

**This week we celebrate Easter**—the season when we focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Yet in the middle of so much world wide suffering and anxiety, how are we to understand the love of God? In our first reading today we listen to the lament of Jeremiah, the prophet who spoke in Judah at a time of huge upheaval and suffering. In the book of Lamentations he struggles with all he sees around him and yet even in this he encounters God. *Read the passages below, and follow the simple instructions to find our more.*



### Lamentations 3:19-26

19. Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!

<sup>20</sup> My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.

<sup>21</sup> But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

<sup>22</sup> The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;

<sup>23</sup> they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

<sup>24</sup> “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

<sup>25</sup> The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.

<sup>26</sup> It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

### Exodus 34:6

The Lord passed before him (Moses) and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,”

In Lamentations, the writer is weeping over the destruction and distress that he witnesses in Jerusalem as the inhabitants are being taken away into exile. His heart is broken.

**READ Lamentation 3:19 –26 and mark the LORD with a  and mark pronouns “me , I” with a **

*In v 19-20 what is the focus of the writers attention?*

*What impact do his reflections have on him?*

*V21 is a turning point. What does he choose to do?*

*In v22-26 what different things does he call to mind about the LORD?*

**READ Exodus 34:6—where did Jeremiah get his ideas about God from?**

Take a few moments to reflect on what you learn about God here.

**READ v 21—26 and underline the word HOPE**

**HOPE—strongs 3176—to wait with expectation, to trust patiently**

*Where is he placing his hope? Why? (v24)*

*V25-26—as a result of what he has called to mind, what does the writer tell himself—and us—to do?*

**WAIT—Strongs 6960—to look for expectantly, to twist as a cord**


**V26 “A long and patient waiting; a lingering hope; still expecting and earnestly desiring; though hither exercised with delay and disappointment.”**

**SEEK—Strongs 1875—to seek with care**

*How do we wait for and seek the LORD? How do the definitions help?*

The word used for steadfast love in the ESV version is the Hebrew word CHESED—a very important word describing the love of God. It has no English word to describe it— it is a deep persistent covenant keeping love that perseveres despite unfaithfulness. It is who God is, and all he made, as well as all of his plans, are rooted in this deep CHESED love. Rabbis call this one of the most important words in the Old testament, where it is used 243 times.

In Psalm 103 David speaks of the CHESED love of God four times and, each time, a different aspect of Gods love.

**READ Psalm 103 : 1-5 , v8, v10-11, and v15-18 and each time mark “Steadfast love” with a **

**V1-5** What is David recounting here?

*CROWN—Strongs 5849—encircle, surround for protection*

*How does the definition help you understand what David is saying about Gods “Chesed” love?*

*What does it look like to live in the reality of this?*

**V8** Where did you read these words before?

*How important is it to know how God reveals Himself?*

*What does the word “abounding” teach us?*

**V10-12**—what is David reflecting on in these verses?

*On what basis are we forgiven?*

*What is David emphasizing about God’s love?*

**READ Ephesians 2: 4-7** Mark LOVE with a 

*How does this add to what David has been saying? What has His great love accomplished for us?*

**V15-18** What contrast is David making? How enduring is the CHESED love of God?

**READ Romans 8:38-39** Mark LOVE with a 

*How does this add to what you saw in Psalm 103:17?*

**READ 1 John 4: 9-11** and mark love with a 

*How do these verses reinforce what you have seen in Psalm 103 about the love of God?*

*When did He set His love on us?*

*How should experiencing that love change us?*

**REFLECT : Are you living as someone who is deeply loved? Take time to speak to God about the truth you have learned and ask Him to pour His love abroad in your heart by His Spirit. ( see Romans 5:5)**

**Pray Ephesians 3: 14-21 for yourself and for each other in these difficult days.**

### **Psalm 103 : 1-5, 8, 10-11,**

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,<sup>3</sup> who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,<sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,<sup>5</sup> who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>10</sup> He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.<sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;<sup>12</sup> as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

<sup>15</sup> As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; <sup>16</sup> for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.<sup>17</sup> But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, <sup>18</sup> to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

### **Ephesians 2 : 4-7**

<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

### **Romans 8:38-39**

<sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **1 John 4 : 9-11**

<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.