

## From Bro. Frank Padilla

### Learning the Lessons of Lamentations

LAM 101-107: [7 Basic Elements of Lamentations](#)

*"Let us search and examine our ways that we may return to the Lord!" (Lam 3:40)*

#### Lamentations 101 – Covenant

Covenant is all about God entering into a relationship with His people. *"I will be your God, and you will be my people."* (Lev 26:12). It is an amazing and an astonishing reality, that the God who created the universe and who holds everything in His hands and who is omnipotent and almighty would enter into a relationship with sinful, weak, even rebellious humanity. It is a relationship where God assures bountiful blessings, if we live according to His commands and His ways.

Even more amazingly, our covenant as Christians is sealed in the blood of God's own Son, Jesus (Mt 26:28). God sent His own Son to suffer and die for us, even when we were sinners. God won for us our salvation. God gathers us to Himself as His children, as His people. God blesses us abundantly.

#### Lamentations 102 – Repentance and Faith

The way for us to enter into covenant is for us to be reconciled to God. This happens through *metanoia*, our personal repentance for sin and wrongdoing, and our resolve to turn away from our own ways and from running our own lives.

Then we turn to Jesus in faith. We accept Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. We recognize what he has done for us by going to the cross, and accept the free gift of salvation. Then we submit our life totally to him. We no longer live for ourselves, but for him who is our Lord and Master.

#### Lamentations 103 – Holiness

God made us in His image and likeness, and in His call to covenant, He calls us to be like Him. *"Be holy because I am holy."* (1 Pt 1:16). Even though we are weak, sinful human flesh, God gives us the opportunity and the privilege to be like Him in our holiness of life. Jesus in fact says that we must be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48). We are to love as God loves. And that means unilateral, unconditional, self-sacrificial love.

In our day-to-day lives, we are to reflect the virtues of the kingdom of God. We are to live according to the Spirit, and manifest the Spirit's fruit in our lives—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal 5:22-23). These are what give evidence of our covenant with God, our life in Christ, and the empowerment of the Spirit.

### Lamentations 104 – Community

God calls us to be the one body of Christ, which is the Church. We are to live life as a community of disciples. God calls each of us to respond individually, but God also calls all those who respond to live a communal life of caring and sharing. It is in our love for one another that we witness to the world about the power of Jesus' resurrection.

The community is our support environment, both for growing in personal holiness and in looking beyond ourselves to serve others. In community we learn to pray, we study the Bible, we develop brotherly relationships, we give of ourselves in service. Community sends us forth to evangelize and bring the gospel to the whole world. Community helps us fulfill our part of the covenant.

### Lamentations 105 – Servanthood

God calls us to covenant not just for us to experience restoration, but also so that He can use us for His purposes. We become His instruments for the renewal of the face of the earth. Thus an important aspect is our servanthood. Jesus is not just

Savior, but he is also Lord. We no longer own our lives, but our lives belong to God. He tells us what to do and as servants we respond in obedience.

God carries out His plan for the world through His covenanted people who allow themselves to be used as His servants, as His instruments. The continuance of Jesus' mission is entrusted to us his disciples (Jn 20:21). We are the ones who are to proclaim the good news and allow the Spirit to bring in the harvest. The amazing reality is that God has made His very plan for renewing the face of the earth dependent on our response and our obedience.

### Lamentations 106 – Faithfulness

God is faithful. He is *“the faithful God who keeps his merciful covenant down to the thousandth generation toward those who love him and keep his commandments.”* (Dt 7:9). He is the God *“whose faithfulness lasts through every age”* (Ps 100:5). God wants us and the generations after us to be in covenant with him forever, until the end of time, when God finally brings us to our eternal home.

God in turn looks to our faithfulness to our covenant. This is the way by which we reap the full benefits of covenant and enjoy the bountiful blessings of God. We obey His commandments. We live a righteous life. We are faithful to the life and mission of our community. Our faithfulness is what will allow us to finally share our Master's joy (Mt 25:21,23).

### Lamentations 107 – God Alone

Our covenant is all about God. God is at the center of our covenant. Even our faithful response is due to God's grace freely given. God has taken the initiative to draw us to Himself, continues to sustain and support us through the vagaries of our response, and looks to our finally enjoying the fruits of covenant not only in the here and now but ultimately in the hereafter.

We realize that *"our citizenship is in heaven"* (Phil 3:20). We realize our total dependence on God. We realize our need to keep "our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith" (Hb 12:2). We realize that our empowerment for mission comes from the Holy Spirit. We live and die for God alone.

**Frank Padilla**

**"For to me life is Christ, and death is gain." (Phil 1:21)**