



# Small Groups

## *Small Group Discussion Guide*

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**Part 3 of Good Grief: from the book of Lamentations  
Dare to Hope**  
(Discussion Guide by Carolyn Taketa)  
**June 1-2, 2019**

Lament is a passionate expression of deep sorrow, regret, and grief. Here in the third chapter of the Book of Lamentations, Jeremiah is overwhelmed by the hardships that Jerusalem is experiencing during the two-year siege at that hands of the Babylonians. Jeremiah expresses the hopelessness and despair filling the Israelites' hearts as well as his own heart. This is a hard battle. Will Jeremiah surrender to despair or will he dare to hope?

Hope arises out of struggle and requires vulnerability and courage. To have hope is to allow ourselves to dig deep within our hearts, acknowledge our pain, and voice our desire for change. This is not easy. Avoidance and denial are easier. However, the only way forward when we are in pain is through hope. We can learn from Jeremiah who fully expresses his suffering and despair and then pivots to a place of hope and faith. He starts from a place of pain and ends in a place of trust.

At the center of this chapter and in the middle of this book, Jeremiah clings to the hope of each new morning and declares, "Great is your faithfulness." When God grants him breath for another day, Jeremiah receives it as evidence of a fresh promise that God is at work and will eventually bring an end to the suffering. Every new day calls us to rest in the ultimate goodness and love of God, which is why we dare to hope!

**Opening Question: What is the most "daring" physical activity you have done?**

### **Dare to Hope in Our God**

**Read through Lamentations 3:1-66 aloud in the NLT.**

- 1. As you read this chapter, what are the emotional tones and attitudes Jeremiah expresses? Which verses reveal the pivotal points where Jeremiah changes his perspective?**
- 2. The circumstances have not changed but Jeremiah undergoes a profound shift in his emotions, attitudes and perspective. What restores Jeremiah's hope and causes him to move from a place of pain to place of trust?**
- 3. Lamentations 3:20-24 is planted in the center of this book. Read these key verses:**

*"I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is*

*his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!"*

- a) What do these verses and Chapter 3 tell us about who God is and how He works?
  - b) In verse 20, Jeremiah says in the midst of his terrible grief, he still dares to hope. Why does hope require daring? What feeds our hope?
  - c) Pastor Shawn pointed out that the word "remember" in verse 21 is not just the idea of recalling something but the act of rehearsing it over and over; repeatedly preaching it to ourselves. What does Jeremiah tell us to "remember?" Why is that critical to our faith journey?
  - d) What or who helps you to "remember" God's faithfulness, especially during difficult times?
4. In verses 25-27, Jeremiah declares God's goodness, a key attribute of God's character.

*Psalm 145:8 "The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love."*

*Psalm 23:6 "Surely goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever."*

*Psalm 34:8 "Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him."*

- a) How does God's faithfulness, goodness, and unfailing love all tie together?
  - b) Just as a parent knows best, chases after a child to keep them safe, and picks up the messes the child leaves behind, God is constantly chasing after us with His love and goodness – Psalm 23:6. How has God been pursuing you lately?
5. Jeremiah exhorts us in verse 26 to "wait quietly for the Lord," a repeated theme in Scripture.

*Psalm 37:7a "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him."*

*Psalm 62:1 "I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him."*

*Isaiah 40:31 "But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."*

- a) Do you find it easy or difficult to wait? Explain why.
- b) What statements of faith are we making when we choose to wait on God?
- c) Is there a tough situation currently in your life where God may be calling you to wait and dare to hope in His faithful goodness? Share and pray with one another for God to breathe fresh hope into your hearts and deepen your trust in Him.