

Introduction:

- Lamentations:
 - Lamentations is a book written by Jeremiah the prophet.
 - It is a book expressing grief over the fall of Jerusalem.
 - The last half of chapter three is written to produce hope in a covenant keeping God whose mercy is new every morning.
- *"Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she took no thought of her future; therefore her fall is terrible; ..."* (Lamentations 1:9, ESV)
- If we do not attempt to think of or shape our future than something else or someone else will.

I. Power To Shape Your Future

- A. We must be a people who gives thought to our future. If we do not, then like I said, "Someone else or something else will shape your future."
1. Jerusalem is going into exile because she took no thought of her future.
 - a) She gave herself over to other gods. What other gods do you have in your life?
 - b) She was not thinking about the consequences of decisions/choices.
 - c) She abandoned God little by little until she finally turned her back on Him.
 2. Believers who once thought they would never abandon God, suddenly find themselves in 'gut wrenching' situations, alone, in a cloud of darkness, surround by unbelief. They did not start out that way. It wasn't their intention. They wandered from the truth. This is why we have to have a devoted life to Christ. Not just do devotions but live devoted.
 - a) They slowly started to drift away from God. *"Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."* (Hebrews 2:1, ESV) How do you drift from God? Pay little attention to the truth you have heard. The danger of drifting is that you do not know when it is happening. You just come to your senses and realize that you were not paying attention (to your future) and suddenly you are in the plunging whirl pool. Christians who drift never stay in the same place!
 - b) Paying attention to the truth you have heard is giving thought to your future.
 - c) If you are not paying attention to the truth, and you get wounded you will slip into hard heartedness and from there the path goes down into bitterness, self-medicating, and numbness.
- B. The call is to wake up! Hear what God is saying, and apply what God is saying to your life.
1. *Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."* (Ephesians 5:14, ESV)
 2. Why is Paul saying wake up? Because a sleeper misses important things!
 3. Jonah is prime example *"So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."* (Jonah 1:6, ESV)
 - a) The captain is saying, "How can you sleep at a time like this? Get up and pray to your God!"

- b) They were in a storm and Jonah was asleep. His life was in danger and he slept not knowing. Jonah's life could have been different if he had just said, "Yes" to God.
- C. When you wake up you will catch your thief! "And he was teaching them and saying to them, 'Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers.'" (Mark 11:17, ESV)
1. What make a thief a good thief? One who can steal from you without getting caught.
 2. The temple was built for encounter with God.
 3. The outer court was to be for the nations. But the priest lost sight of the value of the outer court and began to steal from God the lives of other nations.
 4. Jesus raided the place turning over tables and making room for a move of God. Make room for those outside to come in and encounter God.
- D. I have found in all my years walking with God and in pastoring that we have to be intentional about life. What we give ourselves to shapes us.

II. Be Intentional!

- A. "Since we are approaching the end of all things, be intentional, purposeful, and self-controlled so that you can be given to prayer." (1 Peter 4:7, TPT)
1. Gr. saphron – "prudent," "modest," "restrained," and "disciplined". A basic attitude that leads to a certain mode of conduct. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume (p. 1150). W.B. Eerdmans.
 2. Gr. nepho - clear from all 'fuzziness'. Sober - minded. Sober judgment is highly valued and if you are 'buzzed' you will not have clear consistent judgement.
- B. The end is near. And we do not know when it will be.
1. Therefore, Peter is saying that the end is at hand.
 2. And if the end is at hand, we should be intentional, purposeful and self-controlled.
 3. Why???? So we can pray well!

III. Taking Thought Of Your Future

- A. "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5-8, ESV) Note: This command is based on verse three and four which is a description of what God has done for us. IE. The Gospel of Identity by Mike Petzer reflects this. We labor for virtue because God has already done the work or labored for us. Do not get that backwards...labor to get from God.
- B. Make every effort to supplement your faith! He is saying to do this with zeal, immediately, do not wait. But provide/furnish your faith with...
1. With virtue/excellence. With strong moral character. It is important that our faith have strong character. Otherwise it undermines our identity as Christians. Add to virtue...

2. Knowledge through the revelation of Christ. Moral excellence or character is strengthened with the revelation knowledge of Christ.
 3. Self-control - dominion over self.
 4. Steadfastness - "This word means a. "to stay in a place," figuratively "to remain in a sphere," b. "to stand against opposition," "to hold out," "to stand fast," Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 581). W.B. Eerdmans. It is not just patience but active resistance.
 5. Godliness - godliness in regard or result of strong teaching. (See vs 3)
 6. Brotherly affection – brotherly love
 7. Love - unconditional love. Note: Peter begins with faith and ends with love. Sounds like the rest of the NT.
- C. *"Since these virtues are already planted deep within, and you possess them in abundant supply, they will keep you from being inactive or fruitless in your pursuit of knowing Jesus Christ more intimately."* (2 Peter 1:8, TPT)
1. Posses these in abundant supply and they will keep you from being 'useless or idle,' and unproductive.
 2. If you lack you go back! To drifting...*"But if anyone lacks these things, he is blind, constantly closing his eyes to the mysteries of our faith, and forgetting his innocence—for his past sins have been washed away."* (2 Peter 1:9, TPT)
 - a) Blind - unable to see the future based on choices.
 - b) Slowly turning their back on God.
 - c) Forgetting what God has done.

Conclusion:

- Jerusalem took no thought of her future and her fall was great. Though that is a dreadful lamentation the book of Lamentations ends with this: *"Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old—"* (Lamentations 5:21, ESV)