

# Lament

Biblically Shaped Worship:  
Songs and Prayers (1)

14 August 2022 Christies Beach Baptist Church  
Stephen Spence

# The Psalms: The Prayer Book of God's People



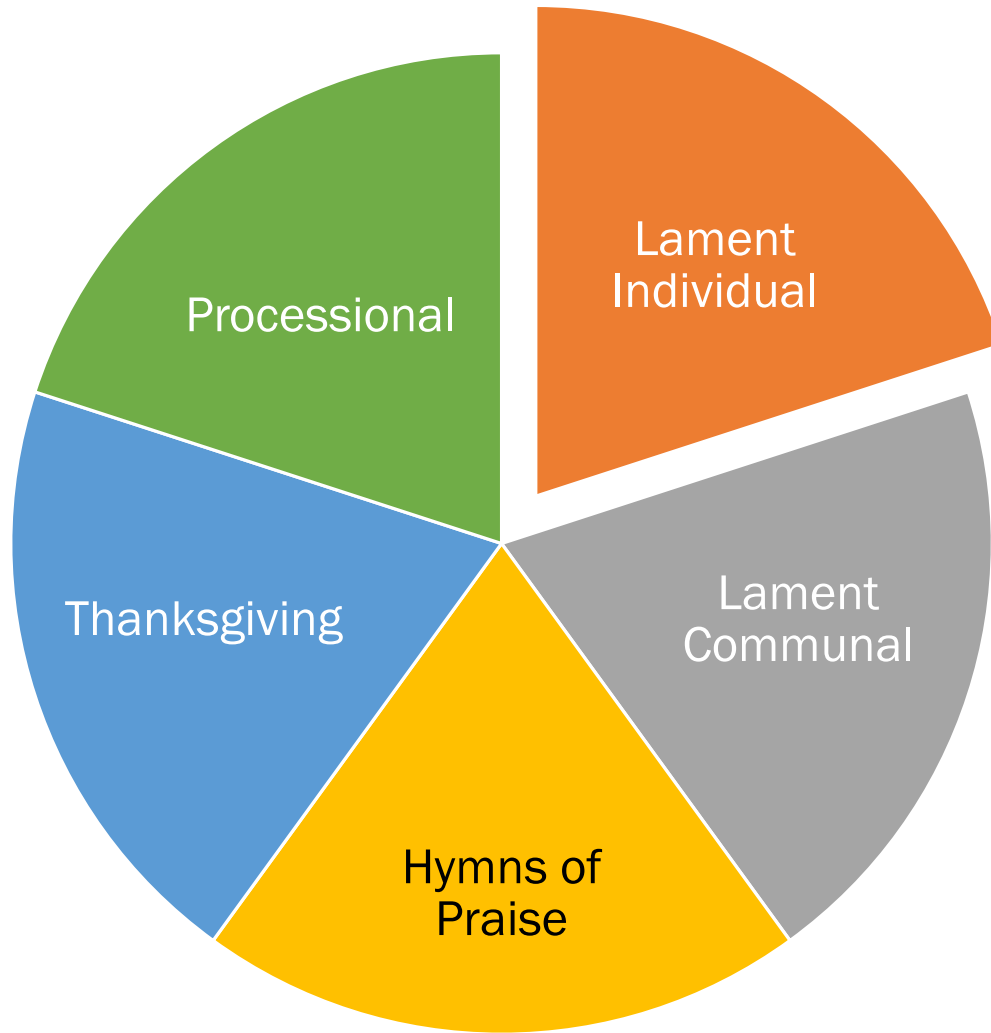
The Psalms show us what it looks like for the gathered people of God to respond to God. They **expand our vocabulary** of prayer and worship.

Psalms don't just teach *about* worship; they *are* worship. **They invite us to learn by doing.**



*Rev Dr Melinda Cousins*

# The Psalms: The Prayer Book of God's People



approx. 60 of the 150 psalms are laments; around 40 of these are individual laments.

Jesus' cry from the cross is a lament, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!" (Mt 27:46)

*Laments appear in MANY other parts of the Bible: e.g., Lamentations, Job, Habakkuk, Revelations*

*Does this reflect the worship pattern of the church and our personal devotional practice?*

# Psalms of Lament



In a lament psalm, a **petitioner** [2] addresses God **directly** [3] on the occasion of **some calamity** [1].

Given God's history with God's people, the psalmist is comfortable charging God with "**dereliction of duty**" and unabashedly urges a favourable response. In fact, many readers describe lament psalms as complaint psalm due to the **strident and active tone** common to psalms of this genre.



[Psalms of Lament \(bibleodyssey.org\)](http://bibleodyssey.org)

G. Broke Lester

# Laments are a part of Christian Worship

Why would you lie to God?

Worship in your  
Sunday Best

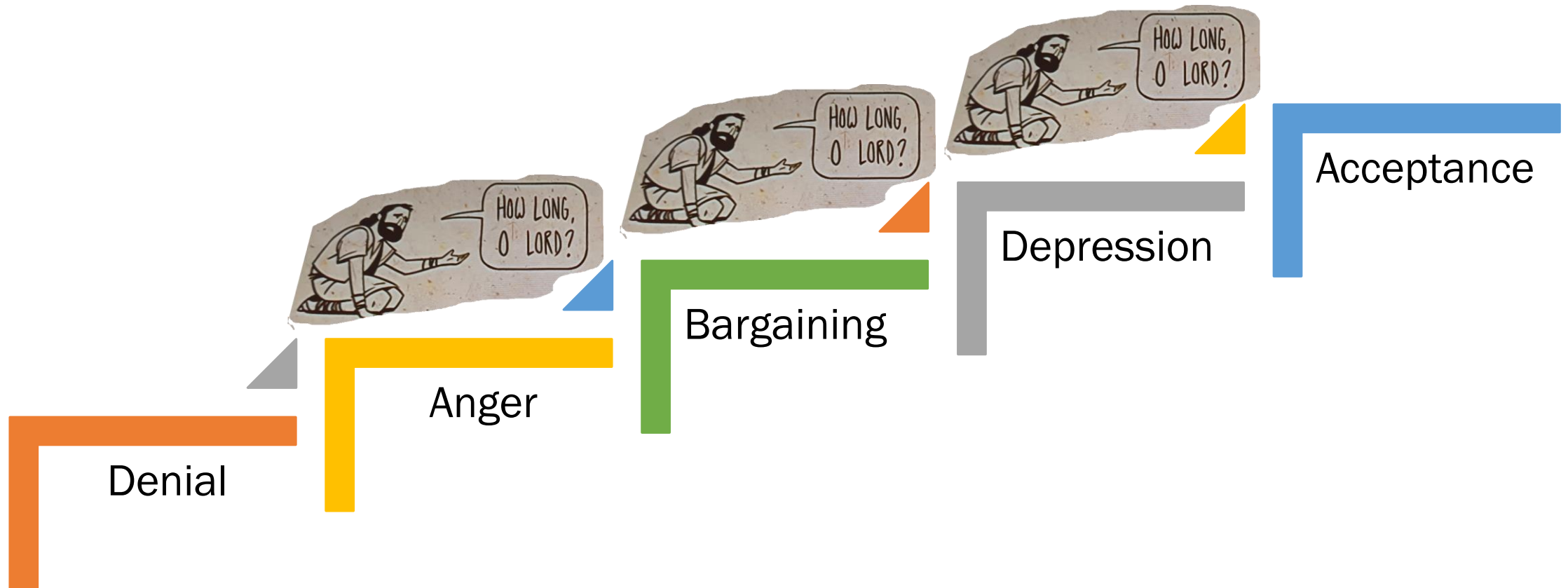
Worship in Spirit  
and in Truth

God searches the heart!



*What happens if we refuse to lament in the presence of God?*

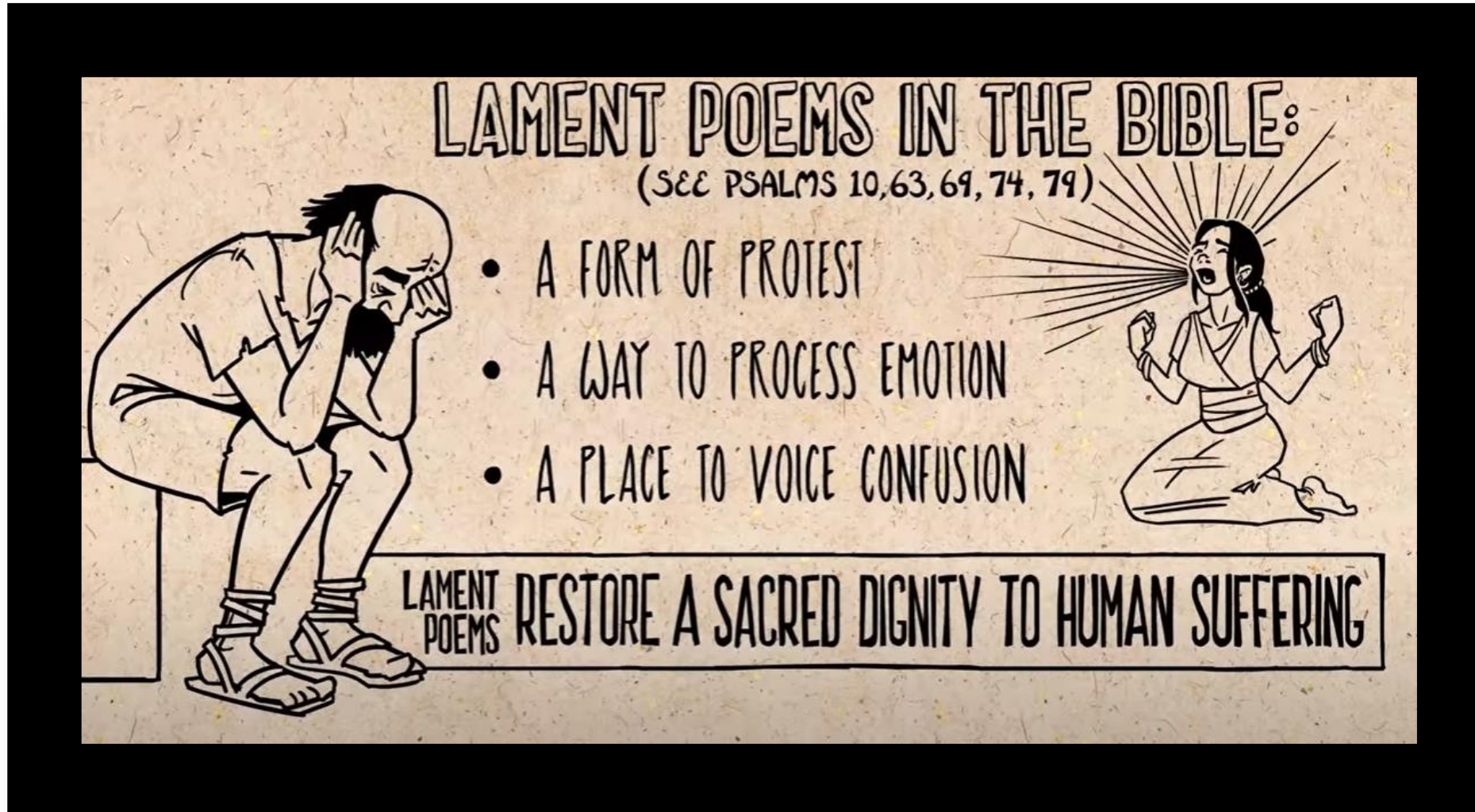
# Laments are a part of Christian Worship



*What happens if we refuse to lament in the presence of God?*



# Why are “Laments” a part of Christian Worship



# Laments are a part of Christian Worship

Individual



Corporate





# The Shape of a Lament

## (1) Cry of despair and frustration

**Psalm 13:1-2** **How long**, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? **How long** will you hide your face from me? **How long** must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? **How long** shall my enemy be exalted over me?

**Psalm 6:6-7** I am worn out from sobbing. Every night tears drench my bed; my pillow is wet from weeping. My vision is blurred by grief; my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.

## (2) A very specific level of complaint

## (3) A cry for God to fix the situation

## (4) An expression of enduring trust in God



# The Shape of a Lament

(1) Cry of despair and frustration

(2) A very specific level of complaint

**Psalms 10:2,11** Proud and wicked people viciously oppress the poor. The wicked say to themselves, "God isn't watching! He will never notice!"

**Psalms 42:9-10** I cry, "Why must I wander in darkness, oppressed by my enemies?" Their taunts pierce me like a fatal wound. They scoff, "Where is this God of yours?"

(3) A cry for God to fix the situation

(4) An expression of enduring trust in God



# The Shape of a Lament

(1) Cry of despair and frustration: “How Long, O Lord!”

(2) A very specific level of complaint

(3) A cry for God to fix the situation



**Psalms 38:15,21-22** For I am waiting for you, O LORD. You must answer for me, O Lord my God. Do not abandon me, LORD. Do not stand at a distance, my God. Come quickly to help me, O Lord my saviour.

**Psalms 35:26-27** May those who rejoice at my troubles be humiliated and disgraced. May those who triumph over me be covered with shame and dishonour. But give great joy to those who have stood with me in my defence.

(4) An expression of enduring trust in God

# The Shape of a Lament

- (1) Cry of despair and frustration
- (2) A very specific level of complaint
- (3) A cry for God to fix the situation
- (4) An expression of enduring trust in God



**Psalms 10:17-18** LORD, you know the hopes of the helpless. Surely you will listen to their cries and comfort them. You will bring justice to the orphans and the oppressed, so people can no longer terrify them.

**Psalms 74:19-22** Don't forget your afflicted people forever. Remember your covenant promises... Arise, O God, and defend your cause.

## When we experience tragedy...

Those who believe in the goodness of God **lament**.

Those who believe in the compassion of God **lament**.

Those who believe in the faithfulness of God **lament**.

**Lament** keeps those who believe in God connected to God.

*Does this reflect the worship pattern of the church and our personal devotional practice?*



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