

Psalm 108  
Covid-19 & Learning to Lament  
March 22, 2020

**Main Point:** This psalm gives us the gift of lament. It is good medicine for us. But lament is something we are typically not good at doing well. Lamenting is not grumbling. It is complaining to God while trusting Him. Lamenting is trusting in a sovereign God while being honest about the brokenness.

What medicine will you reach for during this time of trial? How will you get through? How long will this last?

**SI:** Psalm 108 is a mash up of the latter halves of Psalm 57 and Psalm 60. David takes these two Psalms which are desperate laments, and re-pieces them together to make this new song. It, too, is a psalm of lament. Invitation and permission to find courage in the midst of fearful times.

Lament gives a place to put the heaviness. Where do you put the heaviness?

We either lament or we go to some other source of comfort. But vain is the salvation of man. You will put the heaviness somewhere!  
God is committed to our health so He gives us lament!

Prescription for what to do during times like these: Learning to Lament

### **1 Pick Up Your Sword and Use It (vs. 1-9)**

See the words, look at them, read them, study them, ponder them.

Eph 6:16-18. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

In high school I took a class on weight training. Coach always saying, One more repetition in the weight room, not giving up. He knew the repetitions were making us stronger. How do we get strong? How do we face up to enemies, attacks, materialism, secularism, covid-19? Pick up your sword and use it.

Get your own print copy. (Give those at home time to get one.)  
Feel it in your hand. Open it up. Read it. Read these fighting words. It's not for wimps. It's heavy, right? Good! Holding it will make you stronger. It's solid, strong, tangible. There is something we miss with an electronic copy. It once was literally chained to the pulpit so people would not steal it. Now you can have it, hold it, pick it up and use it.

Look what it says:

1-4 > Emphasis on God's love and faithfulness. Stirring up confidence, assurance, boldness, fighting faith.

v. 5 > The sword is a means to an end. The sword is used for the purpose of fighting a war, the war is fought for the purpose of conquering an enemy. The enemy is fought for the purpose of achieving glory for the victor.

See what God's Word, the sword says: Here is the weapon against fear. God is giving you courage to wield the sword, to pick up the sword and fight. To use the Word of God to fight against fear. David is courageous. See v. 1 – 'my heart is steadfast.' Where does that courage come from?

Keller: "Courage comes when you want something greater than your own safety."

ILLUS of Indiana Jones in the Raiders of the Lost Ark > great movies to see courage on display. His courage comes from wanting victory for the Allies against the Nazi's. To protect these historic artifacts from being used for evil purposes.

His actions come out of his courage which isn't about protecting himself but is for a greater purpose outside of himself.

David's desire is for God's glory to be exalted. For His name to be known as great. This is what it means to have the fear of the Lord destroy all other fears.

Here is how picking up the sword and using it makes such a difference: See this verse. Hold it in your hands like a four foot long double-edged heavy steel sword.

God wants to give you courage.

Over and over in the Scriptures He commands His people: Do not fear.

How? How do I not fear? By asking God for your vision to be His glory. For His glory to be a greater goal than your own safety or comfort. Then you can more and more walk into danger with a big powerful sword.

That's what David does then in the next verses.

5-6 > appeal to

God's power for rescue.

7-9 > God's promises and claims. ILLUS of lots of unfamiliar names here... like the names we are learning about the chemistry and biology of viruses, testing. Covid, chemical re-agencies, epidemiology. David's point is that God is Lord over it all. He owns it all.

This kind of confidence in God's Word does not preclude or disallow questions and complaints to God. Confidence in God and desire for His greatness to be magnified in fact invites these questions.

## **2 Bring Your Questions (vs. 10-11)**

What is happening to David, here? 3 questions.

His courage makes him want to fight. But how? He knows through experience that he is powerless without God.

But he feels God has forsaken them. The enemy appears to be on the rise.

Edom is a wicked enemy. Edom is another name for Esau, Jacob's brother. They should have helped their relatives, but instead they helped Israel's enemies.

Lament always involves honest questioning, complaining to God. Remember, it is lamenting, not grumbling. By including this here, and in so many other examples of lament, God is welcoming our questions.

What is going to happen in response to fighting this enemy, the coronavirus Covid 19? How long is this going to last? Is it going to get worse? Where are you, God? Why are you allowing this to happen?

You know what these questions are? Why they are here in Scripture? Why there are so many psalms of lament? Because they are cries for God Himself. He does not only promise peace. He claims that He is Peace. He is Love. He is Peace. He is Assurance.

Isaiah 9:6 > The Messiah will be the Prince of Peace

Luke 2:14 > When the Messiah is born and announced to the shepherds, a multitude of angels shows up and says: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.

John 14:27 > Jesus the Savior says, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

God is giving us the sword to give us courage to fight so that His name is shown to be great.

He invites questions bc He knows the questions lead to Him,  
And finally, David answers the question, "where else can we go?"

### **3 Go To The Victor (vs. 12-13)**

v. 12 > Grant us help against the foe.

Who is the foe? Who is the enemy?

The enemy is death, right? We call it the Grim Reaper, the Destroyer. That is an enemy that we cannot defeat. People feel it. Death is near. Death is a curse. Death seems to be on the march and getting closer. What are we going to do?

We are going to see courage rise. We are going to attack fear by looking to God.

Quote: Jared Wilson: "The less Godward you are looking, the more afraid you will be." (The Fear Driven Life blog)

We are going to hold up the sword, the Word of Life. We are going to exult in Jesus, who through death destroyed the one who has the power of death, the devil, and delivered all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

We are going to sing: “Where is thy sting, death? Where grave is thy victory?” (Abide With Me)

v. 12b – for vain is the salvation of man!

But with God we shall win, even if we die, because this is what it means to be in Christ.

In Christ, all that He has accomplished is ours. We are alive, forever, even though our bodies have to die.

So go to the Victor, and bring others with you as you talk about facing down your fears with the truth of Jesus’ victory for all who will trust in Him. We have more permission than maybe at other times to talk about this.

Ask people, “What do you believe about God? About Jesus? About life after death?” And then share, slowly, gently, how God met you and is meeting you in your fears...

Maybe God is exposing self-trust for the false god that it is. To trust something outside of ourselves, we need death to come to our self-trust.

C.S. Lewis quote on surrender. “Christ says ‘Give me All. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don’t want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. ... Hand over the whole natural self...I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself. My own will shall become yours.’” (*Mere Christianity*, Book IV, Ch. 8)

God is certainly exposing that vain is the salvation of man! We cannot save ourselves! Pray for these heroes in the public health and health care sectors, support them any way we can.

All the missteps that the CDC took... Crimson Contagion Exercise in 2017. Vain is the salvation of man...

\*For what does David have? Courage – that is what steadfastness is. And where does this courage come from? From wanting something greater than his own safety. With God, we shall do valiantly. We shall win. Because He has already won for us.

Small Group Questions:

With Covid-19 on the rise, what about this can lead to a rise in fearfulness?

How is David picking up the sword of the Word in verses 1-5? How does he find courage to fight? (Tim Keller writes on this verse, “Courage comes when you want something greater than your own safety.”)

If lament is about God giving us permission and invitation to bring our questions and complaints to Him, how does that help you? How does seeing this raw honesty in Scripture help you to dispel fear and anxiety with the sword of God's Word?

Where are you prone to go to find peace? What distracts you from God's Word? How do you fight unbelief in the power of the Word?

How does the Resurrection of Jesus practically apply to you? How does the Resurrection destroy the fear of death?

How can you take what God has done and is doing for you to your world? How can you invite people to reflect on fear and death? How can you share with others how God has met you in your fears and enabled you to have courage?