

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

By Ken Woodley

As the mid-August birdsong around us begins to thin with the first wings of migration south for the coming winter, it's worth noting that the Bible is full of music that never flies away. The book of Lamentations, for example, plays the blues.

*“How lonely sits the city
that once was full of people!
How like a widow she has become ...
She weeps bitterly in the night
with tears on her cheeks ...
Her pursuers have all overtaken her
in the midst of her distress ...
All her gates are desolate ...”*

“Lamentation” is defined as “the passionate expression of grief or sorrow.”

To lament something is to fall into the deep end of sadness and sink toward the bottom. Lamentation knows no shallow end. We are in over our heads.

There are times in our lives when we feel grief and sorrow with such passion that it nearly tears us apart inside. At such times it is wise to remember that it is not an act of faithlessness to feel and express such sorrow. The passionate expression of grief is not contrary to having faith in God.

Indeed, the act of lamentation may be considered an act of great faith.

The Bible is full of lamentations. The Book of Lamentations is far from the only chapter of pages where we will find them. There are as many psalms that cry out to God in despair as there are those which shout Hallelujah.

Playing the blues in our lives helps us feel and express our sorrow and, therefore, find a way to transcend the sadness.

Nor must we do so alone.

Another verse from Lamentations illustrates the point:

*“The thought of my affliction and my homelessness
is wormwood and gall!*

*My soul continually thinks of it
and is bowed down within me”*

But that soul—like our own—has not been abandoned by God.
The very next verse declares:

*“But this I call to mind,
and therefore have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they grow every morning;
great is their faithfulness.”*

And then the soul itself speaks:

*“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”*

The speaker then ends the lamentation with this consoling wisdom:

*“The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the Lord.”*

Embracing our moments of sorrow is an act of faithfulness because we may do so with the full knowledge that the love of God will get us through any journey of lamentation. That love is by our side.

The bottom line is that when we play our blues our blues cannot play us and God will keep us in tune. The melody will give us wings.