

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Always Hope

Speaker:

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Date:

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Scriptures:

Lamentations 4

Theme: Even when all is lost, there is still hope for God's people.

Introduction: There is a difference between gloominess and despair. Despair comes when there is little to no hope left. Despair is unavoidable, as the nature of humanity and the state of the fallen world means that everyone will face despair. But, for those who have been made sons of God in Christ Jesus, there is always hope. In Lamentations, Israel had lost it all, and yet there is a glimmer of hope at the end of Lamentations 4.

Lamentations 4 can be taken in four parts:

1. When the Community Is Lost (1–10)

- Through Lamentations, God is calling his people to consider (and not move quickly past) the judgment he brought upon Jerusalem.
- Although "community" is a buzzword today, Jerusalem genuinely was a community, and they were utterly undone.
- There are various kinds of losses in the first six verses: loss of value (vv. 1–2), loss of food (vv. 3–4), and shocking devastation (vv. 5–6).
- Jerusalem in Lamentations is a picture of hell on earth and serves as a warning concerning the Lord's inevitable judgment.

2. When the Leadership Is Lost (11–16)

- Verse 11 begins with the only King, the Lord himself, and identifies him as the one who brings about the destruction (a common theme in Lamentations).
- The prophets and priests failed to expose Judah's sins. Spiritual leaders must be willing to say hard things.

3. When All Hope Is Lost (17–20)

- Jerusalem relies on two false hopes: (1) Egypt, and (2) their own king.
- A false hope is derived from self-justification: hope is placed in something other than God so that sin can be justified.
- Israel's hope was false—but there is still hope in God to save.

4. There Is Still Hope (21–22)

- Edom had long been an enemy of Israel, and verses 22–23 teach that they themselves will face punishment.
- The writer of Lamentations writes that Jerusalem's punishment is over. This is not the case in hell, but it is true for those who trust in Christ.

Questions:

1. Who/where do you take counsel from? Are they in any way mirroring the false prophets and priests of Jerusalem prior to the fall?
2. What false hopes are you trusting in instead of Jesus?
3. How does Lamentations 4:21–22 bring you hope?