

SCRIPTURE READING: Lamentations 3:19-33.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Portions. Canaan, inheritances, food. We know what we want, we want as big a portion as possible, and we do what we can to get it. *What do we want out of life?*
2. Bible class in Houston. Lamentations. Songs #892, #190, etc.
3. This text spoke to me. I hope it will bless you.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: Lamentations 3:19, 20, 21, 22-23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29-30, 31-33.

SOME APPLICATIONS OF THE TEXT:

1. **Life can be tough and we can get down.**

- A. How's life? Here's the way it was for Jeremiah. Lamentations 3:1-16.
- B. Are you down? Jeremiah was. Lamentations 3:17-18.
- C. Down, angry, bitter, fretful, worried – it's a terrible way to live, isn't it?
- D. Here's the good news. Our text teaches us how to rise above our circumstances.

2. **We must push our thoughts around and not let them push us around.**

- A. It's not what happens in life that makes or breaks us. Rather, it's the way we think about what happens in life.
- B. We can choose how we think about life. Lamentations 3:20, 21.
- C. We can choose to think about how tough life is and be angry, bitter, fretful, worried, depressed, etc. OR, we can think about God – how He always loves and cares for us, how He uses tough times to make us better people, how He's seen us through tough times before, how He will see us through tough times again, and how the toils of the road will seem nothing when we get to the end of the way. Psalm 42:5-6A; 73:26.
- D. We must quit thinking negatively AND start thinking positively.
 - 1) If we do the former without the latter, the negative will soon come rushing back to fill the void. We always need to have a ready supply of positive scriptures, songs, prayers, etc.
 - 2) AND, we need to keep using them until the temptation to think negatively has passed.
- E. How many burdens do we needlessly bear simply because we don't ask God to remember us in prayer? God doesn't force Himself on us. Lamentations 3:19.
- F. How many burdens do we needlessly bear simply because we don't remember God? Notice how immediately Jeremiah is blessed. He goes from Lamentations 3:18 to Lamentations 3:24 is just five short verses. Why? Because he remembered that God remembered him.
- G. As a shipwrecked crew waves and makes frantic efforts to attract the attention of a passing vessels, and recovers hope and starts rejoicing as soon as it knows it has been seen, so troubled souls should lose all despair as soon as they remember that they are remembered by God.
- H. If Jeremiah could push his thoughts around and find hope in his circumstances, then surely we can do it. We must keep things in perspective. It's usually not that bad; it usually passes; and if it is that bad and it doesn't pass, then 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1.
- I. We need to learn to push our thoughts around as early in life as possible. Lamentations 3:27.
- J. But, whatever our age, we must learn to rejoice always! Lamentations 3:29-30. It is humbling but liberating to think that life is tough simply because we refuse to learn what God is desperately trying to teach us. Lamentations 3:31-33.

3. **Is the Lord our portion?** Lamentations 3:24; Psalm 119:57-58A; Philippians 1:21A. Introduction 1.

- A. Have you been saved the only way possible, by obeying the gospel plan of salvation? Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:37-38.
- B. If you've been saved, are you living faithfully? One barrier to rejoicing in the Lord always is that we aren't always in the Lord.
- C. Are we *waiting* for the Lord, i.e. is the Lord such a portion of our lives that we are significantly realizing the blessings that come from an intimate relationship with God? Lamentations 3:25A, 26; Psalm 37:7-11; 62:1-2.
- D. If so, keep on keeping on. If not, are we *seeking* the Lord, i.e. striving to make Him an ever greater portion of our lives? Lamentations 3:25B. *Are we seeking:*
 - 1) His help? Lamentations 3:19; Psalm 142:5-7.
 - 2) To deepen our understanding of His character? Lamentations 3:22-23.
 - 3) To deepen our understanding of His purposes? Lamentations 3:28; Psalm 119:71; Lamentations 3:31-33.

CONCLUSION:

- 1) While Jeremiah was down, he didn't stay down. He pushed his thoughts around and realized that though he had nothing else, since he had God, since God was his portion, he had it all and rejoiced even in his darkest of hours.
- 2) We can do the exactly the same thing!

