.

 *Each of us is created in the image of God. In your own words, write a vow to God which expresses how to treat every person—as one made in God's image.*

RESILIENCY tips

OTHERS

Live among God's People: *We are not alone.*

 *List by name those who have been victims of racism. Pray for each person on the list.*

 *List individuals who share your lament over racism. Reach out to someone on your list to discuss your concerns.*

HOPE

Proclaim good news of Jesus through word and deed

 *What good news does Jesus proclaim to victims of racism? To racists? To anti-racists?*

 *What brings your hope in the current anti-racist movement?*

MEANING

Serve as Jesus
Strive for peace and justice

 *What yet needs to happen so all of God's children might experience justice?*

 *How might you be called to work for peace and justice?*



LAMENT of _____

 Name your lament.

RESILIENCY tips

OTHERS

Live among God's People: *We are not alone.*

 Develop a plan to reach out to someone who can listen to your lament.

HEAR THE WORD

Create your own psalm or prayer.

HOPE

Proclaim good news of Jesus through word and deed

 Draw a symbol of hope.

MEANING

Serve as Jesus

Strive for peace and justice

 Select 5 words which have meaning for you. Write them in any random order. Take a moment to reflect on each of these words. Expand these words into a poem.



PRAYER

Based on Psalms 22, 57, 61

My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?

Be merciful to me,
O God, be merciful to me,
for in you my soul takes refuge.

Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I call to you,
when my heart is faint.

Stir my memory.
For you were there at my first breath,
You were there at my first steps
and with me at every fall.

You were there,
waiting at the waters of baptism
with gifts of discipleship
willing to lead me to
others, hope, and meaning.

Open me to receive your gifts of grace to:
Live among your people
Hear your word
Proclaim your good news
Serve as Jesus
Strive for peace and justice

For your steadfast love
is as high as the heavens;
your faithfulness
extends to the clouds.
So I will sing praises
to your name.

Amen

Affirmation of Baptism

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p 236

Take a moment to affirm your baptism.

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made
with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's
supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ
through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of
Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the
earth?

RESPONSE: I do, and ask God to help and guide me.

 *What does it mean for you to say "I do" to God?*

Silent Meditation

Find a quiet place. Take several deep breaths. Sit in
silence. Name the lament which you desire to set free.
Breathe deeply three times. Imagine the Spirit of God
taking that lament away as you exhale. Imagine inhaling
the love of Christ. Feel the presence of God. Repeat this
process.

