

The Unique Sorrows of Our Savior

Heidelberg Catechism

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We turn in sacred scripture to Lamentations chapter 1. Lamentations chapter 1 attributed to Jeremiah as he witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem. We're going to focus especially on verse 12 as we consider this passage in connection with Lord's Day 15 of the Catechism. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead. Lamentations chapter 1.

1 How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! [like tribute, like a slave] 2 She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. 3 Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits [in the midst of her distresses]. 4 The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

So Jeremiah is personifying the city of Jerusalem, right? That's what's going on here.

5 Her adversaries are the chief [her adversaries have become her masters], her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy. 6 And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts [like deer] that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer. 7 Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths. 8 Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward. 9 Her filthiness is in her skirts; she

remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully [she came down astonishingly]: she had no comforter. O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself [this is now Zion speaking]. 10 The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things: for she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation. 11 All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile. 12 Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. 13 From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day. 14 The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up. 15 The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress. 16 For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed. 17 Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them. 18 The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. 19 I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls. 20 Behold, O LORD; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death. 21 They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me. 22 Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.

It will be profitable to keep the scriptures open to Lamentations chapter 1 verse 12. It's on the basis of this passage of scripture and on the basis of many that we have the instruction of Lord's Day 15 in the back of the Psalter on page 9. Lord's Day 15 of the Catechism, as we continue our treatment of the Apostles' Creed,

Q. 37. What dost thou understand by the words, "He suffered"?

A. That He, all the time that He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind; that so by His passion [His suffering], as the only propitiatory sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the favor of God, righteousness and eternal life.

Q. 38. Why did He suffer under Pontius Pilate as judge?

A. That He, being innocent, and yet condemned by a temporal judge, might thereby free us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed.

Q. 39. Is there anything more in His being crucified than if He had died some other death?

A. Yes [there is]; for thereby I am assured that He took on Him the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, our earthly lives are characterized by many sorrows and sufferings, are they not? All men suffer, and especially the child of God experiences sufferings. What do we read in scripture? "Many are the afflictions of the righteous. In this world ye shall have tribulation. We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of heaven. For unto you," the Apostle Paul writes, "it is given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." We have many sorrows and I prepared this sermon before I knew this announcement had to be read. We have many sorrows. We have these kinds of sorrows. We have our own sorrows, the experience of death in the body every day, the death of loved ones, living as pilgrims and strangers in the world. We have the experience of dying to self every single day of our lives; at work, in the home, in the church, we are constantly called to be dying to self. Surrounding us on every side is so much sin, so much death, so much sorrow and heartache and sometimes when we are in the midst of deep sorrow, we cry out with pain and we say to ourselves, "I never imagined that the sorrow could be this great. I never thought my heart could feel this broken. I never thought that my life could feel this empty. I never thought that my body could be wracked with such pain." And sometimes perhaps we're tempted even to say, "Has there ever been the kind of sorrow, like the kind of sorrow I'm going through or that we are going through right now?"

Our sorrows always seem so unique to us, don't they? As if no one has ever gone through this experience before us. And yet what does the Bible say? The Bible says, "There hath no temptation which hath befallen you, which hath taken you, but such as is common to man." Your sorrows are not unique and then adding great comfort, the same passage goes on to say, "but God is faithful. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you, who will not allow you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it." And for the child of God in the midst of his sorrows, there is always this comfort, there is always this consolation, God is faithful. God is with me. God sees me. He understands this sorrow. He will supply my needs. He

remembers that we are dust, and he will show mercy. In the midst of our sorrows, knowing Jesus, having Jesus as ours, we have this abiding comfort, God will show mercy.

However, as we consider the sufferings of the children of God, there is one Son of God whose sufferings were unique, one Son of God whose sorrows were different, whose agonies and whose griefs of heart, in fact, were infinitely greater than what any of us could bear. There was one Son of God unto whom God did not show mercy. There was one Son of God who could truly cry out, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." And of course, that man was Jesus himself. And you can even hear that cry of Jesus when he's hanging on the cross and he pierces the silence of those three hours of darkness, crying with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Remember, so that we might never be forsaken. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, bearing the unfiltered, unrestrained wrath of God for the sins of thousands and millions of people, and you look at him, and you look at what that Son of God suffered, and you can truly say no man suffered like that man suffered. The sorrows of our Jesus were unique, beloved. That's what we consider in the preaching this morning as we consider Lord's Day 15 of the Catechism and Lamentations 1 verse 12. Our theme is "The Unique Sorrows of Our Savior." We look at that theme under three points. First, the unique sorrows. Second, the amazing reason for those sorrows. And third, the required response.

To begin with, I want to direct our attention, first of all, to the sorrows of Jeremiah in Lamentations chapter 1. You can hardly begin to imagine the great suffering that Jeremiah and the people of God were going through as they witnessed the utter destruction, the downfall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Jerusalem, the holy city, the city of God, which represented the whole church in the Old Testament, Jerusalem, about which the psalmist declares, is beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. Look at her bulwarks. Go about her ramparts. See how glorious Jerusalem is. A strong fortress built on the top of mountains. Walls all around her displaying her majesty. And as you would pass through those walls under the gates and enter the city, you would see beauty. Mansions. Beautiful mansions. And then you'd look up and there on the one mountain peak was the palace of the king. And there on the other peak, Mount Moriah was that site that was to behold, the temple itself, the place where God had chosen to dwell with his people. In all the land of Canaan and on the earth, that was the place of God's habitation and there the people would go gladly going in order to meet with their God and worship him. In another Psalm, the psalmist says, "God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved."

That was Jerusalem representing the church of God and Jeremiah loved Jerusalem fiercely and now. Jerusalem is in complete ruins, a pile of rubble in the midst of smoldering fires. Her walls all broken down to the very last stone pushed down the hill. Her mansions all burned up, brought to the ground. Her palace utterly destroyed. And the temple itself desecrated and destroyed. God himself in his Shekinah glory has departed from the temple and has gone east to be with his people in captivity. The city is reduced to nothing. The people are in rags, wandering about the rubble, searching desperately for

food, starving to death. Nothing is left. And as the other nations pass by the city and wag their heads, Jeremiah cries out on behalf of the city, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Is there any sorrow that can compare to this sorrow, the destruction of the church? Is there any sorrow that compares to this sorrow when we know full well that it is God himself who is doing it in judgment? And the only thing that people can say is this verse 18, "The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment."

Jeremiah says, "There is no sorrow like my sorrow," yet what we should understand as we contemplate that statement is that that statement ultimately refers to Jesus. It concerns Jesus. Yes, Jeremiah is talking here about the city of Jerusalem, that's the context, but these words are ultimately directing us to Jesus and to contemplate his suffering. There's a few things to consider. First of all, we need to remember that Jesus himself is one with his church. He's the bridegroom. She's the bride. They are one flesh. He's the head of the body. Inasmuch as Jerusalem is the church, these sufferings of Jerusalem are the sufferings of Jesus. Second of all, we need to remember that the city of Jerusalem itself was all about Jesus. Everything about it had to do with Jesus. The sacrifices at the temple, the priests, the priesthood, the temple itself, the temple itself is Immanuel, God dwelling with his people, God with us. That's Jesus. That's Jerusalem. And so these sufferings are pointing us to the sufferings of Jesus. And third of all we should remember that Jeremiah is a prophet and as a prophet his word always in the end has to do with Jesus.

And so we may take these words and we may apply them to Jesus. Jesus says, "There is no sorrow like unto my sorrow. My sorrows are unique." Jesus did experience great sorrow, starts right with his birth into poverty; being born in a cattle shed on the outskirts of Bethlehem signified the beginning of sorrows. Even as a little child, Joseph and Mary had to flee to Egypt in the middle of the night because King Herod wanted to kill Jesus. During his earthly ministry, Jesus also experienced great sorrow. No sooner does he enter into his earthly ministry, but he is driven into the wilderness by the Spirit of God himself to endure a fast for 40 days, all the while being tempted of the devil. He suffered sorrow at the hands of the Pharisees, the Pharisees who were always tracking his footsteps, trying to get him to fall into sin. He suffered sorrow in his interactions with his own family members. His family, his brothers and sisters treated him as one who was mad. He suffered sorrow in his interactions with his disciples; during his whole earthly ministry, his disciples never fully understood the implications of who he was. They questioned him, they denied him, they were offended at him, and then in the end, they forsook him and fled. At the same time, he suffered all the same kinds of sufferings and sorrows that we experience in life. He knew what it was to be tempted, what it was to be hungered, what it was to be angry, what it was to be lonely. He knew what it was to stand at the cemetery at the death of a loved one. He knew what it was to weep. All his life he suffered. He knew what it was to be hated of men, to feel rejection, to be spat upon, to be whipped, to be mocked and teased, to go through the whole process from start to finish of dying. He knew what it was to hang naked on the cross in front of his own mother. He knew what it was to bear shame, to have false accusers rise up against him. He knew

what it was to have one of his own friends, his own disciples, betray him. He calls Judas friend. He knew what it was to have people pretend to love you but inwardly hate you.

He knew it all, beloved. As Isaiah says, he is the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Jesus experienced great sorrow but what I want to emphasize this morning is that Jesus' sorrows were unique. His sorrows were great, but we need to say more. There were no sorrows like Jesus' sorrow. I have four things especially to point out. First, Jesus' sorrow was unique because Jesus suffered all these things as the eternal Son of God. This is not just you or me experiencing these things, beloved, this is the eternal Son of God in the flesh, experiencing these things. This is the one who enjoyed the worship of the angels in glory. This is the one who dwells in the bosom of the Father. What a stoop, beloved, from the brightness of the Father's glory, now to come to the earth and be made the picture of shame and reproach. You know, we sometimes say to each other that if someone has been to heaven, they wouldn't want to come back to earth, would they? Because heaven is so glorious. If someone has experienced the glories of heaven, coming back to earth would be painful. It'd be suffering in a whole new and different way. And yet that's exactly what Jesus does. He comes from the realms of glory into a world that apart from him and his gospel, he comes into a world that has no light, no hope, no good, no honor whatsoever. And he came only to be despised by that world. He came to his own, and his own received him not. Instead, they dragged him to their judgment hall, they scourged him, they blindfolded him and buffeted him, they mocked him in all his holy offices, they had their way with him, and then they nailed him to the accursed cross. him who is the eternal Son of God. That makes Jesus' sufferings unique.

Second, Jesus' sufferings were unique because Jesus suffered all these things as a man also who was himself sinless. For us, sin is part of our everyday reality. Man lives in the noxious, polluted fumes of sin and eats the rottenness of sin as a daily occurrence in his life. We get so desensitized to sin, don't we, that we don't even recognize it. But Jesus is the holy one, the sinless one, and as such, his soul is perfectly sensitized to sin all the time. His soul was continually affronted and taken aback with sin. He always saw it perfectly for what it was. He who is the holy one, who breathed the pure oxygen of the love and holiness of God, and then he comes to breathe in this world of sin. Just think, even as a child, Jesus had to deal with this. Imagine being a perfect boy, having to live under the authority of sinful parents. That's how it was for Jesus. He dealt with this during his earthly ministry. Look at him as he walks down the road and his disciples are talking behind him and he reads their minds. He knows what they are saying. He sees their covetous and greedy hearts as they quietly bicker amongst themselves over who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. He sees this every time he sees the wicked heart of Judas Iscariot. He dealt with this in his final sufferings. Three times Pontius Pilate declares Jesus to be innocent, and yet Jesus still has to endure the gross injustice of being whipped by the soldiers. That's acute suffering, beloved, not just the whipping, but to suffer that injustice as one who has never sinned, who's never done anything wrong, who has a perfect sense of justice, and yet has all these injustices inflicted upon him. That's suffering.

That makes Jesus' sufferings unique but third, Jesus' suffering was unique, especially because of this: Jesus, who is the eternal Son of God, who is sinless, was suffering the wrath of God. This is where the truth of Lamentations 1 verse 12 must really be emphasized, "behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me," now this, "wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Jesus' whole life, from birth to death, it can really be spoken of as a day, one single day, and what day is it? The day of God's fierce anger. This is not to say that God hated Jesus or that God was angry with Jesus personally. Jesus himself was the spotless lamb of God, well pleasing in God's sight, his beloved Son. But what it means is that Jesus suffered the expression of God's wrath against sin. The pain and the agony, the sorrow and anguish of soul, the desolation and darkness, the fear and terror, the death and hell, which is all part of the expression of God's wrath, Jesus experienced it. As the Catechism says, he experienced this all the time that he lived on earth. He sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind, Jew and Gentile. All whom God would save. He had to bear up under God's curse, bearing up under God's word of destruction and God's holy anger against sin. Jesus, who could truly say, who could say like no one else, Jesus, who could truly say, "The lovingkindness of my God is more than life to me," and now he's experiencing the wrath of God.

That's unique, beloved. That's unique. Such was his suffering that we read in Hebrews 5, verse 7, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. The eternal Son of God in the flesh offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying. Right, he's in the dust in the Garden of Gethsemane. And of course, such was his suffering that in the midst of the darkness, he cried out in astonishment. You might say confusion. He's asking the question, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His Father, his own beloved Father, who was well pleased with him, and yet his own Father was forsaking him and bringing his wrath upon him. This is holy ground. There is no suffering like this suffering.

Such was Jesus' suffering under the wrath of God that we can say this, consider this: Jesus suffered all that he could have suffered. I mean that in two ways. First, he suffered all that he could have suffered because after he was done, there was nothing left to suffer, right? He drank the cup of suffering down to its bitter dregs, its last bitter sediment at the bottom. He finished it all. He bore the full force of what hell truly is. But second, he suffered all that he could have in this sense also that his suffering demanded absolutely everything of him. His suffering consumed his entire human nature until there was no human, no part of his human nature left without suffering. In every fiber of his body, in every faculty of his mind, in every emotion in his soul, he experienced the full wrath of God against sin with nothing held back. All his strength was consumed with suffering. Indeed, so great was Jesus' suffering that as we know, the Catechism students know, he needed nothing less than the power of his divine nature to uphold him and sustain him in his human nature as he suffered. What Jesus suffered in his human nature was simply a miracle, beloved, a miracle. Only God in the flesh could have suffered what Jesus suffered and how he suffered because he needed the divine nature even to sustain him as he bore under that wrath of God.

Jesus' sufferings are incomprehensible, and they are unique, and fourth and finally, we can add this: Jesus' suffering is unique because Jesus suffered all these things willingly. And that's amazing, beloved. We could say that even adds an added dimension of suffering. Jesus not only suffered, but Jesus had to will to suffer, right? Sinful man is born into sorrow. This is our portion. But Jesus chooses it and every time when his human nature might have suggested that he should bear the suffering no more, Jesus had to submit himself in perfect love and devotion to the will of God. "Not my will, but thy will." Always submitting himself in perfect love and devotion to the will of God. His whole nature not only had to suffer, but it had to be perfectly devoted to God in the suffering, willing God's will concerning this very outpouring of God's wrath on him.

That's unique and what I can add is this: his suffering was without alleviation. He had no comforters. He had no doctors. He had no pain relievers, no sedatives. He had no friends. He didn't have his Father by his side helping him in his time of agony. He didn't have a mediator interceding for him. He didn't have hope that God would show him mercy. He did know the joy that was set before him. He did have a foretaste of that even on the Mount of Transfiguration, but in the supreme moment of his agony, Jesus even felt the loss of God's love. All the while, he was loving God perfectly and he suffered alone. All alone. Perfectly alone, suffering alone and agony which otherwise millions would have shared.

That's sorrow, beloved. Jesus didn't have hope in a Messiah that would save him. No, he was the Messiah. This is all his work to do and he knows it. And even as Jesus is hanging there on the cross, and the onlookers are wagging their heads as they walk by, you can almost hear these words of lamentations breaking through into the scene, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

These are the unique sorrows of our Savior but now we should ask why. Why did Jesus suffer this way? Why was all this suffering necessary? Well, let's go back to Lamentations for a moment. Why was all this suffering necessary in Jerusalem? Why must her walls be broken down? Why must God's people be carried into Babylonian captivity? Well, it was because of sin. It was because of the sin of the people. And just so, Jesus also suffered because of sin. But Jesus himself had no sin. No, but Jesus came as the head of his people. That's why God sent Jesus. That's why God became flesh in order that he, Almighty God, might bear the punishment for the sins of his people so that they might not have to bear that punishment. The suffering that Jesus experienced, that's exactly the suffering our sins deserved but Jesus suffered it as our substitute. As the Catechism says, Jesus sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind, so that by his passion, by his suffering, as the only propitiatory sacrifice, he might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the favor of God, righteousness, and eternal life.

The Catechism says Jesus' suffering was a propitiatory sacrifice and when I come across that word propitiatory, it's a big word, I always think of wrath deflector because that's the

idea of the word, that Jesus' sacrifice was a propitiatory sacrifice because he deflected the wrath of God away from us that should have fallen on us, and he deflects it away from us because he deflects it towards himself and he bears that wrath himself. That's how it's a propitiatory sacrifice and he endures the full punishment for our sin. And what we need to emphasize, then, is that Jesus' suffering actually accomplished something. Jesus' sufferings accomplished something. They atoned for sin. They covered our sins and what that means is that Jesus bore up under a suffering, he gave a suffering, he endured a suffering that was equal to the sin that was committed. I should keep it that way, he bore up under a suffering that was equal to the sin that was committed. We committed sin against the Most High Majesty of God. Our sin is of infinite proportions. As the Catechism said earlier, we deserve everlasting punishment of body and soul in hell but Jesus was able to blot out that sin because he presented the sacrifice that was of even greater infinite proportions than the magnitude of our sin. And that's true because the sacrifice he made was the suffering of one who was not only fully man and perfectly righteous, but also it was the suffering of the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Well, it was God bearing the punishment in the flesh so that after those three hours of darkness on the cross, and after God poured upon Jesus the last drop of his wrath against our sins, God could say, "It is enough. I am satisfied that these sins committed against my Most High Majesty, against me by my elect people, have received their just punishment. No more is needed. Full payment is made." In fact, more than sufficient payment is made, the Canons of Dort emphasize. The payment made would be sufficient to blot out any amount of sin because the payment was the precious life of Jesus Christ, the blood of God, Acts 20 says. And beloved, that is also what makes the sufferings of Jesus unique. No other sufferings could make a full payment for sin like what Jesus' sufferings accomplished.

And then recognize also this, none of our sufferings as God's children earn anything for us. None of our own earthly sufferings are canceling out any of our sin. That's not possible. God chastens his people, but God is not punishing his people. We would make a distinction there because Jesus bore the full punishment. He bore the payment for sin. We are chastened. We are disciplined. We are corrected as a father loves his children and we don't have to suffer that punishment, that making the payment because Jesus made it all. That's not why God calls us to go through sufferings either, to make payment. Jesus bore it all. He bore the whole punishment. He has redeemed our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and instead of God's wrath, we have God's blessing. Jesus has obtained for us the favor of God, righteousness, and eternal life. As the Catechism says in Answer 38, he has freed us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed.

Now as we are looking at the sufferings of Jesus on the cross, all of this should also impress upon us how great our sins actually are. We're not always struck by how great our sins are, are we? We can easily minimize our sins, ignore our sins but our sins are heinous. So great is our sin, beloved, that it took nothing less than the unique sufferings of God in the flesh to blot them out. Jesus' sufferings had to be so great because our sins are so great. And all of this is very humbling. It's humbling because we see that our sins

are wretched indeed; this is what my sins deserved. And then it's also humbling because we also see this is how great God's love is for us. This is how much our Savior loves us that this is what he did for us.

So what should we do with our sins? Well, don't try to hide them from God. Don't try to ignore them or act as if they aren't there. The lie won't set you free. But acknowledge them, confess them, and honor God, honor God by confessing that Jesus' sufferings alone are able to blot out these sins. And honor God by also confessing that God is this gracious, that he is even pleased to forgive these sins for the sake of Jesus and his sufferings. And then confessing sin, repenting of sin, ask God to speak his word of forgiveness and then rest yourself in the finished sufferings of Jesus Christ. This is why Jesus suffered. That's the reason, to take away our sin.

Well, this leads us to how we should respond. How must we respond to the reality of Jesus' sufferings? And I bring that up because in Lamentations chapter 1, Jeremiah himself is calling for a response. Listen to how he puts it in verse 12, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" What is your response? That's the question we are confronted with as we study the sufferings of Jesus. Is it nothing, all ye that pass by? You've seen his sufferings, you've seen him on the cross. Is it nothing to you? What do the sufferings of Jesus mean to you? Again, it's as if every one of us is paraded past the cross and we're asked, "What do you think of it? Stop and look and consider." This cross of Jesus demands a response. How do we respond to the unique sufferings of Jesus? Will we pass by? Will we wag our heads and mock, laugh at Jesus, maybe stop and gawk for a while and then maybe the rest of the week go on our merry way? What will you do, listener? There is no other way that you, that I, as a sinner, can be right with God, there is only the blood of Jesus. There is no other way for anyone to be saved from their sins.

How do you respond to the sufferings of Christ? Well, the response that Christ demands is this: repent and believe. That's the call of the gospel. Repent, confess your sins, and turn from them. Weep over them and fly to Christ. Walk no more in the way of evil, but follow after Christ as his disciple. Continue in his word. Repent and believe. Trust in Jesus alone. I say continue in his word, you can repent and believe, that's the call of the gospel. Trust in Jesus alone for your righteous standing before God and do not trust in yourself. Jesus alone is the Savior. What I mean to say is it's not by our own works. We're not supposed to give works now. Repent and believe. Here in the unique sufferings of Jesus, is the only refuge for the sinner. This is our only hope. This is all our hope, Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God who has freely of his grace given us Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father, we have sorrows but we thank thee that even this morning in thy providence, thou hast called our attention to the sorrows of Jesus, so that we might remember what he accomplished through those sorrows, and we might remember that even our sorrows are in thy mercy to lead us, we who are in Jesus Christ. We pray, Father, strengthen our faith in the midst of our circumstances. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus so that, looking at him, we have the proper perspective on everything else. And may we continue to walk

humbly with thee in this day and going forward, confessing only the name of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Blessed this preaching to our hearts and to our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.