

Message #2**Lamentations 1:1-22**

Many years ago, when I was a boy growing up in Otsego, there was a home on Allegan Street that was once the biggest mansion in the town. It was called the Bardeen mansion. It was a mansion built in 1894 and it was torn down in 1962. But as a boy we would often go in it prior to it being torn down. It was impressive. I still remember looking at it and thinking, this must have been some mansion. Now when we went in it, it was nothing but ruins.

That is what Jeremiah thought as he looked at Jerusalem and the Temple. His mind went back to the way it once was. He had actually seen Jerusalem in all of its glory. He had seen God blessing His people and the happiness and success that had once existed. But that was all gone. Everything was in ruins and all that was left were memories of what used to be.

Most people think sin is fun. Most people think sin is pleasurable. Most people think sin will make them happy. Those who think that way are wrong. Sin will ruin everything. Sin will bring one to ruins.

The book of Lamentations drives home a key point and that is there is absolutely no benefit or profit to God's people pursuing sin. It will leave them a broken down nothing. It will leave them miserable.

WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE CONTINUALLY CHOOSE TO SIN, GOD WILL SEE TO IT THAT THEY END UP LONELY, SAD, DEPRESSED, FEARFUL, WEAK AND RUINED.

Now naturally the antithesis of this statement is that when God's people continually choose not to sin, God will see to it that they will end up happy, fearless, strong, successful, prosperous and blessed. You would think the choice would be so simple. Which would you choose? Which is the best route? When Israel was presented with those choices, they chose the wrong thing and as a result, they were left broken and in ruins. Lamentations tells this story. As we come to chapter one there are two main parts to it:

PART #1 – The results of pursuing sin. 1:1-17

There are twenty-two results given in this part of the book that show what happened when God's people chose to not obey God or His word:

Result #1 - Sin left God's property lonely. 1:1a (Aleph)

As Jeremiah looked at the city, his mind went back to when it was full of people and the greatest city among the nations. But it was that way no more. It was a lonely, eerie place. Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians and a city that once was thriving was now empty and lonely. Some of the most lonely and miserable people you will ever meet are believers who are no longer in fellowship with God. Frankly, you look at them and they are pathetic. At one time they were alive to God no more.

Result #2 - Sin left God's property empty. **1:1b (Aleph)**

Jerusalem had at one time been the hub of worldwide business and honor, but now it was empty. There was no more fullness, prosperity and joy there. At one time these had been happy people, but no more. What was full of blessings was now empty of them. Again this emptiness did not have to be.

Result #3 - Sin left God's people enslaved. **1:1c (Aleph)**

At one time God's people had been free, now they were enslaved to others. At one time she was the queen among the nations, and now she was a widow slave. She had nothing and was nothing.

Often people point out that sin is enslaving and it is. But in this case it literally was true. Sin turned a free people into a slave people. That is what sin will do. If one does not turn from it and turn to the Lord, sin will dominate your life.

Result #4 - Sin left God's people in tears. **1:2a (Beth)**

At one time life had been happy for God's people. It was a life filled with laughter, but now it was a life filled with tears. At night time the people would lie awake and think of how life used to be and they would cry.

You choose to get into sin and you will lie down on your bed at night and remember what life used to be like as you cry yourself to sleep. What is so sad is that in this misery, she still would not turn to the Lord who offered her grace.

Result #5 - Sin left God's people without comforters. **1:2b (Beth)**

No one rallied around her anymore to help her and assist her. No one was interested in comforting her. Those people, who said they loved her and cared about her, really didn't.

Result #6 - Sin left God's people without friends. **1:2c (Beth)**

People who used to be her friends were no longer her friends. When Job's friends thought Job was in sin, they stopped being his friends even when he wasn't in sin.

One of the most painful experiences is a desertion or betrayal of someone you thought was your friend. All of God's people experienced. Those they thought they could depend on were not those upon whom they could depend.

Result #7 - Sin left God's people subject to enemies. **1:3 (Gimel)**

God's own people had been forced into exile, and she had been overtaken and afflicted by many dominant enemies. Sin is not supposed to have dominion over God's people, but if God's people do not deal with sin, it can and will dominate them.

Result #8 - Sin left God's people without fellowship and worship. **1:4 (Daleth)**

The people used to travel the roads to Jerusalem to fellowship and worship. The people were there. The festivals were there. The gates were areas that people typically went to do business. The priests were there, but now there was no one there. It was all gone. The priests were groaning because there were no people or provisions. The virgins were afflicted because the men were gone. All was depressing and bitter.

Result #9 - Sin left God's people suffering and godless people prospering. **1:5 (He)**

Verse 5 is very clear to point out that God was sovereignly causing all of these negative results because of the sin of His people.

God's people, who should have been prospering because they were blessed by God, were watching godless people and powers prosper.

Result #10 - Sin left God's people humiliated. **1:6 (Waw)**

The description here is that God's people, including the princes, were actually having difficulty finding enough food to eat. God had taken away the majesty of His people and the provisions of His people. In fact, they were so physically weak that they could not even get away from those who would pursue them.

Result #11 - Sin left God's people with nothing but memories. **1:7 (Zayin)**

One of the things that will happen to one who gets into sin, is that he/she won't be able to shake the memories of what life was like before the sin. One can ride out their entire existence with nothing but memories of how good life once was.

Result #12 - Sin left God's people unclean. **1:8 (Het)**

Sin will leave one feeling dirty, not clean. But regardless how one feels, it will certainly leave one dirty in the sight of God. Sin will leave one ceremonially unclean, morally unclean and spiritually unclean. When God's people get into sin, it will emotionally devastate them. They will not end up laughing, but groaning.

Result #13 - Sin left God's people dishonored and ashamed. **1:9 (Tet)**

This verse is eye-opening. People who choose to sin against God do not consider the future. They live for the moment. Those who choose to persist in sin will find no comfort and they will end up afflicted and God will not end up magnified, the enemy will.

Result #14 - Sin left God's people without sacred place of worship. **1:10 (Yod)**

One of the worst indications of the judgment of God is that property that was once sacred is now secular property.

Result #15 - Sin left God's people without necessary provisions. **1:11 (Kaf)**

God's people were scrimping to survive. God never intended that. They have brought this on by their own sin.

Result #16 - Sin left God's people with incomparable inflicted pain. **1:12 (Lamed)**

Others will see the horrible pain and horrible things that God's people have gone through and they will realize God has done this because He is angry with His own people.

Result #17 - Sin left God's people with a God sent desolation. **1:13 (Mem)**

Jeremiah was driven by God with a burning passion to communicate the truth. God's people were no longer able to turn back from judgment. God is able to see to it that there is no joy or happiness in the life of His people.

Result #18 - Sin left God's people with no strength. **1:14a (Nun)**

The transgressions had been knitted together and the yoke of judgment left them with no strength.

Result #19 - Sin left God's people with no confidence. **1:14b (Nun)**

God's people are not able to stand up to anything.

Result #20 - Sin left God's people judged by God. **1:15 (Samek)**

God is the One who causes tragedy to hit His own people. God can trodden down and crush His own people.

Result #21 - Sin left God's people with no one to comfort or restore. **1:16-17a (Ayin)**

Sin will bring a life to ruin. It is possible to sin to the point where God has you depressed and crying all the time and there is nothing you can do to get out of it. You can take anti-depressant drugs but you will discover that the problem is your soul and the one who can restore your soul will not do it because of your sin.

Result #22 - Sin left God's people surrounded by God's enemies. **1:17b (Pe)**

God will command enemies to dominate His own people and His property.

PART #2 – The acknowledgement of the sin. **1:18-22**

The only hope that God's people have when God has brought these negative things into their lives is to talk to God in an honest truthful way. It is their only chance to get out of it.

Acknowledgement #1 - God is righteous. **1:18a (Tsade)**

Whatever God decides to do is righteous. Do not ever forget that. If He decides to chastise us with scathing rebuke and calamity, He is righteous in what He does. If He allows godless people to dominate us, He is righteous in doing it.

Acknowledgement #2 - God's people have rebelled against God's command. **1:18b (Tsade)**

Here is honest confession and admission. One who wants out of the emotional turmoil must go to God with this admission.

Acknowledgement #3 - God's people publicly admit the truth. **1:18c-19 (Qof)**

God's people said they have been taken captive by the deceptive people and ways of sin. They acknowledged that their priests and elders could not help them. What is being acknowledged here is that only God can get them out of this.

Acknowledgement #4 - God's people are in distress because of their own rebellion.
1:20 (Resh)

Look at the description in this verse. It is so true:

- 1) Rebellion against God's word will bring you distress.
- 2) Rebellion against God's word will trouble your soul.
- 3) Rebellion against God's word will overturn your heart.
- 4) Rebellion against God's word will kill your life.

God's people will never find happiness and joy in rebellion against the word of God.

Acknowledgment #5 - God's people have enemies who are happy about negative things God does to His people. **1:21 (Sin/Shin)**

One of the real catastrophes of the failures of God's people is that enemies point it out.

Acknowledgement #6 - God's people ask God to do to the enemies what He did to His own people. **1:22 (Tau)**

This is a request for vindication. God's people have no one who can help them except God. They admit they deserve the judgment but then they ask God to pour it out on their enemies.

The only hope God's people have for lifting the gloom is to cry out to God and admit the truth. Sin will not ever lead God's people to a happy conclusion. That is clearly seen in Lamentations chapter 1.

Practical Applications

1. Persistence in sin will lead to a God-caused miserable life.
2. Mourn over your sin and deal with it honestly before God and He will turn the sadness into gladness.