

**His Compassions Fail Not**  
Lamentations 3:22-32, July 5, 2015  
Trinity Sunday V

Sermon Text, Lamentations 3:22-32 (KJV):

***“It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach. For the LORD will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.”***

Beloved of the Lord..... The book of Jeremiah is actually a book of poems similar to the psalms. The five chapters of Jeremiah were actually five poems put to song, sad songs of lamentation and mourning. While the writer of Lamentations is not absolutely known, for the Holy Spirit does not reveal him, the early Christian Church firmly believed this penman to be the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah apparently was an eye-witness to the destruction of the city and all the anguish that came with it. On a deeper level, these poems reveal the true anguish of a believer's heart who is experiencing the chastening of the Lord. It is called Lamentations because Jeremiah is going through sorrows similar to Job. It is a book of grief and heartache, coupled with the prayer that God forsake not His people.

If we are to get in the right frame of mind for verses 22-32, we really need to review the deep sorrows of Jeremiah in the preceding verses. Jeremiah says “I am a man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath”, for Jeremiah had seen a beautiful city destroyed and decimated, and he had seen many people die, even children. In verse six Jeremiah says God “hath set me in dark places....He hath hedged me about”. Neither he nor his people could escape this affliction for the sorrows of death were around him. “When I cry and shout” seeking God's mercy in prayer “He shutteth out my prayer”, refusing to hear Jeremiah, at least that's how Jeremiah felt. In verse ten Jeremiah even says that God “was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places”. Jeremiah felt ambushed by God, for everything that was before him so overwhelmed his eyes, he was filled with bitterness. “And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.” He

really had no more hope or trust that the Lord would help. He was emptied of all his faith with only perhaps a spark left. He was so near absolute despair that he was suspended on the border between faith and unbelief.

Yet faith lived. Suddenly in verse 19 there is a shift or a change in his thoughts. Something happens for Jeremiah prays “Remember mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall”. He is speaking to God here, praying, because in verse 21 he says “therefore have I hope.” And that brings us to 22.

“It is of the Lord’s mercies, that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.” These are the thoughts of faith, or the soul that is meditating upon God’s Word. Jeremiah remembers the only reason he himself has not perished in his sins is because of God’s great mercies. Jeremiah understands then, because of his sins, he deserves this destruction of Jerusalem, not only his people but he also deserved this wrath of God, this rod sent from heaven. Yet through it all, as bad as it was, Jeremiah still knew God’s mercies were great, and “His compassions fail not.” This word *compassion*, in the Hebrew means a tender love, mercy, or pity, and it is also connected to the word *womb*. When we thus think of how God has compassion on us though we were lost in our sins, we ought to think of that indescribable love that a mother has for that child which comes out of her own womb. She is for life connected to that child and can think of nothing else. So the Lord says in Isaiah 49:15, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” This is God’s compassion upon miserable sinners such as you and me, and these compassions fail not.

Such compassions we must keep at the center of our understanding, when we likewise are chastened. Sometimes we have to endure suffering for our own sins, yet through it all it is still true “His compassions fail not.” For example, we can rightly complain about many things in our nation, our loss of freedom, the beginning of persecution, high taxes, lack of justice, abuse of power, bad laws, and many other things, but at the end of the day we still need to say it is our own fault, our sins, not just the sins of others. While we just celebrated the Fourth of July yesterday and we acknowledge God has blessed our country with many freedoms, do we as sinners deserve that blessing of freedom? Couldn’t we say that by our sins we deserve a Pharaoh? Though we were born free in the civil realm, weren’t we born in bondage in the spiritual realm? And though we were born again of water and the Spirit by the regenerating power of Holy Baptism, our old Adam was not removed when we were baptized, and this Adam needs fatherly discipline. Therefore though we are Christians living in the land of the free and the home of the brave, we have no right to say God ought to bless our land because we have been good Christians.

Just as God punished Jerusalem so that her glory ended, God may choose to punish America so her glory ends as well. We pray it will not be so, but we also pray God's will be done. And lest we think we deserve only good and not evil, let us consider our sins. Like the Jews in Jerusalem, we are greedy people. When we give our firstfruits to the Lord, isn't there a part of us that wishes it was back in our own pocket? Are we cheerful givers or bitter givers? When we buy or sell something from our neighbor, how much does it bother us if we come out ahead?... yet if we come out on the short side we are bitter! When someone insults us or hurts our feelings, doesn't our pride feel the wound? Yet if we had no pride would we be wounded? Jesus said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." This means it is better to suffer injustice than to turn back and smite. Of the believer Jeremiah writes, "He giveth *his* cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach." That is how it should be, but have we done this?

And what about the wise use of our time for the welfare of neighbor? Isn't it true we focus much time and attention on what we want to do, what our heart would rather do, and in doing so we fail to give proper time and attention to our family? Like the ostrich, we have our heads buried in the sand, but it is not the sand it is the internet. You cannot drive in the cities without seeing a fellow driver with their head tilted down. Texting is their first love. But it is not the internet that is bad, it is our heart that is simply doing what it wants to do, rather than doing what needs to be done. The heart that lusts after its own pleasures, is failing to do God's good pleasure, as Jesus said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Sometimes it's a good work to lift our head out of the sand, that internet, and spend real time, quality time, with the real people around us: our parents for whom Christ died, our children for whom Christ died, or our spouse for whom Christ died. If Jesus had loved us in the way we love our neighbor, we would all be damned, and God would sit in heaven and say, "Sorry, I have no time to spend with you. I have better things to do."

Therefore "*It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*" God's mercy, pity, faithfulness, and compassion were all revealed to us, when Jesus did not ignore His neighbor, but had compassion on us. He suffered bitterly upon the cross for our sins. God did have better things to do than stoop to this lowly level of man, yet He came, He served, He sacrificed, and He suffered hell and died, but rose again on the third day. Too often and so often this means very little to us and we push it away from our hearts because we have better things to do. Yet this too is also forgiven, our lack of love is even covered by His perfect love, and so every morning when you arise, it is not another day of wrath though you deserve it, but it is another day of Christ because Jesus earned it.....every morning mercies new, fall as fresh as morning dew.

This is why Jeremiah, even in the midst of terrible grief is able to say “The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him.” Though every portion was taken away from Jeremiah.... the city of Jerusalem, the joy of the people, happiness of house and home, the Lord was still Jeremiah’s inheritance or possession. God had not withdrawn Himself, His help, or His salvation. These still belonged to Jeremiah by faith nor would God take them away. In like manner if God allows this great nation to perish or be destroyed for her sins, God is just to do so, but let no believer in Jesus forget, God is still our portion and He has not withdrawn His grace, “For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.”

Therefore “The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him. *It is* good that *a man* should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.” Here God Himself is teaching us that if we seek Him in prayer and wait for God’s help in faith, it is sure to come, though it will come in the Lord’s good time and way. Therefore “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.” If you have prayed for help and it hasn’t come, that does not mean it will not come, but for Christ’s sake it simply means you must wait a little longer, wait some more. When it seems all is lost and the hand of God is heavy, we are to seek the Lord in prayer, search for Him and find Him in the mercies of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate with God the Father. “*It is* good that *a man* should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.” We “quietly wait” when we do not murmur nor complain about the cross, but accept it in confidence praying “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” When God teaches you to wait just a bit longer, it is because God wants you to trust Him a bit more, because “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted more than you are able.”

“For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.” Obviously when things are their worst, it does feel like God has rejected us, even cast us away. We do not feel His love within, nor does anything without show us God’s love because our eyes are blinded and blurry from tears. We have suffered loss, we are confused. Why has all this evil come? Doesn’t God care? That is how we think. Yet it is written, “though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion.” So yes, God caused Job great grief when Job lost all his wealth and children in one day. Likewise God caused Job great grief by the boils which covered his body from head to toe. Likewise God caused Jeremiah grief when he witnessed the utter destruction of proud Jerusalem, yet through it all God still had compassion on Job and Jeremiah, and God still has compassion upon you, because you are one of those precious souls for whom Christ died and rose again. Meditate upon that and your sorrows will disappear because Jesus said, “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven”. Rejoice because

“His compassions fail not, they are new every morning, and great is God’s faithfulness.”

Therefore dear sinner, do not be too depressed if you are depressed, for Jeremiah and Job went through the same thing, but do not despair. It is true you lack faith and you should be confident and you have no reason to doubt because God’s promises never fail, but all these sins are also forgiven. Jesus forgives you not only of your greed and lust and selfish use of time, but Jesus forgives you also of your despair and lack of trust and love for Him. You are still loved. You are still forgiven, because “His compassions fail not, they are new every morning.” It is a sad world, a dying world, a depressing world, but Jesus lives, and Jesus will take you home. Amen.