Sharing Our Heart with God (honestly and unedited)

Lamentations 3:1-24

*I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the Lord’s wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light; indeed, he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long. He has made my skin and my flesh grow old and has broken my bones. He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship. He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead. He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains. Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked. Like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in hiding, he dragged me from the path and mangled me and left me without help. He drew his bow and made me the target for his arrows. He pierced my heart with arrows from his quiver. I became the laughingstock of all my people; they mock me in song all day long. He has filled me with bitter herbs and given me gall to drink. He has broken my teeth with gravel; he has trampled me in the dust. I have been deprived of peace;*

*I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, “My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord.” I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them,**and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:**Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed for his compassions never fail.**They are new every morning;**great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.”*

Psalms of Disorientation

The presupposition and affirmation of Psalms of disorientation is that precisely in such deathly places as presented in these Psalms new life is given by God. *Walter Brueggeman*

These Psalms free us, invites us, encourage us to name our experience of life in unedited honesty knowing God is with us, God cares for us and about us and that nothing can separate us from God’s love.

Structure of Lament Psalms (adapted from Westermann)

1. Plea. A complaint that God should correct a skewed/wrong situation.
   1. Address to God. The address is intimate, personal and honest coming one from who is in relationship with God.
   2. Complaint. The purpose is of this prayer is to characterized for God how desperate the situation is…. The rhetoric seeks to evoke from God an intrusive, transformative act. Often times, not always, the complaint tends not only to describe a situation of urgent need, but to also hold God accountable for it. The writer intends to turn the problem into a problem for God for God is able and responsible for doing something about it.
   3. Petition. The writer makes a request that asks God to act. Often it is a plea for justice as much as mercy.
   4. Motivation. Writer provides the reasons God needs to act, should act.
      1. Innocence, guilty but has repented, God’s goodness, valued, loved by God, reputation , power, prestige of God.
   5. Imprecation. Unguarded language. Often a voice of resentment, even vengeance but expressed to God.
2. Praise. Change of circumstance or attitude. Sense of urgency and desperation is replaced by joy, gratitude, and well-being.
   1. assurance one is being heard.

Personal Complaint Psalm: 13, 35 and 86. Choose one of the previous Psalms and spend time interacting with it.

1. Slowly read it a few times paying attention to the words or phrases are you drawn to, resistant to?
2. Spend some time pondering those words/phrases. What might God be speaking to you – reminding, inviting, challenging, encouraging.

Exercise

1. Using the Lament structure above or one of the psalms of personal complaint as a template construct your own personal psalm of complaint.
2. When you are done share your Psalm with God the Father or Jesus.
   1. What is your sense of your Father or Jesus?
   2. Do they say anything to you?
3. As you have worked through this process what have you noticed going on within your heart, with your spirit?
4. Create a collage, painting or mixed media expression of your psalm.

Imperfectly compiled by Larry Warner, beloved of God. [www.b-ing.org](http://www.b-ing.org)