

ULC Sermon Study Resource
His Mercy is More // The Lonely City
Pastor Marcus Lane
March 2, 2022 // Ash Wednesday

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What's your most comforting bible verse?

Reading: Lamentations 1:1-22

Outline:

- I. Israel's Loss (v. 1-7)
 - a. The reading starts with a painful reflection on the former glory that Jerusalem once was before the pride of Israel produced its demise
 - b. The ashes we receive to start this season of reflection are meant to humble us and remind us of our begin and end; "you are dust, and to dust you shall return"
Q: How do reminders of our past and future abolish destructive pride?
- II. God's Silence (v. 8-17)
 - a. In response to Israel's pride, ignorance of God, and lack of prudence, God responded with the only form of instruction that would get them to turn and listen again: silence
 - b. We often allow God's silence to shape how we see God, rather than letting our view of God shape how we understand his silence
Q: When have you felt the weight of God's apparent silence?
- III. Israel's Lament (v. 18-22)
 - a. Lamenting, like Israel eventually did, encourages and instructs us to find God in the midst of our struggles through His written word and His Son
 - b. Pride and other rebellions have no place in a relationship with God, so if we want to understand Him better and see His heart more clearly, we must weed out those sins
Q: How does lamenting prevent us from becoming resigned or cynical?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) At what point has pride threatened to or successfully created immense loss in your life?
- 2) How has God's silence shaped the way you saw/ understood Him?
- 3) What scripture passages have you relied on to pacify the intense loneliness that silence brings?
- 4) Why do you think God uses the experience of this kind of loss to instruct us?
- 5) How does scripture bring about the humility we need to restore our connection to God?

Suggestions for further study:

- Isaiah 54:4 **Q: What hope does life after this offer in regards to our mistakes?**
- John 10:27 **Q: What can this verse remind us of in times of God's silence?**

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God, as we look both in our own hearts and the world around us, there's much to lament. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, and rebelled against your word. But Lord, in the face of that, we believe that your mercy has been made known to us. So may the acknowledgement of those sins lead us to seek out your mercy, compassion, and the cross of our Savior. He went there for us so we could be forgiven, free, and raised up despite being merely dust. Humble us this season to turn back to you and find new life and salvation. Amen