

SUMMARY AND REVIEW

Take 5-10 minutes to discuss this week's sermon, *Lament and Longing*, Psalm 137.

READ Psalm 137

INTRO TO THE TEXT:

Psalm 137 opens at the waters of Babylon, the land of exile. Consider what a shock this is for the Jewish people. They left exile in Egypt to reach a land promised to them long before. They see the promise fulfilled through military conquest and ultimately the reign of Saul, David, and Solomon. Yet, in this prosperity, God's people progressively abandon him. The monarchy is crushed by foreign invaders, Jerusalem is destroyed, and God's people are torn away from the peace and stability that had become a way of life. As they sit at the water's edge, their captors mock them, telling them to sing songs of worship that celebrate the land from which they were torn.

The psalmist, likely a musician and poet, would rather remain mute and unable play an instrument than forget God as his greatest joy. Even in what seems to be the worst possible circumstances, God remains redeemer and provider.

The final verses present a desire for violent retribution that is almost impossible for us to comprehend as scripture. In context of the exile itself, Charles Spurgeon comments, "Let those who find fault with it who have never seen their temple burned, their city ruined, their wives ravished, and after children slain; they might not, perhaps, be quite so velvet mouthed if they had suffered after this fashion." While Spurgeon certainly lends context to the sentiment of the people, these graphic words in scripture. Thus, it is helpful to be reminded of our sin placing us in exile from God and the magnitude of the curse we deserve that is taken away through Christ crucified as we think through this passage.

RE-READ Psalm 137

ANALYZE THE TEXT

1. Review the story of the Israelites, from their time in Egypt to the wilderness to their arrival in Canaan (Psalm 78). How does this history lend more context to the situation in Psalm 137?
2. Take notice of the imagery surrounding worship in this passage. What does this tell us about how the Jewish people viewed worship (even though they had abandoned God)? Does this reverence seem "oxymoronic" when placed beside their way of living in Psalm 78?
3. How does calling upon God to curse the Babylonians relate to the curse we deserve as a sinful people?

APPLY

1. Think about the Israelites and their gradual but progressive abandonment from God's commands that ultimately ends in exile. Do you have others speaking into your life to identify areas you may wander before you find yourself in dire circumstances? What does (or could) that look like?
2. During difficult times or situations, do you trust God to seek justice and peace on behalf of his people, or are you tempted to call out a curse upon others?
3. Christ took the curse we initiated and deserved and placed it upon himself. As we seek to imitate Christ, how do we carry the burdens of others and place others before us? What does that look like in your family or at work?

MEMORIZE Isaiah 53:5 and/or Galatians 3:13