

WE Lament Together

Elizabeth Turnage



Mark Vroegop, author of *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*, writes that biblical lament involves four aspects: “turning to God, bringing your complaint, asking boldly, and choosing to trust.” I have included each aspect of biblical lament in this lament.

A Lament about the Shooting at Covenant School

“God of our salvation,
we cry out day and night before you,
Let our prayer come before you;
Incline your ear to our cry” (Psalm 88:1-2).

We turn to you, O Lord,
for “you have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

We bring to you, merciful Lord, our complaint.
This is the way many of us feel right now:
“For these things we weep;
our eyes flow with tears;
for a comforter is far from us,
one to revive our spirit;
our children are desolate,
for the enemy has prevailed”
(Lamentations 1:16).

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“Our souls are bereft of peace;
We have forgotten what happiness is;
So we say,
‘Our endurance has perished;
so has our hope from the Lord’ (Lamentations 3:18).

And yet,
“this we call to mind, and therefore we have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
your mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
You, the Lord, are our portion,
say our souls,
therefore we will hope in you” (Lamentations 3:22-24).

Because you are the God
“who comforts us in all of our affliction
so that we may be able to comfort others” (2 Corinthians 1:4),

we ask you to bring
your surpassing peace,
your unfailing love,
your soothing comfort,
and your complete healing

etlivingstory@gmail.com

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to all affected by this tragedy,
and to our entire world:
to the families of the victims
to the family of the shooter
to the children, family, faculty, and staff of Covenant
School
to the pastors, ministry leaders, staff, elders' wives, and
congregation of Covenant Presbyterian Church,
and to all the grieving and traumatized
in the Nashville community
and around the world.

We urge you to bring your justice and peace
to this broken world,
praying
for the day of
no more violence,
no more evil,
no more tears,
no more death,
no more mourning,
no more pain (Revelation 21:4).

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As we move toward Holy Week,
May the good news of Christ's death and resurrection
capture and convict our hearts more deeply than ever:
Because your Son agonized in the garden,
sweating drops of blood as he cried out to you,
because your Son "endured the cross,
despising the shame,
for the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2),
Because your Son cried out from the cross,
"It is finished" (John 19:30),
Because your Son rose from the dead on the third day
(Mark 16:5-7)...

Sin is defeated.
Death has died.
New life has begun.

Now we loudly proclaim,
"Death is swallowed up in victory
Oh, death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

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Now we are sure
“that neither death nor life,
nor angels nor rulers,
nor things present nor things to come,
nor powers,
nor height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

Now we eagerly anticipate
The day of resurrection and reunion with you:
when we will
“be glad and rejoice forever
in the [new heavens and new earth] which you create” (Isaiah 65:18).

In that day,
you will make all things new,
and you will wipe every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4).

As we walk these hard days
in the light of your redeeming love,
as we lean and look toward the day of resurrection,
we hear our beloved Savior assuring us,
“Behold, I am coming soon” (Revelation 22:7).
We cry out,
“Come quickly, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).
We hear our beloved Savior answer us,
“Surely I am coming soon” (Revelation 22:20).

In your tear-wiping name we pray. Amen.

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