

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Grappling for Hope

Speaker:

Doug Plank

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Scriptures:

Lamentations 3

Theme: As bitter afflictions arise, remember your hope in the Lord.

Introduction: As a nation, we have grappled with the trauma of 9/11, even 25 years later. Our human condition in this evil, fallen world is one of grappling. All of our grappling is a struggle to find hope—hope that the Lord provides. The poem of Lamentations is a powerful helping of hope, and chapter 3—the center of the poem—reveals the summit of our hope.

Lamentations 3 can be broken into three sections:

1. The dark night without hope (1–20)

- Although chapter 3 takes us into the dark night of the soul, it is important to remember that Lamentations is for all of God's people, whether currently suffering or not.
 - We do well to prepare during times of plenty so that when the afflictions come, we are ready.
- In the opening section of chapter 3, the poet casts God's people as a man of sorrows.
- The darkest part of Lamentations comes in verse 18, when his hope in God perishes.

2. The light hope brings (21–39)

- One might expect the poet to lose *all* faith, but he still has hope (v. 21).
- Hope is the firm, fixed conviction that God is who he has revealed himself to be, and that he will fulfill all his promises toward us.
- Our hope is built on nothing less than the steadfast love of our Lord.
- In the light of hope, the poet can much more clearly see the greatness of God and the nature of his afflictions.

3. The aftermath of hope (40–66)

- Verses 40–66 can be seen as the aftermath of hope.
- Hope energizes and strengthens us to obey the commands of God.
- The imprecatory prayers of the poet reveal that God is to be feared and his judgment is coming.

Questions:

1. What bitter afflictions have you been through? Are you in one now?
2. How do verses 22–24 give you hope in times of affliction?
3. How is the "aftermath" of hope evident in your life?