

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

December 29, 2016

Lamentations 1:1–2:22. Describing the funeral dirges over Jerusalem’s afflictions.

Romans 15:8–21. The innermost compenetration of the form/character of Christ/God in us.

Proverbs 30:1–33. Prayer to forgo the pernicious temptations of the rich and poor.

COMMENTS.

Lamentations 1:1–2:22. This reading contains the first two poems of Lamentations, funeral songs, over Jerusalem as she lays in ruins. The people of God have lost their city and their land. These songs demonstrate that the people accept that this disaster is God’s punishment. The first poem is in **1:1-22**, which describes Jerusalem’s agony like a desolate widow (**1:1-7**), as she is severely punished for her transgressions (**1:8-11**), and she cries out for sympathy (**1:12-22**). The second poem focuses on the fact that the Lord is against His own people (**2:1-9**) as it describes the agonies of famine (**2:10-13**), true and false prophets (**2:14-17**), and the horrendous famine conditions that included mothers eating their own children (**2:18-22**).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. In the midst of widespread unimaginable ruin and barbarity, Judah is urged to orient to *2nd person relationship with God by proper knowledge and proper love*. We see this in 2:19: ***“Pour out your heart like water Before the presence of the Lord; Lift up your hands to Him For the life of your little ones Who are faint because of hunger At the head of every street.”*** Regardless of what problems we face in life, there is no true solution apart from direct 2nd person connection with God. There is no grace, no power, no forgiveness, and no glory apart from this connection. The idea that the believer can receive grace or divine power or divine illumination by doing x, y, z, is a result of deistic thinking. Grace with its gifts of illumination, strength, forgiveness, is a result in being connected to the Fountain of Life and Grace, Jesus Christ. It is not a matter of building more and more and more faith or trying harder and harder to live the suprahuman life. The suprahuman life really is a supranatural life and the only place for anything supernatural in is in God Himself, and this God is fully manifested only in Jesus Christ. Moreover, the only way to rise higher than our own self-pity is to so identify with Christ that our identity in Him is stronger than any sense of self-identity as an individual, isolated person. Galatians 2:20 *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* When we think of ourselves, our history, our place in this world, our circumstances, our sinfulness, our righteousness, our future, our self-esteem, etc., when we reflect on ourselves in a very self-conscious manner, our place in Christ and His riches should be far more powerful than who and what we are in ourselves. Christ is our righteousness and future, and living in that reality by *2nd person knowledge and 2nd person love* for Jesus Christ fills a person with a hope and love that transcends everything else in life, including any personal or national devastation. Christ and Christ alone is the Supreme Explication, Revealer, and Source of Grace in the Being of God as such. In Christ, we really do conquer all things because of Him.

Romans 15:8–21. In the first thirteen verses of this chapter, Paul shows believers how to be imitators of Christ in dealing with each other. This is followed by Paul's concluding remarks regarding his travel plans.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Our chief goal in life should be to be imitators of Christ. This imitation is not to be viewed in terms of superficial mannerisms. Being an imitator of Christ is not a veneer. To become an imitator of Christ is to have the metaphysical Christ-form formed in you (Gal. 4:19). It means nothing less than our character shaped, molded, and transformed into and by the very character of God (Eph. 5:1). Our characters are to be stamped with the character of Christ. As I have noted in recent written commentaries and teaching at church, it was only until recently, to be candid, that I realized that some of my views regarding politics and government were more formed by conservative politicians (e.g., Spencerian, evolutionary-based capitalism) than Jesus Christ. I will not belabor the point or get into the weeds except to say that the power of Satan to blind even believers is truly astounding—in both the political right and political left. There are many confident Christians that have views that are not in accord with the Word of God and thus are antagonistic to Christ's. The most efficacious solution to this evil is to *walk with God by proper knowledge and proper love*, a life that always seeks the whole truth, total truth, on every issue, to value not *a* truth but the whole truth above all, knowing that that is where the Lord is. And where He is is always the locus of tranquility, peace, godliness, and true dignity: 1 Timothy 2:1 *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.* In fact, it is also the place of true righteousness: recall, for example, that Romans is all about living out God's righteousness and chapter 13 tells us how to live righteously with respect to government (obey, respect, and pay taxes to government, which is God's minister). If we really do not passionately desire to be like Christ, like God, in all things, then we are not on the right track. To be like Christ in our inner nature in thinking and attitudes regarding all things is our calling and ultimate destiny.

Proverbs 30:1–33. This reading contains the sayings of Agur. The **first nine verses** show that man must acknowledge his inability to understand the ways of God before he can accept the revelation of God. In verses **10-33** there is a sundry of teachings that include the fact that an eagle in the sky, a snake on a rock, and a ship on the sea all have in common that they move without leaving any tracks. In the same way, those committing adultery assume they can do so without leaving a trace of what they have done. The same holds true for those who think they can continue to reject the ways of God such as the mandate to give ourselves totally to Him: mind, body, and will (Rom. 12:1-2), to love our neighbors (Rom 13:8-10), and to assemble with fellow believers in the learning and encouraging each other in each of our paths in the Faith (Heb. 10:25).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Note the prayers in verses 7-9: *Two things I asked of Thee, Do not refuse me before I die: 8 Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, 9 Lest I be full and deny Thee and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be in*

want and steal, And profane the name of my God. Wealth always brings temptations of pride, which results in forgetting about or neglecting God and the things of God. Poverty brings temptations to steal (in some way or another) and thus blaspheme the name of God. Only by *walking with God by proper knowledge and proper love* can the believer avoid arrogance or crime because when one lives in the presence of the Lord, integrity is always in the forefront. One cannot forget God if he is living before the Lord. Likewise, one cannot be actively and consciously living in the presence of God and steal. As one walks with the Lord, he avoids a host of griefs that plague the rich (e.g., 1 Timothy 6:9-10 *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*) and the poor (cf., those who have even resorted to eating their own children as per the forgoing national famine described in Lamentations). Moreover, the one who walks with God sees that walk as its own reward and a treasure above all other treasures on this earth. Life with God brings the highest, the most supreme, the most transcendent delectation possible.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love,

Pastor Don