

**Advent #3: Joy**  
**Psalm 80: Lamenting**

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Yesterday, Mark frantically tried to get a hold of me because he was caring for a sick family and told me he couldn't preach today. He will preach the sermon for today next week and today is the Psalm we were going to talk about next week.. so this is Eric's 4-hour sermon on Advent from Psalm 80.

Jesus's Birth Story from **Luke 2:**

**2** In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. **2** (This was the first census that took place while<sup>[a]</sup> Quirinius was governor of Syria.) **3** And everyone went to their own town to register.

**4** So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. **5** He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **7** and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

**8** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

**(This is Good news!)**

**11** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

**13** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

God is our savior, king, and sovereign Lord...we all have an opportunity to be saved and have a king. But there is more:

**Rev 1:5** from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, **6** and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

We are brought into a kingdom...his birth looks forward to his death but in the middle we have a vocation. This is where we get re-oriented. We are entering into a Psalm today that is not typically happy. It is about intercession and lament. Does Christmas make you think of your family constructs? You think of obligations and the brokenness of relationships. You have to listen to the world's bad songs about consumerism...you have to live in the tension of the world's brokenness and the knowledge that things are not right. Advent is a time to feel this tension and feel the brokenness of sin and chaos in our relationships.

As priests we are called to intercede for our families, city, and world and we are called to lament and pray and feel the weight of a reality that is not fully come. Lament is actually you talking to God about what is going on in the world: taking the brokenness and bringing it to god.

### **Psalm 80** (is a song of lament)

**For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lilies of the Covenant." Of Asaph. A psalm.**(Asaph was probably a group of people who wrote songs in the community of Asaph.)

**1 Hear us, Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock.  
You who sit enthroned between the cherubim,  
shine forth **2** before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.  
Awaken your might; come and save us.**

The intro is interesting: "God hear us and be our shepherd" implies that we are dumb sheep. We need guidance. And on top of that, we sit between the two cherubim: we have authority. The imagery of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh is about the ark of the covenant. It's saying we need to shine forth like these tribes and asking God to save us! Notice that it's not about you saving you: it's about God's power and might that He demonstrated in the past.

**3 Restore us, O God;  
make your face shine on us,  
that we may be saved.**

This is the chorus: restore means to turn us around. Shine forth: It's a blessing from Aaron in **Numbers 6** but it's even more about intimacy, like a friend whose face lights up when you are with them. It's saying, turn us around and show us your excitement about us! Please take us by the shoulders and turn us around. Parents know about this: you take a child's face and turn them around towards you. We cannot turn ourselves around: we need God to do this for us. We need God's favor and pleasure in us. We need intimacy. Notice there is nothing we do: nothing anyone can do. We need deliverance. Whatever is happening in the moment isn't good: we are invited to look at our world and pinpoint the broken relationships in our lives that need repair. Maybe we see family and friends suffering and we want something different for them. What weighs on our heart? We are invited to ask God for restoration of these. Advent challenges to lament the condition of our world.

**4** How long, Lord God Almighty, (Lord of the Army)  
will your anger smolder  
against the prayers of your people?

**5** You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.

**6** You have made us an object of derision<sup>[b]</sup> to our neighbors,  
and our enemies mock us.

Part of what is happening here is remembering the stance: in the world we are standing with our back to you and yet we are praying. But these prayers lack relationship; the words are hitting the back of a person that we don't know. How long will God let this go on? Please turn around, God! If Jesus is our savior, understand what we are saved from. The writer of this psalm is swimming in lament: we have been rebellious yet only You, Lord, can do anything about it. It's not about us owning our behavior: priests go before God and acknowledge his sovereignty in all things and please with him to do something.

**7** Restore us, God Almighty;  
make your face shine on us,  
that we may be saved.

Notice this time the chorus adds God Almighty. Think about Christmas: when you look at this lament it's full of loneliness and disconnection. Aren't these common feelings during Christmas? I feel unappreciated by people and lost and unattached. I'm on the outside of the fun. So many of us ARE alone and on the outside.

**8** You transplanted a vine from Egypt;  
you drove out the nations and planted it.

**9** You cleared the ground for it,  
and it took root and filled the land.

**10** The mountains were covered with its shade,  
the mighty cedars with its branches.

**11** Its branches reached as far as the Sea,<sup>[c]</sup>  
its shoots as far as the River.<sup>[d]</sup>

**12** Why have you broken down its walls  
so that all who pass by pick its grapes?

**13** Boars from the forest ravage it,  
and insects from the fields feed on it.

You are the one who let everything bad happen? We must swim in the sovereignty of God. We are asking God to change things: Listen for relationship in next verses:

**14** Return to us, God Almighty!  
Look down from heaven and see!  
Watch over this vine,

**15** the root your right hand has planted,  
the son<sup>[e]</sup> you have raised up for yourself.

**16** Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire;  
at your rebuke your people perish.

Look at what you've done to us! Swimming in God's sovereignty means everything happens under His direction. Only He can bring restoration! In this third week of Advent (JOY) we are invited to lament because you can't have a deep happiness of Jesus if you don't understand what you've been saved from and called to as a priest.

**17 Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand,  
the son of man you have raised up for yourself.**

**18 Then we will not turn away from you;  
revive us, and we will call on your name.**

When it says, "man at your right hand," the writer Asaph doesn't understand what he's saying. He's looking forward to Jesus who is seated at the right hand of the father. We know the son of man is Jesus, the super-man. (Superman in the comics is the son of man: it's a reference from the Bible.) If You send Yourself, God, we won't turn away from You. You must revive us and turn us. When we pray and lament, the Holy Spirit will bring a confidence that he will do something. Part of Christmas is that We came and we as followers can be revived and invite others into this.

**19 Restore us, Lord God Almighty; (Yahweh...THE name for God)  
make your face shine on us,  
that we may be saved.**

We want to be turned around: we pray for ourselves, each other, and our world.

Quote from Eric's favorite theologian:



Comments:

Fasting makes us uncomfortable and humble. Lament is facing God and acknowledging that you trust God and offering what you are disturbed about: If you feel entitled, bring this to him. Ask him.

To lament is to cry out to God, despair is by myself. We have to turn out of despair and enact lament. It's a confession that we cannot be turned.

Rod's definition of Joy is The pleasure of God's presence. This fits with this!

Exploring the connection of how there is physical health when we lament and place the things that are in us at their rightful place in front of God.

Lament is asking for intimacy for ourselves and others. Asking is what we do and then we wait.