

## “MERCIES NEW EVERY MORNING”

### I. Lamentations 3:19-26

A. 2012 was a very tough year for a lot of people, perhaps for you personally...

- 1) The loss of loved ones, relatives and friends...
- 2) Storms, disasters, tragedies... Troubles, trials, and painful ordeals...

B. Lamentations was likely written by the prophet, Jeremiah...

- 1) Like Job, I've never heard anyone refer to it as their favorite book...
- 2) It's a book of 5 poems, written between Judah's fall to Babylon in 586 B.C and their restoration in 538 B.C. (It's painfully sobering.) *Talk about the Judah Blues!*
- 3) Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet. Also a priest, he suffered terribly. God forbade him from marrying; with the exception of Josiah, the kings hated him, the prophets likewise; he was despised by the people, even by his own family; he was an outcast; his messages were rejected; he was poor and deprived; was imprisoned; was thrown into a cistern of mud; he was exiled and most likely stoned to death in Egypt.
- 4) Thankfully God sees success in different terms than we do... Jeremiah was devoted and faithful, bold and courageous, obedient to his God for 40 tough years... 5) I believe his rewards have been and will be great... Psalm 30:5b KJV...

C. Lamentations 3:19-26 is encouragement for us in this emergent year... It conveys a message of hope, of God's unending love, of mercies new every morning, of God's faithfulness, of a God worth seeking, of a God worth waiting upon...

- 1) Having hope is ever appropriate for God's people, no matter how bleak things are or how ominous things are on the horizon... (Hope is ever our anchor!)
- 2) No matter how you feel about yourself and no matter how others perceive you, you are loved by God--nothing and no one can change that... Rom. 8:33-39.
- 3) The ultimate manifestation of God's mercy was demonstrated by Jesus on the cross, dying for our sins. His atoning sacrifice and forgiveness could never be earned. Our faith is not rooted in what we do for God but what He has accomplished for us; it is not a faith of "*doing*" but a faith of "*done!*" (Let's not begin 2013 by saying: "*What shall we accomplish for God this year?*" Let's begin the new year, and every day of it, by saying, "*Oh my-look what God has accomplished for me thru Christ my Lord!*")
- 4) No matter what prayers God says yes to or no to, He is ever faithful. In good days and bad days, happy times and sad times, when your heart is celebrating or when it's in mourning, thru the wormwood & gall, God is faithful--period!
- 5) Our God is therefore worth seeking and worth our quiet waiting...

### II. Communion

A. So we begin our new year with the Bread and the Cup...

- 1) Before it really gets started, we proclaim Jesus' words, "*It is finished!*"
- 2) Before we set goals or try to accomplish them: "*It is finished!*"
- 3) The Bread and the Cup declare: "*It is finished!*"

B. Story: *You Have An "A"* (By Steve Brown as told by Tullian Tchividjian)

C. Pray & Serve Communion...

PSB's Follow Up Letter to *The Beacon*:

[http://www.buckeyelakebeacon.net/news/2013-01-05/Editorials\\_%28and%29\\_Letters/Baby\\_Jesus\\_is\\_returned.html](http://www.buckeyelakebeacon.net/news/2013-01-05/Editorials_%28and%29_Letters/Baby_Jesus_is_returned.html)

### Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

#### Lamentations 3:19-26 (ESV)

19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! 20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. 21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: 22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." 25 The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

#### Psalms 30:5b (KJV)

5b ...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

#### Romans 8:33-39 (NIV)

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is

also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: *"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."* 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### Quote by Leonard Ravenhill

"Just three words - IT IS FINISHED. The greatest words ever uttered by the greatest Man that ever lived."

#### You Have An "A"

By Tullian Tchividjian

<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tullian/2011/04/19/you-have-an-a/>

My friend Steve Brown tells a story about a time his daughter Robin found herself in a very difficult English Literature course that she desperately wanted to get out of.

She sat there on her first day and thought, "If I don't transfer out of this class, I'm going to fail. The other people in this class are much smarter than me. I can't do this." She came home and with tears in her eyes begged her dad to help her get out of the class so she could take a regular English course. Steve said, "Of course."

So the next day he took her down to the school and went to the head of the English department, who was a Jewish woman and a great teacher. Steve remembers the event in these words:

She (the head of the English department) looked up and saw me standing there by my daughter and could tell that Robin was about to cry. There were some students standing around and, because the teacher didn't want Robin to be embarrassed, she dismissed the students saying, "I want to talk to these people alone." As soon as the students left and the door was closed, Robin began to cry. I said, "I'm here to get my daughter out of that English class. It's too difficult for her. The problem with my daughter is that she's too conscientious. So, can you put her into a regular English class?" The teacher said, "Mr. Brown, I understand." Then she looked at Robin and said, "Can I talk to Robin for a minute?" I said, "Sure." She said, "Robin, I know how you feel. What if I promised you and A no matter what you did in the class? If I gave you an A before you even started, would you be willing to take the class?" My daughter is not dumb! She started sniffing and said, "Well, I think I could do that." The teacher said, "I'm going to give you and A in the class. You already have an A, so you can go to class."

Later the teacher explained to Steve what she had done. She explained how she took away the threat of a bad grade so that Robin could learn English. Robin ended up making straight A's on her own in that class.

That's how God deals with us. Because we are, right now, under the completely sufficient imputed righteousness of Christ, Christians already have an A. The threat of failure, judgment, and condemnation has been removed. We're in-forever! Nothing we do will make our grade better and nothing we do will make our grade worse. We've been set free.

Knowing that God's love for you and approval of you will never be determined by your performance for Jesus but Jesus' performance for you will actually make you perform more and better, not less and worse. In other words, grace mobilizes performance; performance does not mobilize grace.

If you don't believe me, ask Robin!

- William Graham Tullian Tchividjian (pronounced cha-vi-jin) is the Senior Pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. A Florida native, Tullian is also the grandson of Billy and Ruth Graham, a visiting professor of theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, and a contributing editor to Leadership Journal.

#### Some Great Videos

As We Gather/The Steadfast Love of the Lord by Susan Yu

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKcrIPMhRRY>

Wartime Lifestyle by John Piper

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5H7fopQFPfg>

"It Is Finished" by Matt Papa (Scenes from The Passion)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lb\\_HbAMRbeE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lb_HbAMRbeE)

Imputed Righteousness by Sinclair Ferguson

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE36nrviA4s>

Justification and Imputed Righteousness by R.C. Sproul

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lapqqQ45Q4w>

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" by Chris Rice

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k1WhFtVp0o>

"It Is Finished" Sermon Podcast by the Late Leonard Ravenhill

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/playpopup.asp?SID=112507133464>

## **Bonus Stuff**

### **Texas Policeman Gives Ticket and \$100 to Needy Driver**

From Religion [Today-Crosswalk.com](http://Today-Crosswalk.com) 12-21-12

A police officer in Texas -- who wants to remain anonymous -- is gaining attention after he gave a man a \$100 bill folded in a citation, Fox News [reports](#). When Hayden Carlo, 25, was pulled over by Plano police because he had an expired registration, he said he told the police officer he was struggling financially. "I don't have the money," he told the officer. "It was either feed my kids or get this registration done." The officer then handed him a citation, but when Carlo opened the paper, he saw a \$100 bill. Carlo said he "broke down" in his car -- "What else can you do?" -- and was able to update both his and his wife's registrations with the money. The charitable act would have gone unnoticed, except Carlo's grandfather was moved to contact the police department about the gesture. The officer does not want to be identified, but a department spokesman said he is 43 and has a family. He apparently has a past of doing good deeds at his old post at another police department, and his coworkers are reportedly planning on honoring him for his generosity.

### **Justification & Sanctification**

By Jerry Bridges

During the long years of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, a Russian air force pilot flew his fighter plane from a base in Russia to an American air force base in Japan and asked for asylum. He was flown to the United States where he was duly debriefed, given a new identity, and set up as a bona fide resident of the United States. In due time he became an American citizen.

The Russian pilot's experience illustrates to some degree what happened to us when we died to sin and were made alive to God. He changed kingdoms; he was given a new identity and a new status. He was no longer a Russian; he was now an American. He was no longer under the rule of what was then an oppressive and totalitarian government. Now he was free to experience all of the advantages and resources of living in a free and prosperous country.

This former Russian pilot, however, was still the same person. He had the same personality, the same habits, and the same cultural patterns as he did before he flew out of Russia. But he did have a new identity and a new status. As a result of his new identity and status as a citizen in a free country, he now had the opportunity to grow as a free person, to discard the mind-set of someone living under bondage, and to put off the habit patterns of a person living under the heel of a despotic regime. Furthermore, as a benefactor of our government's intelligence establishment, he was furnished all the resources needed to make a successful transition to an American citizen.

In effect, this Russian pilot "died" to his old identity as a Russian citizen and was "made alive" in a new identity as an American citizen. As an American, all the resources of our government were at his disposal to become in fact what he had become in status. But this could not have happened without first changing his status.

**When we as believers died to sin, we died to a status wherein we were under bondage to the tyrannical reign of sin. At the same time we were granted citizenship in the Kingdom of God and, through our vital union with Jesus Christ, were furnished all the resources we need to become in fact what we have become in status. We have been given all we need to bring the imperative—"do not let sin reign in your mortal body"—into line with the indicative—"we died to sin." But this could not have happened without a change in our status. And it is through our legal union with Christ in His death and resurrection that our status has been forever changed.**

**We must count on this and believe it. We must by faith in God's Word lay hold on the fact that we have died to the reign of sin and are now alive to God, under His reign of grace. Unless we do this we will find ourselves seeking to pursue holiness by the strength of our own wills, not by the grace of God.**

**- Jerry Bridges, The Discipline of Grace: God's Rule and Our Rule in the Pursuit of Holiness.**