

How?!?

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[0 : 00] and make your way over to the book of Lamentations. This is in the Old Testament.

If you find the book of Isaiah, which is a big one, you might find Jeremiah after that, and then you will find after that the book of Lamentations.

And let's pray together. Father, it is good for us to be together. It is good for us to be reminded of your great love.

It's good for us to be reminded of the friend that we have in Jesus. It's good for us to sing together of your great mercy that is more than all of our sin.

It's good for us to sing together. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. It's good for us to be reminded that we have 10,000 reasons to bless your name today.

[1 : 16] Thank you for these songs that we have sung together and the way that they tune our hearts and prepare us to hear, the way that they help us to worship well and to center our attention and our affection on you.

As we now turn our attention to your word, would you please help us? Help us to be people who listen and hear and respond by checking your word to confirm that these things are true.

And then when we find that they are true, would you please help us to be the types of people who believe and obey the things that you say to us in your word.

Help us not to come into this place and then to leave here unchanged. We don't want to look, as James tells us, into the mirror of your word, see ourselves, and then leave this place without allowing you, Holy Spirit, to do work that is necessary to change us.

Perhaps to save someone this morning who needs to be saved from their sin. We'd ask, Holy Spirit, that you come and be with us and help us as we turn our attention now to the preaching of your word.

[2 : 43] It is in the name of the Lord Jesus that we pray and ask these things. Amen. Okay, Lamentations chapter one. Here's what I want you to notice as Ryan and Kara are going to come and read this.

And not merely because it is a longer text, only 22 verses, but if you look at it, they feel a little long when you read through it. But here's what I want you to notice as Ryan and Kara read this.

There are two sections, if you will, to this first chapter of Lamentations. The first section is in the third person. Someone is writing and describing what they see.

And then the last portion is in the first person. Someone is speaking what they are experiencing firsthand.

Okay? So there's a little bit of interplay between them. A couple places where the first person breaks into the third person and one spot where the third person interjects into the first person.

[3 : 51] So Kara is going to represent the city of Jerusalem. And so she is going to be representing the first person.

And Ryan is going to read the portions that are in the third person. And I hope this helps us to sort of begin getting our hands around this longish chapter.

So here is Lamentations chapter one, verses one through 22. How lonely sits the city that was full of people. How like a widow has she become.

She who was great among the nations. She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave. She weeps bitterly in the night with tears on her cheeks.

Among all her lovers, she has none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her. They have become her enemies. Judah has gone into exile because of affliction and hard servitude.

[4 : 50] She dwells now among the nations, but finds no resting place. Her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress. The roads to Zion mourn, for none come to the festival.

All her gates are desolate, her priests groan, her virgins have been afflicted, and she herself suffers bitterly. Her foes have become the head.

Her enemies prosper because the Lord has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions. Her children have gone away, captives before the foe. From the daughter of Zion, all her majesty has departed.

Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture. They fled without strength before the pursuer. Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction and wandering all the precious things that were hers from days of old when her people fell into the hand of the foe, and there was none to help her.

Her foes gloated over her. They mocked at her downfall. Jerusalem sinned grievously. Therefore, she became filthy. All who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness.

[6 : 04] She herself groans and turns her face away. Her uncleanness was in her skirts. She took no thought of her future. Therefore, her fall is terrible.

She has no comforter. O Lord, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed. The enemy has stretched out his hands over all her precious things.

For she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary, those whom you forbade to enter your congregation. All her people groan as they search for bread.

They trade their treasures for food to revive their strength. Look, O Lord, and see, for I am despised. Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?

Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger. From on high he sent fire into my bones.

[7 : 05] He made it descend. He spread a net for my feet. He turned me back. He has left me stunned, faint all the day long. My transgressions were bound into a yoke.

By his hand they were fastened together. They were set upon my neck. He caused my strength to fail. The Lord gave me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand. The Lord rejected all my mighty men in my midst.

He summoned an assembly against me to crush my young men. The Lord has trodden, as in a wide press, the virgin daughter of Judah. For these things I weep.

My eyes flow with tears, for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my spirit. My children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed. Zion stretches out her hands, but there is none to comfort her.

The Lord has commanded against Jacob that his neighbors should be his foes. Jerusalem has become a filthy thing among them. The Lord is in the right, for I have rebelled against his word.

[8 : 11] But hear, all you peoples, and see my suffering. My young women and my young men have gone into captivity. I called to my lovers, but they deceived me. My priests and elders perished in the city while they sought food to revive their strength.

Look, O Lord, for I am in distress. My stomach churns, my heart is wrung within me, because I have been very rebellious. In the street, the sword bereaves. In the house, it is like death.

They heard my groaning, yet there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble. They are glad that you have done it. You have brought the day you announced.

Now let them be as I am. Let all their evil doing come before you and deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my transgressions. For my groans are many, and my heart is faint.

Weddings and birthday parties and graduations and funerals, all of these are important social functions.

[9 : 20] We gather in order to celebrate, and we gather in order to grieve.

We share our emotions in the company of those who love us, and by sharing our emotions, isn't it true that we experience a heightened sense of joy?

that it's better to have a party with people there to enjoy the birthday party with. And in the case of a funeral, by sharing our emotions, we have a context for comfort, and we have a beginning of our healing.

Lamentations is a funeral service for Jerusalem. And in this funeral service, we hear about suffering that has rarely been experienced by any person or community or nation.

We listen, and as we hear the things that were just read to us, the grief is nearly unbearable. But let's remember, this grief that we just heard is tethered to history.

[10:47] This is not grief for the sake of grief, not emotion for the sake of emotion. The feelings are very intense, but those feelings are connected to real, actual events that happened in Jerusalem during the siege and the fall.

Lamentations chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 are written in the form of an acrostic. Does someone remember what an acrostic is?

Alice, do you know? That's right. That's right.

I'm going to turn around so I can do this and it'll help, right? You take, like, a person's name or a word and you run those letters down the side of your piece of paper, right?

And then you write a word or a phrase or a sentence that starts with each of those letters. Very good. That's how chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4, so you'll notice 1, 2, 3, and 4, 1, 2, and 4 all have 22 verses in them.

[12:05] Chapter 5 also has 22, but it is not an acrostic. But 1, 2, and 4 have 22 verses in them. Chapter 3 has 66 verses, and if you're quick with math, we'll talk about that in two weeks when we get to chapter 3.

But it's an acrostic, and so each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, it's like they took the alphabet and they wrote their 22 letters of their alphabet down one side of their scroll, and then they wrote a verse describing what was happening in and around Jerusalem, and each verse starts with the letter of the Hebrew alphabet, an acrostic.

Now, sometimes we use the alphabet to help us remember things. Maybe you remember playing, like when you're traveling on a road trip or something, like the alphabet game, right?

I'm going to the grocery, and I'm going to get apples. And then the next person says, well, I'm going to the grocery, and I'm going to get apples and bananas.

And then you go to the third person, and as you go, you have to keep remembering each of the things that are being brought, and it helps to pass the time. Parents, that's a freebie. It helps to pass time in the car when you have to remember, but the letters of the alphabet help us remember how we got there.

[13:25] In Lamentations, the purpose of this acrostic is not to help us remember. No one could ever forget what happened in Jerusalem.

Instead, the purpose, I think, of this acrostic is to ensure that the grief experienced in and around Jerusalem is fully expressed we might say from A to Z.

No tiny little bit of grief goes unexposed. The author, likely Jeremiah, letter by letter, methodically describes the suffering of the people of Jerusalem, and the alphabet helps ensure, guarantees really, that no detail gets overlooked.

This is different, isn't it, from how we normally deal with our suffering? I don't know about you, but I don't like taking my time in suffering. I don't like suffering to be methodical, either in my own life or in the lives of those that I love.

I want a quick path through suffering. I want a shortcut. I want to go around suffering as quickly as I possibly can. walking methodically through suffering is painful.

[14:58] It's like walking with bare feet on a hot, concrete sidewalk. walk. But, the acrostic structure of lamentations ensures that we don't move quickly, even though, even though our feet are burning.

since there is no epidural for grief on this side of our eternal inheritance, we need to talk about our grief.

Finding words to describe our suffering is the first step towards healing. Words are like handles on a laundry basket.

We find the words to describe and to categorize our feelings and our emotions and the grief that we are experiencing and they are like handles on the laundry basket so that we can hand that basket of grief to our God of all comfort.

Words help us grasp our grief and give it to God. Now, in the Hebrew scripture, the book of Lamentations gets its name from its very first word.

[16:25] That doesn't work really well in our language. If it was in our language, then this book would be called what? What's the first word in your Bible? Probably how, right?

The first word of the book of Lamentations, chapter 1. It's not a question. It's not like this. It's not how. It's a shocking word like how.

Shakespeare might say, alas, right? We might say, oofta, or oiva, right? This is so bad.

Oh, no. that's the first word of the book of Lamentations. Look at verse number 1.

How lonely sits the city that was full of people. how like a widow she has become.

[17 : 33] As we work through the chapter 1, we will find Jerusalem personified as a woman. Again and again and again, we will see the city of Jerusalem described like a woman.

And first, we see her as a lonely widow. Her house is empty. She has no husband to look after her. No family to care for her.

Widows deserve pity and compassion, don't they? But Jerusalem isn't only a widow.

We hear other word pictures in chapter 1. Jerusalem is a humiliated princess. Jerusalem is a promiscuous woman. Jerusalem is an assault victim.

Jerusalem is a betrayed lover. She is an abandoned wife. And when we hear these other word pictures that stand so, so different from a widow, we're supposed to feel torn.

[18 : 45] It's like we can't bear to look at her. And yet, we can't look away. It's like the lineup of cars creeping past a horrific accident and everyone has to gawk and then feels kind of dirty for gawking and looking at this terrible accident that has happened.

Notice how everything good about Jerusalem has been undone. verse 1 again. How lonely sits the city that was full of people.

How like a widow she has become. She who was great among the nations, she who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave.

she weeps bitterly in the night with tears on her cheeks. Among all her lovers, all of her friends, all of her companions, she has none to comfort her.

All of her friends have dealt treacherously with her. They have become her enemies. Judah has gone into exile because of affliction and hard servitude and she dwells now among the nations but finds no resting place.

[20 : 11] God's people called out from among the nations now sent back among the nations and yet homeless among them, finding no place to rest.

Her pursuers have all overtaken her. She used to be the one doing the pursuing and now she is pursued and all of her pursuers have overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

The roads to Zion mourn for none come to the festival. Jerusalem used to be a place that God's people would stream to.

Imagine the streets of Jerusalem and the paths and the roads leading to Jerusalem full of people going up to Passover prepared to celebrate all that God had done for them and now all of those roads are abandoned.

It's like a ghost town. Tumbleweeds. I don't know if they have tumbleweeds in Palestine.

Tumbleweeds rolling by and little whirling sand tornadoes.

[21 : 25] Nobody is going to the festival because nobody is left. All of her gates are desolate.

The place where you would normally have commerce and law and people gathered to make decisions. All of her gates are desolate. Her priests groan. Those who would lead the people to worship God and bring people to celebrate the goodness of God and offer a sacrifice so that the people could have their sins covered.

The priests, the ones you would look to, to point you to God. They are groaning. Her virgins have been afflicted.

Those who would remind us of the next generation, that there's hope for us as a people. We have young people around. They have also been afflicted and she herself suffers bitterly.

Her foes have become the head. Her enemies prosper. She used to prosper. Jerusalem used to be the head. And everything is topsy-turvy like that one scene from the second Mary Poppins.

[22 : 41] Everything is upside down and you can't make sense of it because the Lord has afflicted her.

Verse 6, from the daughter of Zion, all her majesty has departed. Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture, starving deer, and they fled without strength before the pursuer.

They are hunted and they have no strength left. They're scrawny little deer and these are our leaders. Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction and wandering all the precious things that were hers from days of old.

When her people fell into the hand of the foe and there was none to help her, her foes gloat over her. They mock at her downfall. Her enemies are laughing at her, gloating, mocking, celebrating the fact that Jerusalem has fallen.

Why? Why would her enemies treat her this way? You thought your God was so much better than our gods.

[24 : 12] You thought your God could take care of you. You thought your God would be there for you. How's that working out for you now?

What does it feel like to be overthrown? What does it feel like to be ruined, to be pursued? You trusted in the wrong God.

I guess you've learned your lesson. Why would the enemies speak this way about Jerusalem? God's doing? And the answer is that Jerusalem's undoing is God's doing. Look again at verse number five.

Right in the middle. verse 8.

[25 : 16] Jerusalem sinned grievously. Therefore, she became filthy.

all who honored her. All who honored her now despise her, for they have seen her nakedness. She herself groans and turns her face away.

Her uncleanness was in her skirts. She took no thought of her future. Therefore, her fall is terrible. She has no comforter. Oh, Lord, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed.

The enemy has stretched out his hands over all her precious things, for she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary, those whom you forbade to enter your congregation.

All her people groan as they search for bread. They trade their treasures for food to revive their strength. Look, O Lord, and see, for I am despised.

[26 : 24] all of the precious things in verse 10, likely first referring to all of the valuables in the temple, gold, and bronze, and precious metals, all of the things that went into the worship of God, but also may hint at a woman's body being violated.

The precious things. the private things. The things that are not to be touched and not to be taken lightly. The enemy has gone in to the place where they were forbidden to go and taken them.

seen. The more we look, the more we shame Jerusalem by seeing what should not be seen.

And yet we can't look away because the poet keeps talking about her. this is the tension. We pity Jerusalem as a widow, and yet we are repulsed by her indecency.

Sin is the cause of her exile, and her exile is the source of her shame. sin has made her filthy, unclean, impure, so much so, verse number eight, that she can barely look at herself in the mirror.

[28 : 17] That's shame. Jerusalem speaks in verse number 13.

Notice four very vivid word pictures describing the suffering that she experiences because of her sin. Verse 13.

From on high, he sent fire into my bones. He, the Lord, made it descend.

He, the Lord, spread a net for my feet. He has turned me back. He has left me stunned, faint all the day.

My transgressions, my rebellion, it was bound up into a yoke by his hands. All of my transgression, all of my rebellion, all of my wanting to do my own thing, my own way, have it my way or the highway, God binds all of that up as a yoke and places it on Jerusalem's neck like an ox.

[29 : 35] And she feels the weight of her sin crushing her down and chafing her neck. Verse 15.

The Lord rejected all my mighty men. in my midst. He summoned an assembly against me to crush my young men.

The Lord has trodden as in a wine press the virgin daughter of Judah. Think of a bunch of grapes piled up in a big vat type thing and stomping on them.

You know what happened if there was a grape in your house on the floor and you stomped on it. Grape juice goes everywhere. That's the metaphor here.

Except it is God's people. Do you see that? My young men, the virgin daughters, they are like grapes, a bunch of grapes that have been piled up and now God himself is the one who is stomping on the grapes and grape juice is going everywhere.

[30 : 55] What do you think that grape juice going everywhere is supposed to represent in the metaphor? Blood. It's a mess. Do you feel these metaphors?

The fire from heaven, a shocking act of God, the surprise, the unexpected event of being caught off guard, unprepared, snared in a net, the yoke, the weight, the heavy crushing weight of sin, chafing that you can't get rid of, the stomping of grapes.

I wonder which of these word pictures makes you grimace the most. Jerusalem confesses in verse 18, verse 20.

Notice the Lord Yahweh, all caps likely in your Bible. The Lord is in the right, for I have rebelled against his word.

But hear all you peoples and see my suffering, my young women and my young men have gone into captivity. verse 20.

[32 : 20] Look, O Lord, for I am in distress. My stomach churns, my heart is wrung within me because I have been very rebellious.

In the street, the sword bereaves. in the house, it is like death. They heard my groaning, yet there is no one to comfort me.

All my enemies have heard of my trouble. They are glad that you have done it. You have brought the day you announced. Now let them be as I am.

Let all their evil doing come before you and deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my transgressions. For my groans are many, and my heart is faint.

You see that there in verse number 20? These physical symptoms of severe, emotional, mental, spiritual distress. a churning stomach, a wrung out heart, and this paralysis at the end of verse 20.

[33 : 40] I can't go out into the street because if I go into the street, if I try to get away, I'll be killed by the sword, but if I stay in my house, I'm going to starve to death.

I'm stuck. Nowhere to go. Lamentations is a funeral service for Jerusalem, but no one came to the funeral.

Verse number two, she has none to comfort her. Verse number nine, she has no comforter.

Verse number 16, for these things I weep, my eyes flow with tears, for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my spirit.

My children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed. Zion stretches out her hands. It's like she's looking for a hug. Do you see that verse 17?

[34 : 57] Zion stretches out her hands, but there is none to comfort her. The Lord has commanded against Jacob that his neighbors should be his foes.

Jerusalem has become a filthy thing among them. Verse 21, they heard my groaning, yet there is no one to comfort me.

Lamentations, is a funeral service for Jerusalem, but no one came to the funeral.

Can you imagine being at the funeral service of a loved one without a single person to comfort you?

Listen to Jerusalem's desperation in verse number 12. It's almost like she's begging someone to come in for the funeral service. Look at verse 12. Is it nothing to you?

[36 : 16] All you who pass by, look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.

Do you remember that tension of whether we should feel pity for the widow or be repulsed by the woman's sinful impurity?

Here's how this tension gets relieved. It gets relieved when we realize five times in this text that there is no comforter.

The relief of this tension of whether we should feel pity for the widow or be repulsed by the woman's sinful impurity is relieved when we realize that we don't get to be the ones standing in judgment on Jerusalem or deciding whether to offer her comfort because there is no comforter.

We don't get to make a judgment call on Jerusalem whether to pity her or to shame her. You are not the comforter. You are the one in need of comfort.

[38 : 03] The casket of your loved one is pushed slowly down the aisle but you are the one standing alone in the church sanctuary. you are not the comforter in lamentations one.

You are part of the whole creation groaning as Paul writes in Romans chapter 8 verse 22. We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

And not only the creation but we ourselves even we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit. We also groan inwardly.

Maybe you believe that a good Christian holds back their emotions. That a good Christian keeps a stiff upper lip that a good Christian refuses to complain when life is hard.

That a good Christian fights the natural urge to cry out in desperation. Maybe you think that Christians sit around campfires singing kumbaya or that every night we fall asleep with the words of the doxology still echoing through our bedrooms.

[39 : 32] Does that happen in your house? That's not happening in my house. we fall asleep sometimes at night with the sounds of our own groaning echoing in our bedroom.

Crying out to God and I suspect that's true in your home as well. If I could use the words of Jesus have you not read the book of Job?

Have you not read 1 Peter? Have you not read Lamentations? Haven't you noticed in the Psalms that those who believe in God regularly cry out to God how?

Why? Where are you when I am hurting? Why does it seem like you are taking so long to come and deliver me from this pain?

When are you going to make an end of this suffering? When are you going to bring justice? Why won't you just leave me alone? If you're going to be quiet and silent and not answer my prayer then just leave me alone.

[40 : 58] Do you remember reading those words in the Psalms? Did you know that God can handle your emotional outbursts?

Your emotions are not obnoxious to your heavenly father. Do you believe that? so you go ahead and weep bitterly. Verse 2 and verse 16.

You go ahead and groan when life is hard. Verse 8, 21, and 22. You go ahead and confess your sin freely.

Verse number 18. When you feel the emotional stress and your stomach aches and it feels like your heart is being twisted like a washcloth in grief.

[42 : 08] Words are like handles on the laundry basket of grief. Find the words and grasp your grief.

Categorize your suffering. Cry out to God. name your emotions. Share your sorrow with your brothers and sisters. Lament is the language of loss and we have all lost things.

Grasp your grief. Find the words and then give your grief to the God of all comfort.

These responses, finding your words, naming your emotions, sharing your sorrows, crying out to God, all of these mark the path towards healing.

Real healing. Healing. properly controlled and appropriately directed emotions. They temper our hearts against bitterness and against revenge and against malice and against permanent holiness.

[43 : 36] Grasp your grief and give it to God. God and know this that as you grasp your grief and give it to God your words are not like a 25 cent rubber ball bouncing off the walls and the ceilings.

Your words go to him. He hears you and your savior the Lord Jesus Christ carries everything everything everything that you give him.

Isaiah 53 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

He was pierced for our transgressions after all. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed.

It's okay to be angry at God and disappointed with what seems to be his lack of responsiveness to you. That is a very normal emotion in the psalms.

[45 : 09] That's okay. It is not okay to stay angry at God. It's not okay to remain disappointed in his response towards you.

So in addition to helping us find the words to grasp our grief, here is my hope for lamentations one. I hope that it softens our hearts and opens our eyes and tunes our ears and increases our patience for being with those who suffer.

listen to this quote from a brother named Chad Bird.

Mourning cannot be microwaved. I wish I would have thought of that line. Man, that's a good line.

The healing of the soul from grief, from shame, from loss, from despair, from the razored shards of broken dreams may take months, years, even decades, who knows how long, and almost all of the time, those wounds will leave scars as iconic reminders of dark days that cannot be un-lived.

When we sit with fellow sufferers and listen to them as they begin to grasp their grief, we have the privilege of modeling the grief-bearing, sorrow-carrying love of Jesus.

[47 : 01] So, friends, let's help others carry their sorrows to the foot of the cross because it's there that we find Jesus.

And he is sympathizing with our weaknesses. He is helping us in all of our brokenness. He is encouraging us in our fear. He is healing us from the wounds of others and forgiving us for the wounds that we have caused others.

Is Jesus your Savior? Or are you still bearing your own griefs and carrying your own sorrows? Aren't you weary?

Aren't you tired of carrying all of that around? Don't you feel that yoke of sin on your neck? Doesn't it chafe? Don't you want to be rid of that sin?

Come to Jesus. Believe in Jesus. Receive from Jesus forgiveness and grace and he will take your sin and carry it and bear it and remove it as far as the east is from the west.

[48 : 15] followers of Jesus grasp your grief and give it to God.

Don't be afraid to tell God exactly what you're feeling. Your emotions are not obnoxious to your heavenly father. Jesus is your grief bearing sorrow carrying Savior.

May the Holy Spirit help us to believe this truth and may he give us the courage to help others believe it as well. Let's pray. Oh good father we are so grateful for your word.

We're grateful even for this hard and difficult and dark chapter of Lamentations one. One. Because we see here grief poured out, sorrow expressed, emotions shared, suffering laid bare.

Help us change our minds, humble us so that we don't consider ourselves the comforter in this text, but rather the mourner, the lonely widow, the degraded princess, the abandoned wife, the mistreated woman.

[49 : 52] Help us to see ourselves in need of comfort. give us courage to grasp our grief and give it to you.

Father, as we take a few moments and prepare to receive the Lord's Supper, perhaps there are some among us who have held back in particular griefs and suffering and sorrow and shame and pain that they have carried for a long time.

Holy Spirit, would you soften hearts and give them the courage to express that right now to you.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you are not ashamed to call us your brothers and sisters.

How kind, how gracious. In spite of our sin and our weakness and our failure, you are not ashamed of us. Instead, we read in your words, Zephaniah 3:17, you sing over us and celebrate over us.

You are so delighted in your children. children. We are so grateful for the work of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ that brought us into this kind of a relationship with you.

[51 : 34] Would you please draw unbelieving sinners to yourself today who hear the preaching of your word? Would you please draw your people closer to you today as they have fresh courage to express to you their anger and their frustration and their complaint and cry out to you, dissatisfied with the brokenness of this world?

Would you please help us increase our capacity, dear Lord, for being with those who are grieving?

Help us not to rush. Help us not to be hasty.

Help us not to hurt one another with casual calloused comments. Instead, help us walk on the hot sidewalk of suffering even though it burns our feet because we know that it's so important for us to grasp hold of all this grief so it can be given to you.

Help us in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.