



**LIKE  
HIM**  
A 90 DAY STUDY OF MARK

# Persevere Through Suffering

March 24-30, 2024

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## **90 DAY MEMORY STATEMENT**

**I am His child, deeply loved, totally forgiven, fully pleasing and complete in Christ.**

## **MAIN POINT**

God calls believers to adopt a posture of submissiveness in the midst of suffering, trusting that He loves us and is sovereignly working for our good.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Share a way, big or small, suffering has touched your life this week?  
How did you react?**

**Did your circumstances or your reaction to those circumstances reveal anything about the character of God? If so, what?**

During seasons of pain, we can be tempted to turn away from God in anger or despair. But these times are actually meant to have the opposite effect. When we lose everything else, we come to remember that Jesus is sufficient. Further, we begin to realize that even while we are suffering, God is showing love and mercy by working good into our souls. When the Lord is our portion, we can hope in Him even in the most painful places. Because we know He loves us, we can trust in and submit to His work in our hearts.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

**READ [LAMENTATIONS 3:19-24](#).**

**[Look at verse 21.](#)**

**Why did Jeremiah have to take an active role in calling to mind the character of God?**

**What specific characteristics of God are recalled in this passage?**

**Is it fair to say that suffering can be both just and unjust? What does that mean?**

**Which characteristics of God in this passage relate to that idea and how?**

**What is God's faithfulness NOT dependent upon? Why is that important to remember?**

This text teaches us that the only anchor for our suffering souls is the nature and character of God. God is good, but God's goodness does not always result in good things in our lives as we define goodness. It's in those moments, when our emotions might tell us lies, that we must intentionally call to mind the truth.

**What does it mean to have the Lord as your portion?**

**What are some of the other things in life you might look to other than God to be your portion?**

Even during the best days, we are tempted to look to other things to satisfy us. We might fool ourselves into believing that good things like family, friends, or a career are truly satisfying. The problem with all these things is that they're all vulnerable to the circumstances of life. Death and loss and pain affects us all, and when it does, it calls us to remember that only God is enough.

### **READ [LAMENTATIONS 3:25-32](#).**

**Why do you think the Lord is good to those who wait for Him?**

**What do we communicate about our faith when we are willing to wait for the Lord?**

**Have you ever had a season like that, where you could do nothing except wait for God? What was happening?**

**Read [Romans 8:28](#). How might knowing that God promises to work all things for the good of those who love Him help you maintain a posture of submissiveness in the midst of suffering?**

**What does a posture of submissiveness to God look like for you?**

**What makes submission hard for you?**

Waiting days are hard. So is submission. But if we remember the ultimate expression of God's love for us, the way He asked His Son to wait and suffer for us on the cross, we can trust that our own waiting and suffering is not without love, not without purpose and not without end. The cross reminds us that our pain is working good and that our pain can't last forever.

### **APPLICATION**

**What are you waiting and trusting God for right now?**

**How is He revealing His mercies during that time?**

**What is one example of God's faithfulness that you can think about this week to strengthen your soul?**

**What are some of the other ways that we can help each other suffer well and not forget the mercies of God?**

**Is there any part of your heart or life that isn't in submission to God?**

**What step can you take to assume a posture of submissiveness?**

### **PRAYER**

Thank God that He is faithful, and that His faithfulness is not dependent on ours. Thank Him for His love that works for our good through our pain. Pray that as we wait on Him and submit to Him, He will heal the hurts in our group and help us see the change He is working through them.

## COMMENTARY

### LAMENTATIONS 3:19-32

**3:19–20.** The sufferings were so deeply impressed in the heart of the victim that he found himself constantly thinking about them. His memory left him depressed and despondent. At the moment of his deepest despair and as he recalled his bitter affliction, a remarkable transition in his attitude took place. His hopelessness expressed in vv. 18–20 turned to hope as he remembered the Lord.

**3:22–24.** The unbroken mood of despair was displaced by a beautiful affirmation of hope in spite of suffering (cf. [Job 1:21](#); [Habakkuk 3:17–18](#); [Romans 5:3](#); [1 Peter 4:12–13](#)). The basis for renewed hope is God’s “great love.” The Hebrew word *hesed*, sometimes translated as “covenant love” or “loyal love,” is a word that has the basic meaning of loyalty or faithfulness, especially as related to the covenant initiated by God; the word involves obligations to family, friends, and the community. Another basis of hope is God’s unfailing “compassions” (from a word related to the womb, it describes the tender, caring love of a mother), which are experienced in a fresh and new way every day.

Verse 23 is the best known verse in Lamentations. In the midst of chaos and depression, the poet revealed a deep faith (vv. 22–24) in the trustworthiness of God: “Great is your faithfulness”. Contrary to the way neighboring peoples viewed their gods, the Jews now understood their God to be faithful to them, and there is no greater hope than knowing that God is totally reliable. God had always been faithful ([Exodus 34:6–7](#)), but the point here is that the people finally realized it. Often in life people do not realize the faithfulness of God until the “bottom has fallen out” of their lives. In Lam 3 the “faithfulness” of God is to be interpreted in light of his promise to destroy, which he has done, and his promise to restore, which he would do. The poet realized that restoration was on its way, both nationally and individually. In a metaphor made bold by such a context of judgment, he claimed God as his “portion”.

**3:25–27.** The Hebrew word “good” has a broad range of meaning: practical or material good, abstract goodness such as beauty, and moral good. This word is the same used in [Genesis 1:1–2:4](#), where the creation is described as being “good.” It may be understood here in the sense of God’s re-creating Israel after the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. the destruction of the world and the re-creation of it in [Genesis 6–9](#)). [Lamentations 3:25–27](#) reveals some qualities of genuine faith: (1) belief in God’s goodness to those who trust in him; (2) confidently and without complaint waiting for God’s help; and (3) willingness to accept hardship and testing, knowing that they strengthen faith.

**3:28–30.** Yoke bearing is profitable only if it is done in the right way—without complaint or retaliation. These verses describe practical ways that the yoke may be borne. Yoke bearers, who sometimes must bear their burdens alone ([Psalm 1:1](#); [Jeremiah 15:17](#)), do not complain when maligned or unjustly treated. They bear it patiently, for they know the Lord has allowed it (3:28). They are submissive; they bury their faces (lit. “mouth”) “in the dust” (an expression found only here in the OT). Falling prostrate on the ground was an ancient way of acknowledging complete submission to another person (3:29; cf. [Psalm 72:9](#); [Micah 7:17](#)). Yoke bearers accept physical abuse, even disgrace (3:30); for they know they will be vindicated and that “it is mine to avenge, ... says the Lord” (Rom 12:19). Submitting the cheek to the smiter was a symbol of total surrender ([Job 16:10](#); [Isaiah 50:6](#); [Micah 5:1](#); [Matthew 5:39](#); [26:67](#); [1 Peter 2:20–23](#)). There is a progressive severity in these verses: first, accepting the burden in silence (which is the easiest), then, burying the face in the dust but maintaining hope (which is more difficult), and finally, accepting physical abuse and disgrace for one’s

faith (which is the hardest of all to accept).

**3:31-32.** These verses give the reasons that make it possible to accept life's trials and tribulations in quiet confidence. Affliction can be borne more easily when one knows that rejection and alienation from God, as well as suffering, do not last indefinitely since they are not God's ultimate purpose for his people (cf. [Job 5:18](#); [Psalm 30:5](#); [77:8](#); [Isaiah 54:8](#); [Jeremiah 3:5](#), [12](#); [32:42](#); [Hosea 6:1](#)). Further, there is confidence that the trials will be replaced by God's compassion because of the abundance of his "unfailing love". There also is understanding that God does not "willingly" (lit. "from his heart") bring affliction (but God chastises us "for the sake of," "to promote" our spiritual well-being; [Psalm 119:75](#); [Acts 14:22](#); [Romans 8:18](#); [2 Corinthians 4:17](#); [Hebrews 12:6](#)).