

LAMENTS created by SAPPHIRE CIRCLE
The Stone Church of Willow Glen, San José, California

Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament
Horizons Bible Study 2020–2021 by P. Lynn Miller

Lesson One: The Heart of Lament

Lament #1

Creator God, designer and maker of the Universe and all that is in it.

We, who are created in your image, cry out to you as we find ourselves surrounded by chaos and a creation that is suffering:

- from an illness that threatens and takes lives.
- from fires scorching the earth.
- from an environment in shambles.
- from discord and discontent that divides us.

We cry out to you to guide us through this chaos and suffering by holding us in your healing hands; by holding all creation in your healing hands.

Show us the way through to an unknown future and a changed way of life.

We know that you never change and we are strengthened by your faithfulness and steadfast love.

Creator God, you alone give us hope.

+Claudia Hamm

Lament #1

Creator God,

Why do we have a president who is the antithesis of all you hold dear: womanizing, greed, liar, divides rather than unifies, cheats, steals, irreverent, fear monger, chaos creator, corrupt, no values or morality? Help us get out from under this administration, help his supporters see the injustice in his policies. Open my heart to understanding and take away the hate raging in our country, world, and me.

I know there are lessons to be learned and you support and love all your children; you sometimes choose the least likely candidates to do your work. Help us to love one another as we love ourselves and as you love us.

I believe you will bring us together.

Amen.

+Kathleen Oliver

Lesson Two: Lamenting Together

Lament #2

Our Father in Heaven—ruler of all. I am outraged by the attempted manipulation of the people in our country by some of our leaders. Please, O God, let people's heads be cleared and not hypnotized into making poor choices at this pivotal time in the life of our country. We trust you will watch over us and bring us out of this dark period and into the light to continue to practice caring for one another.

+Sheri Cunningham

Lament #2

Dear Lord—things have gotten out of hand in much of this world. Please help us understand the need for peace and acceptance. Our leaders need your guidance in gaining intelligence, patience, and calmness in running our countries in which we have been sadly lacking these past four years. Give us the ability to trust and hear whatever you call us to do. Amen.

+Sue Evans

Lament #2

Creator God, designer and maker of the Universe and all that is in it.

Are you among us or not?

The universe you created is:

- suffering from racism and injustice.
- suffering from poverty and hunger.
- suffering from divisions among our people and government.

Are you among us or not?

Lead us toward reconciliation.

Heal our divisions.

Make us whole.

You are among us.

Your faithfulness and love give us

HOPE.

+Claudia Hamm

Lament #2

Not really a community lament but this is how I am lamenting the state of our country.

My heart is breaking for our country. I am working on a quilt series that expresses my sadness.

The series is called "Death of a Nation": Dark Heart for how divided we seem to be (top left); USA Struck and divided (top right); National Sadness (bottom left); R.I.P Ideals as Hope, Dreams, Life, Happiness, Spirit, Love, Safety, and our Soul linger in the shadows (bottom right).

These were inspired as the violence against fellow human beings has risen and the lack of empathy and mutual respect has disappeared in our society. What has happened to the Golden Rule? Are we so afraid of each other or greedy that we only think of ourselves? This is not the American ideals I thought our country stood for. Not to mention how we are destroying our planet. The next generation deserves better.

Each quilt is 12"x12" I used commercial fabrics, pieced, raw edge appliqué and quilted by domestic sewing machine with some thread painting.



+Created by Kathleen Oliver

Lesson Three – Women’s Lament

Lament #3

I cry to you my God
too many deaths
too much misery and fear
save us from this pandemic
restore our health
restore faith to those in need
Give rest to our health care providers
Aid our economic recovery
Bless those who have lost so much.

+Joyce Summers

Lament #3

Creator God,
Our country is so very divided. I ask for your healing balm, help us to mourn together and find ways to listen and celebrate the gifts of each other and creation. I trust in the love you have for all your people and thank you God for your faithfulness.

+Kathleen Oliver

Lament #3

Creator God, designer and maker of the Universe and all that is in it.

We women are tired:

- tired of bearing the weight of holding up half the sky.
- tired of being considered secondary to men.
- tired of being put down and sexualized.
- tired of responsibilities not shared at work, at home, and with family.

We women stand in protest:

- Sign says: *Real change happens a step at a time*
- Sign says: *Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it, possibly without claiming it, she stands up for all women.**

Creator God, you are a God of justice.

- See our need for justice.
- Hear our calls for justice.
- Provide a path for justice.
- Lead us on our way to justice.
- Strengthen our sense of justice.

Claim us in your justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Make us whole.

+Claudia Hamm

*Maya Angelou

Lesson Four: *Lamenting Death*

Lament #4

Sung lament by Jeanette Rapp

Tune: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

Praise be to God for my lost mate,
He gave such love and harbored no hate;
Teaching and preaching throughout his short life,
May I be thankful, forgetting the strife.

+Jeanette Rapp

Lament #4

Creator God, designer and maker of the Universe and all that is in it.

Creator God: On February 2, 2016, my sister in the faith, Linda Hagan, died to soon.

Creator God: Her faith was strong; her medical condition was not.

It was a catch-22, medically unpreventable.

Our last time together, we solidified our relationship as sisters.

Her passion was for justice and peace.

She had much left to do.

Her daughter and I now have the responsibility to carry on the passion in her place.

Creator God: We trust in you.

Creator God: With that trust in us...we can do it. The possibilities are endless.

Creator God: I am thankful for my sister, Linda, she lives on in my heart.

+Claudia Hamm

Lesson Five: Lamenting Life

Lament #5

Precious Lord who loves us all, how can all of these horrible events happen—even among those who are supposed to represent us and keep our best interests at heart?

Please, dear Lord, help me to understand those whose beliefs are different than mine and give me the strength and patience to navigate these difficult times.

I know you walk with us and I trust you will help us through these dark times.

+Sheri Cunningham

Lament #5

O God, where have You been this past week?

Our nation is bleeding, and You seem absent.

Why are we so divided? Why do each of us feel You are on "OUR side"?

We cry out for Your wisdom and divine intervention. Please heal our wounds and mend the tears in the fabric of our nation. I call upon You in the name of Jesus, who assured us that You care for each of us, and that Your will shall be done here on this Earth. Amen.

+Jeanette Rapp

Lament #5

Creator God, designer and maker of the Universe and all that is in it.

Life today is broken.

Life today is torn in two.

How can life that is so broken be mended?

Creator God: Be the bridge.

Creator God: Be the guide.

Creator God: Be the healer.

Creator God: Be our companion on the way to reconciliation.

Make life whole.

+Claudia Hamm

Lesson Six: Lament Over the City

Lament #6

Creator God, designer and make of the Universe and all that is in it.

A question: What is justice?

- Justice is housing for all.
- Justice is enough food for all.
- Justice is education for all.
- Justice is jobs with fair wages for all.
- Justice is equality for all.

A question: Creator God, where is this justice?

- Creator God, how do we begin to find it?
- Creator God, where are you in the process?

A request: Creator God, we need your guidance in working toward justice...
knowledge, strength, determination, love and time.

Creator God, make it so.

+Claudia Hamm

Lament #6

We know, dear Lord, that even though WE are not always aware, YOU do watch over those of us who are struggling with losses—loss of jobs and income, loss of housing, loss of being able to care for those we love.

It is our hope that you will pay particular attention to those who are in such desperate straits. We truly thank you for the help they receive from groups such as Sacred Heart Community Service, local food banks, homeless projects, and shelters.

As we gain strength, we urge you to show us ways in which we can help these organizations and the people they serve find life less of a struggle and a little more joyful.

+Sheri Cunningham

Lament #6

Hear me, O Lord, as I look at my pretty town of tall trees, clean sidewalks and beautiful homes—some old Victorian and some sleek and modern with tiled driveways for three cars.

Where is the space for living for those who serve the well-off? Where can the Safeway cashier live close-by?
Where can the house cleaner, who makes our bathrooms sparkle, live?

O Lord, there is so much unfairness in my little town. There are no inexpensive homes to rent, let alone buy.

And on the main street the bookstores, the novelty shops, the antique collections have disappeared—to be replaced by spas (fingernails, toenails, body wraps, luxurious bed sheets!).

I know You see this, God. Please open OUR eyes that we ALL may see and re-adjust our values. Awaken us to your justice and love for ALL people, regardless of wealth or education or social standing, and give us the will, the heart, and wisdom to SHARE what we have. Amen.

+Jeanette Rapp

Lament #6

Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us.

Homelessness is no longer hidden, but in our neighborhoods, highways, & everywhere we look.

The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned to mourning, our hearts are sick.

The rich are greedy without care for those less fortunate.

The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned to mourning, our hearts are sick.

Hate and fear blind and confuse truth and love.

The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned to mourning, our hearts are sick.

Hear us dear God. Open our hearts to the needs of others. Free us from hate and fear to trusting in your love and grace.

Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored.

+Joyce Summers

Lesson Seven: Creation Laments

Lament #7

Creator God, designer and maker of the Universe and all that is in it.

YOU have made us in your likeness to secure the well-being of the Earth.

We fall short of YOUR expectations.

We create:

trash and litter along our highways.

trash and litter in our streams, rivers, oceans.

The well-being of the Earth is lost on us.

Call us to repent.

Offer us YOUR redemption.

Transform our careless ways.

Lead us back to caring for the well-being of the Earth.

In YOU we trust.

To YOU we offer our praise.

AMEN.

+Claudia Hamm

Lament #7

Our dear Lord, creator of all earth and sea—we have been so careless with the resources you have given so generously.

We trust in you to make us aware of our destructive acts and please be patient as we try to correct our ways.

Please renew in us the awe of your grandeur and to treat it with the love and care you have shown us.

Please know our love of your creation and help us NOT to just stand by, wringing our hands but to take action.

We love and honor you—thanking you for the gifts you have given.

+Sheri Cunningham

Lament #7

O God, You who created me “in the beginning,” planting many of my own in your Garden of Eden, look favor upon me and my dying brothers and sisters. Some of us have been burned to death in recent wildfires; others are being bull-dozed every day by lumber and paper mills. We have held the earth in place with our strong roots, have provided homes for wildlife in our branches, and have given wood for humanity’s dwellings. But greed is destroying us. Dear God, we ask you to replace the overkill mentality of humans with fairness and re-planting habits that we may survive and continue serving all of your creation. Thank you for life and co-existence with all living things. Amen.

+Jeanette Rapp

Lament #7

Heavenly creator, nurturing mother, sustainer of life,

Experimentations of biological material like plants for GMO's or animals for warfare or greed for cheaper more profitable gain, cause destruction of life and disruption of normal cycles for life. Those experimenting in creating deadly viruses, bacteria, pesticides, & toxic poisons are an abomination.

I believe God gave us the duty to protect and care for our environment and planet. God made our earth and said: "It was good." We are to keep it fruitful and beneficial for all.

Help people to see potential risks, dangers, and evil that they create for self-gratification. Guide us to protect our lives and the lives of generations to come. Assist healing of life and restoration of our earth damaged by climate change and human ignorance.

God's creation of our world is ours to enjoy. God's love for us will support and guide us.

People will trust in God as His goodness & peace of the earth is made full of the knowledge of the Lord. All praise to our creator and sustainer of life.

+Joyce Summers

Lesson Eight: God Laments

Lament #8

My people:

My heart is full of sorrow.

My people:

You have let the world change you.

My people:

Where are signs of your compassion?

My people:

Where are signs of your action toward equality for all?

My people:

Where are signs of your faithfulness to me?

My people:

Where?

My people:

My heart is full of sorrow, but I cannot give you up.

My people:

There is always and forever room in my heart for you.

+ Claudia Hamm

Lament #8

Heavenly Father (that's a "No-no" these days, I realize,
but that's what I hurriedly wrote),
forgive me for causing You to lament over *my* life,
my neighbors' lives and the shortcomings of all of us
all over the world.

I confess that I have not used the gifts that You have
given me to help those in real need. I want to do better.
Please help me get motivated and to try harder.
I know it's never too late to right the wrongs of the past,
and that all things are possible through You and Your Son,
in whose name I pray. Amen.

+Jeanette Rapp

Lesson Nine: *The End of Lament*

Lament #9

Creator God, designer and maker of the Universe and all that is in it.

You have heard my voice as I have called to you.

You have listened to my cries of distress and sorrow.

You have responded to my pleas and laments.

You are faithful to me and have called me to faithfulness.

You are my God and my **hope**.

It is right to give God my thanks and praise!

+Claudia Hamm