



**Keswick
Ministries**
HEARING BECOMING SERVING

Lamentations – The process of grieving

Rico Villanueva: Seminar 1

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This seminar is the first in a series of four. You can watch the seminars on your own or with your church, small group, or friends. The questions/reflections below may help you discuss and work through how to apply what you've learnt to your own life. Start the video and then pause it when suggested to look at the question(s).

WATCH THE VIDEO:

[Seminar 1:
https://tinyurl.com/2z8zrnmX](https://tinyurl.com/2z8zrnmX)



To watch the video, scan the QR code or go to @KeswickConvention on YouTube and search for Rico Villanueva

SEMINAR OUTLINE

What does it mean to lament? Why is it important to grieve? This seminar introduces us to the book of Lamentations and focuses on chapter 1 as it addresses these questions and helps us as we come to terms with personal and collective trauma.

QUESTIONS

Watch the video and pause it at 15:40 minutes

1. Why was the book of Lamentations written and how have the Jews used it? Look at 2 Kings 25:1-12.
2. How do Lamentations 3:55, Psalm 130:1 and Psalm 142:2 help us understand what it means to lament?

Restart video at 15:40 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/3ku6s5wf>) and pause it at 20:51 minutes.

3. Philippians 4:4 says, 'Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!' How do we reconcile this verse with our own need to grieve and the Bible's frequent examples of lament?

Restart video at 20:51 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/bdze7x2c>) and pause it at 27:22 minutes.

4. Think about the acrostic, personification, and poetry of Lamentations 1 and the reasons the poet included them. What strikes you most, what do you find most helpful/most challenging?
5. In Lamentations 1, how does Lady Zion demonstrate for us what grieving looks/feels like?
6. Lady Zion cries out to God (Lamentations 1:9, 11, 20). How does crying out to God make a difference to our experience of grief?

Restart the video at 27:22 (<https://tinyurl.com/cxh9rnpn>) and watch until the end.



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REFLECTION/PRAYER

- Discuss whether this quote reflects your church and, if so, what you can do to change the culture: ‘Something was seriously wrong with our church...we had no capacity for dealing with sadness. As I reflected on the way in which my church worshipped, its emphasis, its tone, its expectations, its expressed hopes, I suddenly understood clearly that there was no room in our liturgy and worship for sadness, brokenness and questioning’ (John Swinton).
- ‘People live on best after calamity, not by utterly repressing their grief and shock, but by facing it and measuring its dimensions’ (Hillers). Spend time facing and measuring the dimensions of your grief – tell God about it, talk it through with a friend, use a journal to record your thoughts.
- Read one of the books mentioned in the seminar – ‘It’s OK to not be OK’ by Rico Villanueva, ‘Raging with Compassion’ by John Swinton or ‘Letters and Papers from Prison’ by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
- Watch the Bible Project video which outlines the major themes in Lamentations (<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/lamentations>)



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HEARING BECOMING SERVING

Lamentations – Complaining against God

Rico Villanueva: Seminar 2

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This seminar is the second in a series of four. You can watch the seminars on your own or with your church, small group, or friends. The questions/reflections below may help you discuss and work through how to apply what you've learnt to your own life. Start the video and then pause it when suggested to look at the question(s).

WATCH THE VIDEO:

[Seminar 2:
https://tinyurl.com/3w2bjsym](https://tinyurl.com/3w2bjsym)



To watch the video, scan the QR code or go to @KeswickConvention on YouTube and search for Rico Villanueva

SEMINAR OUTLINE

Philippians 2:14 warns us, 'Do everything without grumbling or arguing'. So, is it ever OK to complain to God - to rail against injustice and cry out in our suffering? This seminar looks at passages from the Bible, particularly Lamentations 2, to show us that God allows our complaints. Indeed, biblical lament teaches us about ourselves, God and the role of the church.

QUESTIONS

Watch the video and pause it at 22:43 minutes

1. What are the accusations against God in Lamentations 2? How do you feel about speaking to God like this?

Restart video at 22:43 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/2ys2fvx8>) and pause it at 33:20 minutes.

2. What difference does it make to understand the Israelites' complaints against God in Lamentations 2 in the context of the relationship/intimacy they enjoyed with him?
3. What do the people's complaints against God in Lamentations 2 teach us about God?
4. How would you respond to someone who said, 'Jesus was silent in the face of suffering (Isaiah 53:7) so we shouldn't complain either, even about social injustice.'

Restart video at 33:20 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/bdfec3ab>) and watch until the end.

5. What do Jesus' words on the cross teach us about lament?
6. Think over what you have learnt this session. What do you think makes the Israelites complaint in the dessert wrong but Lady Zion's lament acceptable to God?





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Lamentations – Complaining against God

Rico Villanueva: Seminar 2

REFLECTION/PRAYER

- Kathleen O' Connor writes, 'The churches' unwillingness or incapacity to bring radical discontent, protest, and anger before God silences and denies reality. It teaches sheepishness, lying and cowardice.' Discuss with your small group or trusted friends how true this statement is in your church.
- 'Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn' (Romans 12:15). Lament with those in the group who are going through difficult times. Cry out to God with them.
- When was the last time you complained to God? Write down what was it about, how you felt and what you learnt.
- Today will you, 'pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord'? (Lamentations 2:19).





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HEARING BECOMING SERVING

Lamentations – The Tragic in the Life of Faith

Rico Villanueva: Seminar 3

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This seminar is the third in a series of four. You can watch the seminars on your own or with your church, small group, or friends. The questions/reflections below may help you discuss and work through how to apply what you've learnt to your own life. Start the video and then pause it when suggested to look at the question(s).

WATCH THE VIDEO:

[Seminar 3:
https://tinyurl.com/2pxypapy](https://tinyurl.com/2pxypapy)



To watch the video, scan the QR code or go to @KeswickConvention on YouTube and search for Rico Villanueva

SEMINAR OUTLINE

This seminar unpacks Lamentations 3, the context for those well-known verses, 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness' and examines what persistent faith looks like in the face of continued suffering.

QUESTIONS

Watch the video and pause it at 13:06 minutes

1. Why do our churches often tend toward 'comfortable triumphalism' (Belden Lane) and shy away from lament?

Restart video at 13:06 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/27bknr78>) and watch until 30:20 minutes.

2. In Lamentations 3, what turned the afflicted man's lament to praise? How does this help you praise in the midst of suffering?
3. What does the overall movement from lament to praise and then back to lament teach us about the life of faith?
4. What does Lamentations tell us about healing and restoration?
5. What does Lamentations 3 reveal to us about the people of God? Think particularly about their prayers at the end of the chapter.

Restart video at 30:20 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/3jvwu428>) and watch until the end.

6. What value does it add to your understanding of Lamentations 3:22-23 to know the context of the whole chapter?



Lamentations – The Tragic in the Life of Faith

Rico Villanueva: Seminar 3

REFLECTION/PRAYER

- As a group, think about the songs you sing in church, the content of your prayers and how you respond when one of you is suffering. How can you better embrace the contradictions we experience as believers who suffer yet hope, question yet trust in God.
- The experience of the afflicted man in Lamentations 3 qualified him as a teacher. Write down what you have learnt from the lives of faithful, suffering Christians.
- If you would like to explore this topic further, read one of the books mentioned in the seminar – ‘Stumbling towards Zion’ by David Smith or ‘Lamentations’ in the Asia Bible Commentary series by Rico Villanueva.
- Pray for yourself and those in your group, that you would have a faith that persists in the face of continued suffering.

Lamentations – Lamenting as a community of faith

Rico Villanueva: Seminar 4

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This seminar is the final one in a series of four. You can watch the seminars on your own or with your church, small group, or friends. The questions/reflections below may help you discuss and work through how to apply what you've learnt to your own life. Start the video and then pause it when suggested to look at the question(s).

WATCH THE VIDEO:

[Seminar 4:
https://tinyurl.com/48n65vvv](https://tinyurl.com/48n65vvv)



To watch the video, scan the QR code or go to @KeswickConvention on YouTube and search for Rico Villanueva

SEMINAR OUTLINE

This seminar explores Lamentation 5, the uncertain ending to the book, and the differences between individual and communal lament. It looks at how the church can become a community of lament and why this is important for believers and unbelievers alike.

QUESTIONS

Watch the video and pause it at 10:38 minutes

1. What are the particular features of communal laments and how do they point to our need for community?

Restart video at 10:38 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/bwvbt4hj>) and watch until 27:33 minutes.

2. When we hear about a tragedy happening to someone often our initial response is relief that it didn't happen to us. How would a community of lament respond differently? What lessons can we learn?
3. Look at Lamentations 5:19-22, what is the evidence that the Israelites had a robust faith?
4. How do you feel about the ending of Lamentations?
5. Is there a place for a sense of the tragic for Christians in light of the resurrection?

Restart video at 27:33 minutes (<https://tinyurl.com/2s3bska5>) and watch till the end, joining in with the reading of Lamentations 5.

6. Consider what you have learnt or been reminded of during these sessions on Lamentations. What are the key truths/challenges/comforts you will take away with you?

Lamentations – Lamenting as a community of faith

Rico Villanueva: Seminar 4

REFLECTION/PRAYER

- Are you projecting an image of 'joy and certainty in spite of conditions, in spite of adversity' (Martyn Lloyd Jones)? Why do you present yourself in this way? What do you think would happen if you admitted to feeling grief, uncertainty or sadness?
- As a group, pray through a communal lament Psalm such as Psalm 18, 44, 74, or 79. Use it to express your grief and complaints to God and your solidarity with the suffering of each person.
- If you would like to learn more about suffering from depression as a Christian, read, 'Lord, I'm depressed' by Rico Villanueva.
- Thank God for giving us the book of Lamentations. As Lady Zion, the poet and the people cry out to God while holding fast to their faith, they model for us what it means to lament. This book is, 'a lamp to our feet' (Psalm 119:105) in dark days.