

Week 1: Light

1. To _____ is to be _____, and we must start by _____ reality.
 - It's important for those who are _____.
2. Lament is _____ of the Psalms but less than _____ of modern worship music.
 - When we neglect lament, it can create a community that _____ to _____ people where they are and for who they are.
 - Lament is normalized in the Psalms because it recognizes that this is part of the _____ of living in a _____ world.
3. Psalm 80 is a lament that is _____ at God.
 - Even though they are _____ God for their situation, they still _____ and _____ that God is trustworthy, loving, good, and able to respond.
4. Advent is a season where we _____ our lament and at the same time we _____ into an expectant _____.
 - These people are looking, watching, waiting with _____ that God will _____ their prayers and _____.
5. Lament is not the _____ of hope.
 - It _____ us into hope that is _____ on truth and the _____ of God.

Start talking.

- If you were sinking in quicksand, would you (a) Pray for help? (b) Yell at God? (c) Figure out an escape? (d) Give up? (e) Look for help?

Start thinking.

- Why do you think Joseph is mentioned in vv1-2? (see Gen 46:19-21) Who do these names represent? From what do they need to be saved?
- What do you think “*make your face shine upon us*” means?
- What is their affliction? What do you think is the most painful about their trial of faith?
- How is the change in the refrain of v14 significant? Is the Psalm saying that only God can close the distance the people feel?

Start sharing.

- What do you do in times of trouble and need? Pray for God’s restoration? Turn to other people? Go it on your own? Retreat in frustration?
- Why do you think we shy away from lament in our individual and communal lives?
- What is your “*bowl of tears*” (v5) Is there any relief in sight? How do you keep from being overwhelmed?

Start praying. *Be bold and pray with power.*

God, sometimes it seems that everything in life is bearing down on me and I feel helpless and alone. I also recognize the brokenness of our world as I look around me. May the light of your face express in my life and through my life the hope of your goodness and salvation.

Start Doing:

- Confess to God your struggles and sin.
- Share with God where you are not content. Ask God to show you his hope.
- Acknowledge and thank God for His faithfulness in the past and place your current struggles at his feet and receive and live into the hope of what only He can do in your life.