

Anchors amid Adversity

Text: Lamentations 3:21-23

Date: 11-20-22 10:30 AM

“The black velvet of sin and suffering in chapters 1–2 and 4–5 serves as a fitting backdrop to display the sparkling brilliance of God’s loyal love in chapter 3”.¹

In the midst of relentless torture, his beloved city’s defeat, painful agony, and misery and affliction, Jeremiah writes that he still had hope. Jeremiah’s afflictions were directly tied to the cities destruction as a result of God’s judgment hand.

Jeremiah continually thought about these things and it brought him to a state of downcast, depression, and despair.

In the midst of the difficult scenes being replayed in his mind, the depths of the despair of his land being demolished, and the fact that he could do nothing to change his surroundings, the prophet moved from hell to hope, from famine to food, from discouragement to faith.

Jeremiah teaches us that, no matter the situation, a focus on God gives expectancy and a cause for hope.

At this moment in time, Jeremiah could have sinfully blamed God and become bitter with Him. He could have said, “I was faithful, yet I was treated unfairly and unkindly”.

Instead, Jeremiah makes a life-changing choice. The word *recall to my mind* means to bring back knowledge from memory or recollection. What he remembered brought him hope.

Jeremiah was now seeking and waiting even though he was in distress. In the midst of thorns he found a rose. In the middle of the nettles, he found sweet berries. In his recollection he found an anchor for his life and soul.

Jeremiah utters a praise song, fixates his whole mind on God, and places his trust in the never-changing attributes of God. Despite the worst of times, Jeremiah shows that a person can give thanks in everything.

Can we? When God allows unexpected events to come into our lives, how do we respond? Where does our focus go in desperate times? What do you anchor your life to in the pain? Jeremiah found his anchors to be in the character of God.

Here are three anchors that we can cling to in these times. These are more than security blankets. They fasten us to the Rock of God Himself. We should burst out in praise that God has given us these moorings. Psalm 61:2 says, “From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

I. The anchor of God’s mercies (Lam. 3:22a)

The word mercies (Hebrew: *hesed* – used 245x in the OT) describes the *loyal love of God*. Descriptive words like *kindness, goodness, faithfulness, unfailing, and loyalty* demonstrate its wonderful meanings.

¹

Dyer, C. H. (1985). [Lamentations](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1207). Victor Books.

The word declares God's favor upon His people. *Hesed* is related to God's covenant and therefore is based on His word. This is a character trait of God (Num. 14:18; Deut. 17:9). God extends it to all those who call upon Him and are His children (Ex. 20:6). God's mercy is revealed in the heavens (Ps. 36:5) and describes His work on earth (Ps. 25:10). God never lacks in mercy (Ps. 86:13; 15). God's mercy lasts forever (Ps. 89:1; 100:5). Mercy is that which truly satisfies us (Ps. 90:14). God will not forget His mercy towards His people (Ps. 98:3). God's mercy is great towards those that fear Him (Ps. 103:11).

God's mercy is something to sing about (Ps. 59:16) and we will never stop singing about it (89:1). We are delivered because of God's mercies (Ps. 109:21) and we are saved because of them (Eph. 2:4ff).

Jeremiah recalls Jehovah's mercies because he recognizes that is what keeps His people from being consumed.

Jeremiah's hope was based on God's word. Jeremiah's hope was based on the remembrance of God's promise of the coming Messiah. On that basis neither Jeremiah nor his people would be consumed.

Our hope lies in the unwavering belief that God's mercies have given us eternal life and that life is His Son. Nothing can revoke or undo God's mercies in our lives.

II. The anchor of God's compassions (Lam. 3:22b-23)

The word *compassion* means "a deep awareness of and sympathy for another's suffering".² The idea is of gentle, yet intense concern for another's plight.

Jeremiah didn't allow God's compassions to become old or worn out. They never once proved undependable. They didn't become disappointing because they didn't cease. They were like fresh baked bread in the kitchen, new rain in a desert, and a brand new building. Every single day.

Like manna in the wilderness, God's mercies and compassions could never be exhausted.

This great truth caused Jeremiah to burst forth in praise calling out that God is great in His faithfulness! The mercies and compassions of God were truly a demonstration of His faithfulness.

His faithfulness is great because He is great. His faithfulness is great because His works are great. His faithfulness is great because His character is great. Not one aspect of God is limited, less than important, powerless, or small.

We have failed Him. He won't fail us. He faithfully forgives (I John 1:9). He faithfully sympathizes (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16). He faithfully walks with us and delivers us in the midst of temptation (I Cor. 10:13). He faithfully keeps us and holds us to eternal life (I Thess. 5:23-24). He is our faithful Creator (I Pet. 4:19).

² Brannan, R., ed. (2020). In [Lexham Research Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible](#). Lexham Press.