

A FERVENT & HUMBLE PLEA *continued*

(c) THE SUFFERING, **3:45**: “*offscouring*” = “scum” - something unfit for use. Cf. **1 Corinthians 4:13**.

(d) THE SHATTERING, **3:47**: ‘terror and the pit’ had become their portion; “*destruction*” means “*to shatter, tear in pieces*” – each pointers to the collapse of organised life in the kingdom.

(e) THE SORROW, **3:48-51**: another portrait of Jeremiah as ‘the weeping prophet.’ A severe ‘eye problem’; **3:48,49,51** (literally, “*my eye does evil to my soul*”). The spirit that gives ourselves – and God – no rest is in evidence (cf. **Isaiah 62:7**). Do we weep? *I love the Church, O God! / Her walls before Thee stand / Dear as the apple of Thine eye / And graven on Thy hand. For her my tears shall fall / For her my prayers ascend / To her my cares and toils be given / Till toils and cares shall end.* (Timothy Dwight). This sorrow will continue until God looks down (as out of a window) and sees (i.e. acts):

(f) THE SIGHT, **3:50**: “*Bad as the case is, one favourable look from heaven will set all to rights*” (Matthew Henry).

Isaac Watts died in 1748, but had lived to see the answer to his prayers in the shape of the Evangelical Awakening: “*May a plentiful effusion of the blessed Spirit descend on the British Isles and all their American plantations to renew the face of religion there.*” We need to pray like Watts today – with fervent yet humble pleas!

Come, dearest Lord / Descend and dwell / By faith and love in every breast / Then shall we know and taste and feel / The joys which cannot be expressed.

MEETINGS TODAY



- Morning Worship – 11.30am:
*8th Message in Lamentations Series:
“Praying with Fervent and Humble Pleas.”*
- Evening Service – 7.00pm:
“I Am Not Ashamed of The Gospel of Christ.”
Please come and bring your friends.



CHRISTMAS EVENTS FOR MARTYRS 2018

The Old Presbyterian Meeting House in the grounds of the Folk Museum at Cultra is once again the venue for our annual Carol Service this year – Wednesday, 5 December 2018, at 7.30pm. The level of interest has been very encouraging so far – approximately 150 tickets have been claimed. However, there is still room for others so if you think that family or friends would be interested in attending, please ‘sign them up’ as soon as possible.

Our Christmas Dinner is planned for Monday, 17 December, in the Jubilee Hall. Tickets are priced at £17 and are available from the church elders. Please join with the Church family for this occasion.

A selection of outreach activities are high on the agenda for the incoming month, including the Afternoon Christmas Service for children and their parents on Lord’s Day, 9 December. Others events have been organised for the parents who attend Little Ones, plus the usual circuit of Carol Singing in various Nursing Homes will fill at least a couple of evenings. Please pray for all events – and participate where you can.



A FERVENT AND HUMBLE PLEA Lamentations 3:37-51.

Dr Isaac Watts described prayer as, “pleading with God, or arguing our case with Him in a fervent, yet humble manner.” By this he intended that prayer is not just petition, but petition that is well reasoned, and is not just requesting, but appealing with passion (cf. **Psalm 62:8**).

Scripture provides plenty of examples – **Mark 7:24-30; Joshua 7:6-9; Isaiah 38:18-19; Luke 18:7** ... and **Jeremiah**, in **Jeremiah 12:1** and in this book of Lamentations.

[1] A CONFIRMATION ABOUT RULERSHIP: THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD; 3:37-39.

Three principles about the sovereignty of God should be noted:

(a) **THE STRENGTH OF GOD’S RULE**: Nothing happens without the Lord’s knowledge and sanction, **3:37**. While the Babylonians boasted that they would destroy Jerusalem, they were only able to do so because God commanded and commissioned them to do it. As with Creation of the world (**Psalm 33:9**), so it is with its Administration (**Psalm 115:3**) – God is in total control. None of this makes Him the author of sin / evil (cf. **Romans 8:28**).

(b) **THE SPAN OF GOD’S RULE**: It is God Himself who orders all things, **3:38**. “*God is too wise to err, too good to be unkind.*” cf. **Job 2:10**. *My times are in Thy hands / Whatever they may be / Pleasing or painful, dark or bright / As best may seem to Thee.* John Flavel wrote ‘The Mystery of Providence’ based on **Psalm 57:2**: “*God that performeth all things for me.*”

(c) **THE SUBMISSION TO GOD’S RULE**, We must never quarrel with God, **3:39**. If a man’s sins have brought on himself God’s punishment, he has no grounds for complaint. What **Jeremiah** and **Jerusalem** suffered from God’s hand did not come from God’s heart (**3:33**), but was due to the condition of their own heart. Cf. **Job 40:1-2**. We need to ensure our attitude is one of godly fear, implicit obedience, entire resignation, deep thankfulness and joy and adoring worship; A.W. Pink – ‘Our Attitude Towards God’s Sovereignty.’

[2] A CALL TO REPENTANCE: THE SORROW TOWARDS GOD; 3:40-42.

God’s sovereign authority and rule is a doctrine designed to have a dynamic impact on living. It should issue in our Repentance.

“*Repentance is a grace of God’s Spirit, whereby a sinner is inwardly humbled and visibly reformed*” (Thomas Watson).

(a) **WE MUST INITIATE A REVIEW: SELF-EXAMINATION**, as indicated by “*search*” and “*try*” in **3:40**: the first term means “*to dig into*,” the second to explore in order to become fully acquainted. Cf. search of house in **Luke 15:5**.

(b) **WE MUST INSTIGATE A RETURN: GET BACK TO THE LORD, 3:40**: true searching and trying will result in a turning (cf. **2 Corinthians 7:10**).

(c) **WE MUST IGNITE A REQUEST: EARNEST PRAYER IS REQUIRED, 3:41**. This is a graphic picture of earnestness and single-mindedness, looking up to the One who sits on the throne; **3:38,41**; cf. **Psalm 2:4; Isaiah 6:1** – a useless exercise to pray only with the lips if the heart does not keep pace with the words.

(d) **WE MUST ISSUE A REVELATION: CONFESSION OF SIN IS VITAL, 3:42**. True confession of sin before God will not be general but particular and will be accompanied with a pleading and a resolution not to go down the same paths again. “*Some run from the confessing of sin to the committing of sin*” (Watson).

Lamentations 3:42 concludes with the observation, “*... Thou hast not pardoned.*” The reason for this cannot be that God has exhausted His mercy, or is unwilling to forgive, but that there is a lack of reality and sincerity in the repentance.

[3] A CAUSE FOR REQUEST: THE SUPPLICATION TO GOD; 3:43-51.

The intensity of the Lord’s discipline that has been imposed on His people is in fresh focus. Various items that Highlight the Need for Supplication are indentified, including:

(a) **THE SUMMARY, 3:43**: four key words, already used in this book, summarise what God has done – “*anger*,” “*persecuted*” [in pursuit], “*slain*” and “*not pitied*.” All part of God’s righteous vengeance.

(b) **THE SEPARATION, 3:44**: prayer cannot penetrate through to God – not from the prophet or from the people (**Jeremiah 14:12; 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; 15:1**).