

Notes on Ashleigh Urquidi's video, An Introduction to the Psalms - Week 3

There are two types of Psalms of Lament,

- Individual
- Communal

Individual Psalm Characteristics

These are direct quotes in quotes from her video:

- *"Composed in first person as direct address to God, frequently open with "Lord."*
- *Basic component repetition: typically asks to be heard or helped.*
- *Includes description of trouble the petitioner has typically described in relation to God, others, and/or self.*
- *Petitions often supported by reasons why they should be heard: typically appeal to character of God, petitioner's relation to God, and implication of petitioner's problem.*
- *Include statements of confidence in God / confession of truth.*
- *May end with promise of sacrifice and / or praise."*

There is however, no standard order of these elements, so none of the 42 Psalms of Lament will sound exactly the same.

Elements of Communal Psalms

Again direct quotes in quotes from her video:

- *"Some are individual but there are two exceptions.*
- *Composed primarily as voice of community: WE instead of I.*
- *Troubles speak of God's absence /. wrath, community's humiliation / suffering, power / arrogance of enemies.*
- *Feature recollections of God's past workings.*
- *rehearse what God's done in history of community, even creation of the world -- so ways of making suffering of community an issue of God's sovereignty in the world."*

The common thread in all of this is suffering be it individual or communal.

Further Observations

"Theologian and author James May says that the prayers for help are a theological interpretation of suffering."

- They place the troubles of life in the context of meaning.

- They provide a way to move affliction out of the realm of merely accidental or fortuitous meaningless into the comprehension of a view of self, and world, and God.

Ashleigh Urquidi' asks the question about who wrote these books, but whoever did write them, she suggests that they:

- identify with righteous, faithful, lowly, poor / needy . . . address God as "*your servant*."
- Count themselves among those who take refuge in God, seek him love him.

The troubles are narrowed to three categories:

- sickness (whole range of physical or psychological abominations).
- Accusations (from formal proceedings of community to betrayal of neighbour / family).
- armed conflict (local fights to national warfare).

She then asks '*how does all of this apply to oneself*'.

- Do you claim to be a servant of God and claim that stature?
- Have you ever taken refuge or sought after God?

She then says,

"These psalms could be easily written by you, particularly those individual psalms."

and that

"some people write Psalms of Lament themselves."

Conclusion

By reading the Psalms, we come to know who we are and how to say it to God.

By praying the Psalms, we find a depth within ourselves.