

Computer Generated Transcript - We're going to be continuing on in our series just about life this morning and we've got two more weeks this week and then the next next week will be our last one and when we started this series when I when I was putting it all together when we were first getting it all figured out John are you going to record this thing so thanks buddy our normal videographer isn't here this morning so. When you when this turns on are going to be just a few seconds behind on the video if you're watching online. John isn't usually doing this but he's he's covering for us today but. We when I first started this message or this series there were only two messages that I really knew I was going to preach there was only two of them that I just absolutely knew were going to fit into there which is really unlike me when I prepare I'm usually five six months out on the preaching calendar starting to get stuff out there but when we started this one there were only two and it was this one today and it's the one next week all right these are the only two that I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt were going to be in this series when when we got started because when we talk about life I mean these are just two things to me that just crashed down around us all of the time and so today I want to talk a little bit about where's God in the bad times. I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand if you've ever had a hard time in life because that's a ridiculous question right I mean we've all had something hard happen we've all had something come up in life where we didn't understand where we didn't we didn't know why we were going through it maybe it brought us to a point where we questioned our faith or question God maybe maybe it strengthened our faith and we were able to go through those things that way with God But but regardless of an absolute fact of life is that difficult times will come it is an absolute fact there will be something in your life that will happen if it hasn't already which I'm sure it already has where you were like Man when I was a kid I didn't dream about this day. And something difficult will come along and we will have to walk through that we will have to wade through that that situation and we will ask those questions how can this be where's God what's the point of this what's the purpose you know and I want to just talk about that today I want to talk some ways about what the Bible says about that most of us have probably heard the verse that I'm just going to read the back part of this Deuteronomy Chapter thirty one six you can flip over there if you want to see it but what's happening is the nation of Israel is just getting ready to go into Canaan and to take what's theirs to take what has been promised is called the Promised Land something that they've been looking forward at for hundreds literally hundreds of years they're getting ready to go and God speaks to Joshua I will never leave you or for sake you God is saying I'm going to be with you no matter what happens in all of this all right I am not going to first say que he doesn't say that everything is going to go easy right nowhere in there does God be like yeah you're going to go in there and everyone is going to give you their stuff and everything is going to be awesome that everything is just this is this couldn't be a simpler task. God never promises that God looks at them and says I'm going to be with you and I'm not going to abandon you in those times all right most of us will probably never know what it's like to look across the battle line you know with a sort of a shield in hand some of you have looked across battle lines and I'm not trying to downplay that at all but most of us will never know what it's like to not have a home to be a people that's been living in tents and you're going to go fight for a home that used to be yours where there's stored and shield. But we're probably not going to experience that kind of a thing but in that came so many questions and so many issues for Israel and they go in and God promised so I will never. Leave you in for say Q So you might not be able to imagine fighting for a homeland like that but what you probably can imagine is walking into a situation that seems totally beyond you. Walking into a situation where you look out and you're like I really don't have an answer for this. I really don't know how I'm going to get through this I really don't understand why this is happening and I can't see the ending. So what's the next step most of us either can relate to that we've been or might even be in that right now and so I want to ask you a question. What what do you most likely hear from one Christian to another right if somebody if some Christian were going through the worst thing they've ever had happen to them in their life right the absolute worst experience of their life and they are the words My God my God why have you forsaken me what do you think one Christian would say to another Christian who utters those words literally asking for

responses he'll never forsake you you bet he's not given the chance you bet TELL ME MORE. And then we'd start quoting scripture most of us write. And we quote what kind of scriptures God is in control keep the faith know that the testing of your faith produces patience I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength which is totally out of context and we use it that way right most of us would quote something either really happy. From scripture which is OK or most of us would quote you know a verse like that maybe maybe you would hear Have any of you ever heard this right well. God only gives the strongest battles to his strongest followers so this is a compliment to you by God we chalk hole because most of us have heard it that is not scripture that is nowhere in the Bible nowhere I would love if it is please show me because it's not there maybe you heard this one even to write God will never give you more than you can handle So clearly this isn't too big for you. It sounds kind of nice but again you have to take scripture and make it say something that it's not saying at all with that verse to apply it right there God never says he won't give you more than you can handle Can I just eliminate that for again for like the millionth time. God never says in Scripture he won't give you more than you can handle it's not in scripture at all what they're doing is they're taking something that Paul said right and what he actually says is God won't allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear right he's saying that God won't give you let a temptation come that's too much for you when you trust in Him It actually says he'll provide an escape it doesn't even say you'll be able to stand in the way of temptation it says if you look to God you'll be able to run away from the temptation that's in your life and we somehow take that verse and make it seem like that means nothing on this earth should happen that we can't handle or else we're really not trusting in God the way we're supposed to and can I tell you that is an entirely damaging thought to give to somebody in the midst of a struggle because things happen that are bigger than you and I can bear all the time. Try and talk to a grieving mother who just lost her child and say you know what there's nothing how that can happen that's too big for you God won't give you anything more than you can take. Is that not completely ridiculous and I know we mean good I mean I know I know that we mean to help with those kind of things you're talking to somebody who's literally dying and the doctor said there's nothing else I can do this cancer is going to win and you go in and you're like oh don't worry God won't give you anything you can't handle We don't know what to say so we say something that we've heard often enough that we think it's true but can I tell you that that is not not the way to deal with some of this stuff and that verse and particularly while it is an amazing verse I rest on that verse all the time when it comes to temptation it is not about handling things in life things happen that are bigger than us all the time nothing can happen that's too big for God in us if you understand what I'm saying God Plus you equals big enough. But it doesn't make that any easier. And it certainly doesn't mean that what you're going through. You can just handle on your own so I don't want to be the type of person. That gives those kind of advice is the things my God my God why have you forsaken me most of you have heard that verse before not all of you probably but most of you probably heard that word you know that from what's what's. The crucifixion of Jesus Jesus on the cross he's hanging on the cross time is almost up he's about ready to enter heaven and he says My God my God why have you for seeking me. Do you think that somebody walking up to Jesus and patting him on the feet and that they would be like Don't worry God will give you more than you can handle. It would be helpful and the bible scholars out there know where this actually came from my God my God why have you forsaken me once you turn to Psalms chapter twenty two Psalms chapter twenty two. Jesus didn't make this up Jesus was quoting scripture when he is on the cross hanging breathing some of his last breaths Jesus quotes Psalm chapter twenty two verse one Psalm chapter twenty two verse one somebody read it out loud. Pretty simple right my God my God why have you for say to me this is a Psalm of David who was Jesus's ancestor OK Jesus came out of that line my God my God why have you forsaken me David writes this song and this is a song that's called a love meant OK this is a song when they call them the lament Psalms these are the songs that people saying to God when the world was crashing down around them if Jesus felt comfortable praying a lament to God when he was on the cross in what would have been the worst day on earth wearing flesh that he had ever experienced maybe we can take a cue from that. Maybe what we should really

do when we're looking at these kind of things and we're saying wow life is really hard and we don't know what to say maybe we should look at some of the Psalms and not the super happy ones if you go through and you read through Psalm chapter twenty two this is a lament this is this is David pouring out his heart saying this is gigantic all of this stuff is a raid against me and I don't know where to go now we're going to go through the what most of the laments look like here in just a few moments but what I want you to understand is in his darkest hour Jesus didn't quote This Psalm to make it messianic right which is a Bible the way of saying to make it something that prophesied Jesus OK Jesus didn't be like you know what there's not enough messianic Psalm So maybe on the cross I'll just quote one more so it can be messianic in about me. That's not what Jesus did Jesus didn't do this just to model prayer this song reflected what was in the heart of Jesus on the cross My God my God why have you forsaken me and so he quoted that portion of Scripture and yet many of us would field Hilti almost for saying that to God in the middle of a trial. Because somehow we've been conditioned along the way that to ask that question of God would be a lack of faith. And what I want you to hear this morning is if Jesus did that it's probably OK for you to understand so OK to model Jesus it's a pretty good example lament Psalms these laments are the most common type of Psalm in the Bible. Over forty percent of the Psalms are laments over forty percent of the songs are those Psalms that are like God I don't know what to do now that means over sixty of the one hundred fifty songs that are in the Bible are laments the most common type of Psalm there is if God is afraid of those kind of questions God I don't know what to do now God where are you in the middle of this why would there be so many laments in the Bible. If God was afraid of us being honest with him and saying I am totally overwhelmed and don't know what to do right now why would he inspired over forty percent of the Psalms to be this kind of a thing. I think God knew exactly what we would need God knew that life was going to get incredibly difficult from time to time and we would need something to reflect our heart to his and he gave us laments but they're not super flashy and they don't always make us feel good so most of us probably don't have a single lament memorize we have Psalm twenty three memorize but not Psalm twenty two right that's kind of how it works because most days Psalm twenty three sounds a lot better God you're always with me you lay me down and green pastures. I will never be afraid. But many times we need some chapter twenty two because that more accurately reflects what's actually in our heart and it's so important I want you to turn to Psalm thirteen and I've been talking about Psalm twenty two but Psalm thirteen is going to be really easy for us to go through because it's only six verses. And you actually see the pattern of most of the little manse in Scripture right in these six verses All right this is another lament of David this is David saying Life is tough right now and you will hear this echo through at the beginning of this David writes this song. And and he goes through and we'll see the pattern there's a pattern to the laments that I think is very important for us as we begin to pour out our heart in this way oh I'm Chapter thirteen I'm going to read the whole thing six verses OK Oh Lord how long will you forget me forever. How long will you look the other way how long must I struggle with anguish in my soul with sorrow in my heart every day how long will my enemies have the upper hand this is why we don't memorize most of these. OK because we only get that far like the past. Verse three. Turn and answer me Oh Lord my God restore the sparkle to my eyes or I will die. I don't want don't let my enemies gloat saying we have defeated him don't let them rejoice at my downfall but I trust in your unfailing love I will rejoice because you have rescued me I will sing to the Lord because He is good to me I want you to understand I chose this psalm specifically because it's only six verses all right there are many Psalms including Psalm chapter twenty two that we just talked about that follow the same pattern but they are much longer All right but I grabbed this one specifically because it was short so we could look at it releases singly and talk about it this is the pattern of the songs I want you to know that even though David goes from God How in the world is this happening to I will sing to the Lord in six verses that doesn't mean he had multiple personality disorder OK it's not like everything just worked itself out in six verses either this is the picture of a man with the correct view toward suffering on Earth. And we see it laid out Sosa's simply in these six verses and I want you to hear it if you're a note taker Here's the five points of like ninety five percent of laments OK there's

five things that almost every lament has and common and this is how I truly believe like what John was talking about earlier when life is tough and we go to God and we speak to God and we cast our heart on him because we don't know what to do We don't know where to go I believe if we can get these five things in our heart it won't make the situation any easier but it will change our viewpoint in it and that will be better. Five things from these elements number one call to God Many of us when life gets hard make a lots of calls. But we don't start with the most important one. Call to God You can see it right at the beginning David opens up with Lord. Gotoh on who actually can make the biggest difference. Number two there is a complaint. In almost every lament Will you forgive me forever. Right first one you call on God and they complain to him. Sounds weird to say that in church doesn't it. Complaining that that's not what I'm supposed to do wonderful staff faith I'm supposed to get through all of these things that's that's not that's not how I was taught I agree. I wasn't taught that way either. I was taught and I grew up in a church where if you it wasn't a word it was an Assemblies of God church but it was very much like a word faith thing like you weren't allowed to say things that were negative out loud because that would speak them into existence. Right so if your arm was broken you weren't allowed to say out loud my arms broke because then your arm would be broke you had to somehow say no my arm is not broke with enough faith and then every time somehow it would fix itself and not be broke I don't even know where to start. My arm isn't broke because I said it out loud it broke because I fell off the swing and broke both bones right that's that's what broke my arm that's what gave me a second elbow you know not not saying it out loud but we were allowed to complain to God we weren't even allowed to say bad things right like if we weren't allowed to edm it that they were thing because somehow that meant our faith wasn't where it was supposed to be and can I tell you if that's true no one in the Bible operated that way. Like we we now know more then every person that we look to in the Bible who taught us to pray who taught us how to do life and taught us how to do all those things because you don't see anybody in Scripture operate that way even closely. People just talk to God about exactly what's going on read the soul most. That's what they are it's people just telling God what it is look at Jesus on the cross he's not like yeah god this is OK. We'll be fine. He says My God my God why have you forsaken me. It is oh OK to take your complaint to God the one who can do something about it that's all right and if you feel like I'm being heretical right now I just want you to read the Psalms and then come and talk to me OK then we'll talk about it. This is a pattern we see they call to God Number two they issue their complaint. Number three there's a request. OK they call they got the issue of their complaint and then they make a request turn and answer me that's David simple cry in this one. Turn and answer me you see that at the beginning of verse three turn in answer me oh god hear what I'm about to say. Turn answer me Number four strongest You can complain to God and trust in him at the same time and we absolutely should first number five but I trust in your own failing love. David says God will you forgive me forever will you look the other way how long must I struggle how long will my inner me in a me have the upper hand turn an answer me oh god. I will trust in you. Do you think David feels every thing of God all around him is he spending these words like I mean based on what you just read the first you know five or four verses of this psalm do you feel like David is like floating on the rainbow butterflies right right now like he's never had a better day and he can just feel the presence of God all around him that's not what I read at all I think David just says I see that everything is terrible and I'm going to trust in God anyway because he's good number five. Praise I will sing to the Lord in verse six because he is good to me it is possible to have life crashing down all around you. And still praise God. And as a matter of fact I would tell you as a Christian it's important I'm not talking about fake pastry praise right I'm not talking about coming into church and putting on a fake smile and when people are asking you how it's going being like oh yeah nothing could be better right now like everything's good and then we just sing some songs and we clap and we smile and you know do the look over to our neighbor to make sure they see a smiling right and then look back and then we're good that's not what I'm talking about I'm not talking about being fake I'm talking about knowing where help can come from and that is from God which should cause us to praise. And Song is only one of those ways some of you are like I don't even sing when I'm happy. I'm

going to sing when I'm miserable How do you praise God How do you praise God Go do it these are the five functions of a lament that we see in the vast majority of them. And I truly believe as followers of Jesus I truly and wholeheartedly. Believe that if we could wrap our heads around talking to God this way in the midst of our horrible times we come out better for it I am not saying that that horrible time suddenly gets easier you don't just pray a little man and then all of a sudden everything works out that's not what I'm saying but what I'm saying is is your heart and your mind are realigned with how things should really be and we will be given strength in the midst. Of a battle we will be given right perspective in the middle. Of a battle and that's important that is so. Important. And that can make all the difference in the world. I want you to turn to Mike a Chapter seven we're going to kind of balance through this as we wind down here. Mike is one of the minor prophets it's probably going to be pretty tough for you to find if you don't know your Bible very well you might need to use the glossary but it's really it's in all those minor prophets are going to see Isaiah and Daniel as your turn to the back and you're going to get to the really weird names like Obadiah in a home and all of those and Mike is going to be right in the middle of those K. Micah is a prophet at the same time as Isaiah K. is in Jerusalem and he's prophesied and he's doing all those things and Mike is a contemporary there prophesying at about the same time Micah is prophesied to the nations of Israel and Judah they were one one nation under David and Solomon but David's grandson decided to do some really stupid stuff and he split the nation two generations after the best King that they had ever had right and he split it and they split into two kingdoms the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah all right and so he's prophesied to both of these nations. The end is coming he's prophesying you have done so much evil in the sight of God and you have completely forgotten who he was it's coming and you can particularly see it's amazing if you read through the minor prophets how often one of God's chief complaints against them was that the people of means were taking advantage of those with nothing. You see that repeated in Mike I think three or four times in seven chapters I mean it is it is just a continuous model but he's probably sighing that these countries are going to be destroyed. All right that their time is coming to an end that probably made him really popular at home right. Right like women he's telling all of his friends and everybody that he knows that our country is so messed up God's going to allow it to be destroyed. That probably made him really popular at the lunch table. But he's promising all this stuff and he gets to seven and I just want to read this because again you see so much of the same stuff echoing through them Chapter seven when I read verses one through four that I'm going to skip ups skip over some stuff all right how miserable I am I feel like the fruit picker after the harvest who can find nothing to eat not a cluster of grapes or a single early fig can be found satisfy my hunger the godly people have all disappeared not one honest person is left on the earth there are they are all murderers setting traps even for their own brothers both their hands are equally skilled at doing evil officials and judges alike demand bribes the people with influence get what they want and together they scheme to twist justice even the best of them is like a brier the most honest is as dangerous as a hedge of thorns but your judgment day is coming swiftly now your time of punishment is here a time of confusion I want you to drop down to verse seven because you see the turn OK he's listing out what's happening right he's issuing the complaint and then you see the turn verse seven As for me I look to the Lord for help I will wait confidently for God to save me and my God will certainly hear me if you look back up you see that he is prophesied and that God is the one that's going to orchestrate this but in the midst of that he will look to the Lord for help and we're going to drop down to fourteen and then I'm going to read through the end of the chapter. Up on a verse fourteen Oh Lord protect your people with your shepherd staff lead your flock your special possession though they live alone in a thicket on the heights of Mount Carmel let them graze in the fertile pastures of Bosh on and out as they did long ago yes says the Lord I will do mighty miracles for you like I did or like those I did when I rescued you from slavery in Egypt all the nations of the world will stand amazed at what the Lord will do for you they will be embarrassed at their feeble power they will cover their mouths in silence deaf to everything around them like snakes crawling from their holes they will come out to meet the Lord our God they will fear him greatly trembling in terror at his

presence verse eighteen Where is another god like you who pardons the guilt of the rim then overlooking the sins of his special people you will not stay angry with your people forever because you delight in showing on failing love once again you will have compassion on us you will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean if you will show us your faithfulness and unfailing love as you promised to our ancestors Abraham injected Jacob. Long ago I want you to understand that even in the midst of this man saying God is the one who is going to come and make this happen because we have abandoned him. He still rightly knew God was and that's important. I'm not saying that what you're going through right now please don't misunderstand what I'm saying and try and take a step past that and try and make it sound like I'm implying that you're difficult thing that you're going through or you have gone through it somehow God trying to get you. OK that's not what I'm saying. What I am saying is there is a right way to go to God in the midst of pain. There is a right way to go to God in the midst of confusion. There's a right way to go to God we don't know what else to do and I feel like Micah could be echoing David but for some reason many of us. Don't have this in our tool box. All we have is the good ones I love Psalm twenty three please don't misunderstand what I'm saying with that either there are lots of great and encouraging Bible verses and we should know those but so many times when pain runs through and rings through. Things that are only about the good stuff aren't enough because they just ring hollow even though they're not even though they're every bit as inspired as they were before they just start to sound a little hollow and we need things like Psalm thirteen to turn through that will echo our heart. Things like saw almost twenty two where we can align our thought process just like Jesus did in the midst of pain. And allow it to speak for us because we don't have the words. I want to encourage you if you're not a memorizer make some marks I don't like making marks in my books I know a lot of you you know some of you know that I I'm a book nerd I don't even like to open books all the way because it's going to wreck the binding so you know if I've got like a four hundred fifty page book I read it like a quarter open to make sure that it's OK I don't write in my books I make notes in electronic things but some of you especially if you're not as is nerdy as me it's OK you'll be able to do this no problem but you need to put a bookmark in some of these things or you need to write it down somewhere in the cover because listen there is going to be something that happens in your life again that you don't understand that's difficult to deal with it's just the fact of life it's not God trying to get you it's that we live in a sinful fall in the world and bad things happen all the time and we need to have stuff like this to make sure our thinking is right in the middle of it all some of you are good at the complaining part right you get that far in it. You feel fine complaining to God that's OK but you need help getting to the next step you help getting to that Pray step. You get through the first two maybe three then you stop and some of you skip one in two and you go right to that prayer and praise and you never really deal with what it is that's causing pain and listen that might sound good but it doesn't really help anything long term turn to the laments allow them to align your thoughts with God's heart. And let them speak for you when you don't know what to pray it's such an important thing when I take a moment here I want to I want to do what we do every week and then we're going to come back to this we believe in this place and I've referenced it with Jesus on the cross referenced it I know this whole message wasn't about it that's all right. We believe in this place that Jesus came to this earth two thousand years ago as a man God came and wore flesh we're about to be singing some of you have already been singing these songs for three months already most of the world's about ready to start after Thursday listening to all the you know all the songs that are about this Jesus came to this earth God with us Emmanuel. And he lived a sinless life. And he died in our stead so that we could be made right with God. He's the one that said I am the way I am the truth I am the life no one comes to God but me I didn't say that Jesus did. He is the only way. To the throne of God. And some of you in here maybe have never prayed a prayer you never believed in that and we want to give you an opportunity to become a follower of Jesus this morning to seek his forgiveness it was really simple the Bible lays it out so simply it can be tough following Jesus but to receive His forgiveness is so simple God tells us to acknowledge our centers believe on who Jesus said He is confess our sins to him. We will be made right with him all right so

we're going to do chances that maybe some of you in here you've done that before. But you know that lately it has not been about God. It's been about you. And today you want to realign with Jesus I'm on a prayer prayer with you as well right so I want to ask you about your heads just put them down and ask you to close your eyes. We're not going to call you up here we're not going to Paris you we don't want it's not about that this is a moment between you and God So if you're out there and you've never chosen Jesus before but this morning you'd like to I'd like you to raise your hand and I want to pray with user anybody out there you never chosen Jesus this morning you're ready to do that so anyone. We're not going to wait long I don't want to motivate this out of guilt we just want to pray with you or I were going with that second question maybe you're in here. And you've chosen Jesus before but lately it hasn't been about God at all it's been you and you know some things need to change you need to you need to repent of that and make it right with God again. Is there anybody in here that's you you've done this before but it's time to readjust to anybody at all all right. So we're going to in the service a little differently than we usually do you can all go ahead look at me and you start some music for me. I'm going to say a prayer I'm going to ask our leadership team their spouses to come back up here maybe just take a seat on this front row. Our board members and and our if you guys could come up that be great. I don't want to in a time when we're talking about struggles in life and then try and pretend like there aren't any out there. OK I just think that that's a waste of our time and energy. So I really want to encourage you today if God has been speaking to you if life has been tough maybe it just started maybe it's been a long time and he said maybe you're stuck in step one in two and you know I mean you're good you gone to God You called to him and you've been complaining to him but you haven't been able to crest that. Hill. Of getting to thanks and praise. Maybe you're just starting on this journey and I mean lot of life is just a mess right now. I don't want you to leave this place and not give God a chance to speak in the wind. So we're going to pray I'm going to pray and if you're good to go like I mean if you're ready to leave this place by all means go and I want to encourage you though we have a they built a giant foyer out there some of you might like the word narthex just because it's fun. Out there we built it just for this kind of a thing so people can go out there and talk while some people are doing business in here so I'm going to ask you if you're done after I pray just please keep your conversation out there all right laugh talk enjoy each other. Just wait til you're out there. If you're going through something and you want somebody to pray with you I want you to come up you don't have to come to one of our leaders I just want them to be available if you want to pray with somebody if that's not your thing this morning you can pray right where you're at you can come to this altar and you can just bow down before God and you can pray there if you want somebody to pray with you I just one of them here for that. I pray. And if you need God to be with you in the middle of some struggle come from. And if you're ready to go. Go. God you're good. Thank you for your word and I think you that your word doesn't just deal. With rainbows and butterflies and happy because it would be really hard to apply that to real life if that's all it was I thank you for those verses I thank you for those times. But so many times I feel like we're dealing with real tough issues. And we just need you. We know. It's something real genuine. God I pray for everybody out there right now who may be struggling. Ask that you work because only you can. Ask to speak in ways that only you can I pray God that as we enter this season god of Thanksgiving on Thursday and Christmas as we celebrate this time God that help us to be thankful even when life is hard. Because you are still good and you are still able and you are still there. Of this kind of right attitude right. Work miracles I am your name and then. Have a great afternoon please come and pray if you get there feel free to go figure.