***Lamentations 1:12-22 “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see If there is any sorrow like my sorrow, Which has been brought on me, Which the Lord has inflicted
In the day of His fierce anger. 13“From above He has sent fire into my bones, And it overpowered them; He has spread a net for my feet And turned me back; He has made me desolate And faint all the day. 14“The yoke of my transgressions was bound; They were woven together by His hands, And thrust upon my neck. He made my strength fail; The Lord delivered me into the hands of those whom I am not able to withstand. 15“The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst; He has called an assembly against me
To crush my young men; The Lord trampled as in a winepress The virgin daughter of Judah.***

***16“For these things I weep; My eye, my eye overflows with water; Because the comforter, who should restore my life, Is far from me. My children are desolate Because the enemy prevailed.”***

***17Zion spreads out her hands, But no one comforts her; The Lord has commanded concerning Jacob That those around him become his adversaries; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them. 18“The Lord is righteous, For I rebelled against His commandment. Hear now, all peoples, And behold my sorrow; My virgins and my young men
Have gone into captivity. 19“I called for my lovers, But they deceived me; My priests and my elders Breathed their last in the city, While they sought food To restore their life. 20“See, O Lord, that I am in distress; My soul is troubled; My heart is overturned within me, For I have been very rebellious. Outside the sword bereaves, At home it is like death. 21“They have heard that I sigh, But no one comforts me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble; They are glad that You have done it. Bring on the day You have announced, That they may become like me. 22“Let all their wickedness come before You, And do to them as You have done to me
For all my transgressions; For my sighs are many, And my heart is faint.”***

We continue in Lamentations 1 tonight. Last week, we saw Jerusalem as a widow, sitting in the dirt, mourning her situation. She has been betrayed by all that she called friends. She has been afflicted, but we need not guess who did the afflicting because Lamentations tells us that it is the Lord that afflicted. He afflicted because of her great transgressions, her idolatrous ways, her adulterous patterns. God sent prophet after prophet with warnings of the judgement to come, but all warnings were ignored. People don’t change. We are warned and warned and still we do what is wicked, then we sit in the dirt and lament our situation, asking God why He allowed this. A disobedient and undisciplined child will grow into a disobedient and undisciplined adult, believing all that matters is his appetite and comfort. An undisciplined nation will grow much the same.

 Starting our verses - Verse 12*“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see If there is any sorrow like my sorrow, Which has been brought on me, Which the Lord has inflicted In the day of His fierce anger.* We are still hearing this verse as if we are hearing it from a woman in travail and misery. Picture her calling from beside the road, calling out for compassion on her situation. She’s telling of a sorrow unlike any normal sorrow, a fall from greatness unlike any fall before. In God’s perfect Providence, He has chastised perfectly. God is giving all nations through history the opportunity to learn by the calamities that came upon Judah. Mature believers do not provoke God to anger and wrath. He will not overlook our sin. We serve a perfectly just God. If He overlooks our sin, He must overlook all sin. Too often we want God’s wink and nod for us and His fierce wrath for others.

 Verses 13-16 “*From above He has sent fire into my bones, And it overpowered them; He has spread a net for my feet And turned me back; He has made me desolate And faint all the day. 14“The yoke of my transgressions was bound; They were woven together by His hands, And thrust upon my neck. He made my strength fail; The Lord delivered me into the hands of those whom I am not able to withstand. 15“The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst; He has called an assembly against me To crush my young men; The Lord trampled as in a winepress The virgin daughter of Judah. 16“For these things I weep; My eye, my eye overflows with water; Because the comforter, who should restore my life, Is far from me. My children are desolate Because the enemy prevailed.”* ***From*** *above He has sent fire into my bones, And it overpowered them* – the Prophet uses fire in the bones to describe the calamities.  *He has spread a net for my feet And turned me back; He has made me desolate And faint all the day –* God has tangled Jerusalem in misery. With no way out, the nation struggles until it is faint and only becomes more entangled. The nation will have to come to the realization that only God can set His people free. *“The yoke of my transgressions was bound; They were woven together by His hands* – The sin of the nation has become a heavy yoke of affliction. Sin is always a heavy yoke. Jesus tells us to take His yoke upon us. We won’t rest until we do. *And thrust upon my neck. –* God weaves His judgements together into an unbreakable net of twisted cords. Storms, fires, floods, earthquakes, famine, wars – God’s judgements come from multiple directions. One things doesn’t stop before the next starts. True then, true now. *He made my strength fail; The Lord delivered me into the hands of those whom I am not able to withstand. The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst –* All the Mighty Men of Judah are overcome, the military could not stand and have been trampled underfoot. Notice though that **the Lord** delivered Jerusalem into the hands of the conqueror. *He has called an assembly against me To crush my young men –* God has called an assembly of the Chaldeans and the Babylonians to lay ruin to the city and carry the Children of Israel away captive. *The Lord trampled as in a winepress The virgin daughter of Judah. –* The blood of the people flows in the streets of the city as wine flowing from a winepress. Even the most innocent among them are not spared. *For these things I weep My eye, my eye overflows with water; Because the comforter, who should restore my life, Is far from me.* The prophet weeps, for the calamities he sees, the afflictions he witnesses, the sins he knows the nation has committed. He weeps because he knows the nation is in distress and it is a distress of its own making. Jerusalem brought this upon herself. God, the Comforter, has withdrawn His hand. The Hebrew has the idea of God standing at a distance and looking on in displeasure. *My children are desolate Because the enemy prevailed. –* The true enemy, sin, has brought desolation and separation from God. God has withdrawn His blessing and there is not a more desolate place to be than outside the blessings of God.

 Verse 17 *Zion spreads out her hands, But no one comforts her; The Lord has commanded concerning Jacob That those around him become his adversaries; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them. Zion spreads out her hands* – Zion spreads out her hands in a plea for relief. *But no one comforts her* – None can comfort her, and worse yet, none really care enough to try. *The Lord has commanded concerning Jacob That those around him become his adversaries; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them. –* God raised up nations as tools of judgement against Jacob, another name for Israel. She has become vile among her neighbors.

*Verse 18-19**“The Lord is righteous, For I rebelled against His commandment. Hear now, all peoples, And behold my sorrow; My virgins and my young men Have gone into captivity. 19“I called for my lovers, But they deceived me; My priests and my elders Breathed their last in the city, While they sought food To restore their life.* ***The****Lord is righteous, For I rebelled against His commandment –* God is perfectly just. The prophet sees that the judgement is just and he can make no accusations against God. Likewise, just as the prodigal son, we must come to ourselves and own our sin. No punishment comes undeserved upon us. *Hear now, all peoples, And behold my sorrow; My virgins and my young men Have gone into captivity. –* 2 Chronicles 36:17 *says Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand.* The enemy showed no compassion for anyone. *“I called for my lovers, But they deceived me –* The Egyptians and other nations Judah committed adultery with during her times of prosperity and blessings, had promised to defend her. In the day of adversity, they deserted her. Better to place our trust and find our friendship in God, Who never fails, never leaves us nor forsakes us. He does not deceive. *My priests and my elders Breathed their last in the city, While they sought food To restore their life. –* The famine killed the honorable as well as the dishonorable. Famine is no respecter of the status of man.

*Verse 20**“See, O Lord, that I am in distress; My soul is troubled; My heart is overturned within me, For I have been very rebellious. Outside the sword bereaves, At home it is like death.*

***See,*** *O Lord, that I am in distress; My soul is troubled; My heart is overturned within me, For I have been very rebellious. –* Now the prophet calls to the Lord, knowing as we know, that God sees our distresses and knows our hearts. Repentance brings restoration of relationship, but does not erase the consequences of our sin. *Outside the sword bereaves, At home it is like death. –* Moses, in Deuteronomy 32:25 says *The sword shall destroy outside; There shall be terror within
For the young man and virgin, The nursing child with the man of gray hairs.* Thus Moses warnings to the children of Israel are realized. God warned early that idolatry and rebelliousness would lead to judgement, but they would not hear. Just as He warns today and we refuse to hear.

*Verses 21-22“They have heard that I sigh, But no one comforts me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble; They are glad that You have done it. Bring on the day You have announced, That they may become like me. 22“Let all their wickedness come before You, And do to them as You have done to me For all my transgressions; For my sighs are many, And my heart is faint.”* ***They*** *have heard that I sigh But no one comforts me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble* – Those that sinned gleefully with Judah in the good times now ignore the sighs in the bad times. They know, but they don’t care. Too often, when the times are good, friends abound. It’s when the times turn dark that the true friend becomes apparent… and often, it is not the one we would have expected. It’s sad to say, but often people and nations don’t seek God until times of distress. If God wants relationship and we only have that relationship in times of trouble, is it any wonder that trouble is our companion most of our days? *They are glad that You have done it. Bring on the day You have announced, That they may become like me.* Some nations are even glad of the calamities. Not all that smile in our face are rooting for our success. Now, the prophet asks God to look upon the Babylonians and the false friends and execute His judgement upon them. There is Hope that God will deliver Israel and judge those that have turned against her. *“Let all their wickedness come before You, And do to them as You have done to me For all my transgressions; For my sighs are many, And my heart is faint.”* We see a Hope here that God will call the enemies of Israel to answer and account for their sins. We know that He did indeed call them to account and punished them accordingly. Edom is no more. The Chaldeans are no more. The Assyrians are no more. The Babylonians are no more. God stands against those that stand against Israel… then, and now. He is God. He changes not.

Tonight, we’ve been given a glimmer of Hope. Jeremiah knows that God is a God of Mercy and Forgiveness. His anger will not burn forever. When we turn from our disobedience and rebelliousness, God is quick to forgive. He doesn’t want afflictions and calamities in our lives. He longs to bless and love. We are the ones that block the blessings. It was true of Israel. It is true of the United States. It is true in our personal lives. Repentance and submission open the door to blessing.