

The Monthly Ministry Focus: January 2021

A Moment of Scripture Focus for Every Ministry in First Baptist Church

To Ministry Leader: Please send this by email to your ministry members or if you meet online, please read or have this read at your meeting /activity/rehearsal.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS FOR THIS MONTH: FROM MOURNING TO MORNING

Scripture: Lamentations 3: 21-24 (NKJV)

21 This I recall to my mind; therefore, I have hope. 22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

Commentary to Share

The book of Lamentations, likely written by the prophet Jeremiah, is a lament – an expression of sorrow. The Jews mourned the destruction of their beloved Jerusalem. Their mourning is deep and desperate as shown in the beginning of Chapter 1, verse 2* when the prophet says: "Jerusalem weeps bitterly at night. Tears run down her cheeks. [Not one] of her friends comforts her. All those who were going to help her have turned against her."

Lamentations, one commentary says, *reflects the pain of injustice and human loss. It's filled with crushing emotions: anger, desperation, fear, loneliness, hopelessness.* Think about that. Injustice. Loss. Desperation. Fear. Sounds a lot like 2020 as we have faced a relentless virus, chaotic politics, and a time when so many cruelties and injustices have come into full view.

But this dark, beautiful book about Jerusalem's mourning has a message for us as we look to 2021. Chapter 3 shows us what God can do when we experience injustice and fear; it says that God's mercies never end, "they are new every morning." For Jerusalem, their **mourning** about their loss turns into a **morning** of hope! And we need to look at our current situation the same way. God has never left us! We just need to do what the prophet says he did: recall God's faithfulness to our minds; remember all he has brought each of us through, and face 2021 with hopeful anticipation. Our 2020 **mourning** can shift to a beautiful 2021 **morning** of sunshine and hope!

So, as you shout, "Happy New Year," remember these words from a familiar hymn as we celebrate the dawn of 2021:

**"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!**

**New International Reader's Version*