

Woman

Key words: grief, lament, helplessness, healing, wholeness, hope, praise

Note to Leader: As you welcome member please explain that our Old Testament readings (2 Sam. 1: 1, 17-27 and Ps. 130) focus on grief and lament hence the question about prayers of lament.

Welcome

- How is it with your soul?

Here is what Denise Ackermann, a professor and feminist theologian of praxis at the University of Stellenbosch says about Lament:

“Lament is akin to mourning...

It is somehow more purposeful than mourning...

It signals that relationships and circumstances have gone terribly wrong...

It is a coil of suffering and hope, awareness and memory, anger and relief, a desire for vengeance, forgiveness, and healing...

It is our way of bearing the unbearable” (D. Ackermann, *After the locusts*. Eerdmans, 2003, 110-111)

- Have you ever prayed a prayer of lament and which Psalm of lament is the most meaningful for you?

Worship

- Read **2 Samuel 1: 19-23, 25-27**, David laments for Saul and Jonathan after they were wounded and killed in battle.
- Sing a song/hymn about God’s love (e.g. ‘*O love that will not let me go...*’ or ‘*Make me a channel of your peace...*’)
- Pray: say a prayer to express your longing for God’s love and intervention in your life and in the life of our church and nation, also give thanks for God’s intervention in the past.

Word

1. What struck you about the worship service this past Sunday?
2. Become aware that you are about to hear God’s word
3. Read the Gospel story in Mark 5: 21-43.
4. Which phrase/word jumps out at you and what does it mean?
5. Who are the main characters in the story and what do we know about them?
6. Which character in the story can you identify with and why? Are there any other interesting characters in the story?
7. How does the woman with haemorrhage find healing, and what does it mean for you to ‘touch the hem of Jesus robe’?
8. Do you know any stories of lament and helplessness which ended up in hope and praise?

Works

- You may read the Gospel passage again during the week and imagine yourself in one of the scenes. What would you say to Jesus and what would Jesus say to you?
- Write a psalm/prayer of lament for a particular area of grief and hopelessness in our nation.
- Look out for signs of resurrection!