

The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment. Lam. 1: 18

In these plaintive elegiacs, Jerusalem, by the mouth of the prophet, laments her fate. But the story of her desolation is mingled with confessions of her sin. She asks boldly if any sorrow could be compared to her sorrow, and then confesses that not one pang or stroke had been in excess of her sin. This is what sorrow does for us all.

Sorrow has been fitly called the mother of all joy. She alone creates the darkness, in which we can distinguish the real meaning of God's dealings, and understand the true nature of our wild wanderings. Her neutral tints subdue the soul's pride, and turn it away from the glare of human ambition. Beneath her teaching we learn to view aright the evanescence of all things human, and to see that the eternal is alone real amid a world of illusions.

*Sweet sorrow, who the earth has ever trod,
Dreaded and shunned, till, by thy burning kiss,
The heart was fired and flamed serene to God;
O kind stern friend, we leave thee on Time's shore,
The only friend of earth whom we shall see no more.*

Perhaps your sorrow will be allowed to press on you more and more sorely till you have been led to self-examination, confession of sin, and acknowledgment of the rightness of God's dealings with you. There is an alloy of pride in your nature that must be destroyed. If the fire is not hot enough, its heat must be raised till it suffices. Accept the lesson of your present pain, and rebel no longer.

The waves of unutterable grief may be breaking in succession against the beaten promontory of your faith, and will be followed by the great tenth wave of apparent desertion: but the return-tide of exultant joy is at hand.

耶和華是公義的。他這樣待我，是因我違背他的命令。 哀一18

藉先知的口在這些悲哀的詩句，耶路撒冷哀歎她的結局。可是這個耶路撒冷荒涼的故事，摻雜著她對罪的懺悔。她大膽追問有沒有任何痛苦可以與她的痛苦相比，然後坦承沒有任何劇痛或擊打是超過她罪的報應。這就是憂傷為我們每個人所作的事。

憂傷恰當地被稱為一切喜樂之母。憂傷產生黑暗，在其中我們可以明瞭神作為的真正意義，並瞭解我們瘋狂浪蕩的真正本質。憂傷的暗淡色調削弱人的驕傲，並使人避開人野心的光芒。在她的教導之下，我們學會正確看待世間萬事的短暫，並認識到永恆是虛幻世界中唯一的真實。

甜美的憂傷啊，世人踏入你的境界，害怕、躲避，
直到你灼熱的親吻，點燃人心，平靜地引人歸向神。
仁慈嚴厲的朋友啊，我們將你留在時光的岸上，
你是這地上唯一我們永不再看見的朋友。

也許神會允許你的憂傷多多地壓痛你，直到使你開始自我檢討、承認己罪、並承認神在你身上的作為是公義的。你的天性中有一種與驕傲攙雜的東西必須被拆毀。如果火不夠熱，就必須加溫直到足夠熱。你要接受從現今的痛苦中學到的功課，不要再悖逆了。

不可言喻之憂傷的海浪，可能正連續擊打著你信心的海角，並且隨後是明顯拋棄的第十個巨浪；但歡騰喜樂的退潮即將來到。

The prophets have seen visions for thee of vanity and foolishness. Lam. 2: 14

The prophet is addressing Jerusalem-- ruined, desolate, and afflicted--the city waste; her children in Babylon. Of course the main question was as to their return from captivity, and deliverance from their yoke. The false prophets were perpetually seeing visions of deliverance that were never fulfilled. Now this kingdom would come to their rescue; now that. But they were empty dreams. The captivity would never be turned, until the iniquity which had led to it had been discovered and put away. But the prophets had no desire or ability to do this. Now this is true of yourself as an individual and as a Christian worker.

AS AN INDIVIDUAL: You are suffering in one way or another: in body, or relative, or circumstance. Your one thought is to obtain deliverance, and your mind is filled with vain dreams of how it is to come. It would be better far to ask God to discover to you any reason for chastisement. If He says nothing, then believe that there is still some wise end in it for yourself or others. But He may indicate some reason for his strokes.

AS A CHRISTIAN WORKER: Your earnest endeavours have failed. You suppose that some new method will bring success. There may be some reason in yourself which will account for all. Ask God to discover it. When you see it in his light, you will be surprised that you never saw it before; and you will cease to wonder that those over whom you have longed have never yielded to the love of God. It is useless to have visions of a lovely and holy life, unless you are willing to have your iniquity discovered and destroyed. Oh for faithful prophet-voices to do their office for us!

先知為你見虛假和愚昧的異象。 哀二14

先知耶利米向耶路撒冷說話 — 這城荒廢、被毀壞、荒涼、受痛苦；她的兒女被遷至巴比倫。當然首要的問題是關於他們從被擄之地歸回，從枷鎖中得解脫。許多假先知不斷地看見得救的異象，但這些異象從來沒有應驗。有時假先知的異象是這國來拯救他們；有時是那國來拯救。然而這些都是虛空的夢。被擄的人絕不會歸回，直到導致被擄的罪孽被發覺、被除淨。但是假先知沒有意願，也沒有本事做這樣的事。現今，這樣的情況對於你作為一個人，並作為基督的一個工人，都是真實的。

對於個人：你或是這樣受苦，或是那樣受苦；或在身體上、或在親人中、或在環境裡。你唯一的意念就是要得到解脫，因此你的心思就充滿許多幻想解脫如何臨到。其實最好是求神向你揭露受責罰的緣由。若是祂沒有說話，你就要相信當你自己或他人在受苦之中仍有某個明智的目的。或許祂指示你祂責打的理由。

對於基督的工人：你誠摯的努力失敗了。你以為某種新方法必成功。可能在你裡頭的某個原因才能說明一切。你要祈求神來揭露這個原因。當你在祂的光中看見這原因時，你必驚訝以前從未見過這原因；並且你就不再希奇，那些你所期待的人從未對神的愛屈服。擁有可愛聖潔生命的異象沒有益處，除非你願意讓你的罪孽被揭露、被消毀。但願忠心先知的聲音幫助我們。

Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon Thee: Thou saidst, Fear not. Lam. 3 : 57

Jeremiah is referring to his own experiences of the dungeon, into which the malice of his foes had plunged him. As he reached its lowest depths, he began to call upon God, and continued to call. His reliance was on the name (i.e., the nature) of God. This is the most potent argument that any soul can employ. Not our faith, but his faithfulness: not our trust, but his trustworthiness. "Act worthily of that great name, which Thou hast taken for Thyself, O God, we beseech Thee."

No sooner was that appeal made than it was heard. "Thou heardest my voice." Notice that the very breathing of the persecuted soul was heard by the Most High. A mother listens for the breathing of her babe in the dark. It will tell her so much. The soft, measured breath, or the labouring, gasping breath. God never hides his ear from our breathing; or from those inarticulate cries, which express, as words could not do, the deep anguish and yearning of the heart. If you cannot speak, cry, sob, or groan, then be still. God can interpret all.

Then He draws nigh. Of course, He is ever nigh. "Nearer than breathing." But He gives a sweet consciousness of his presence. The dark dungeon of bereavement, or sorrow, suddenly becomes luminous with the radiance of the Shekinah; the stillness is broken by the approaching footfall of the Almighty Friend, who is never so near as when lover and friend are unable to help. Oh, how tenderly He draws nigh! Solitude indeed hath charms, for it is our Saviour's opportunity; and the dungeon becomes desirable, for it is the ante-room to the presence-chamber of our King. Happy they who have learned to detect the secret of the Lord, and his whispered Fear not!

我求告你的日子，你臨近我，說：不要懼怕。 哀三57

耶利米提及他自己在牢獄裡的經歷，他的仇敵因著怨恨，把他下在牢獄裡(卅八9)。當他到了牢獄的深處，他就開始求告神，並且繼續呼求。耶利米倚靠的是神的名(就是神的本性)。這是任何人禱告所能使用最有力的理由。不是我們的信心，而是祂的信實；不是我們倚靠，而是祂的可靠。「神啊，我們懇求你按著你自己的大名行事。」

這祈求一發出就蒙垂聽。「你聽見我的聲音。(56節)」請注意，這受逼迫之人的願望得蒙至高者垂聽。一個母親在黑夜裡傾聽她嬰孩的氣息。這氣息告訴她許多訊息。是柔和有節奏的呼吸，或是吃力喘氣的呼吸。神絕不掩耳不聽我們的嘆息，或不聽難以清楚表達的呼籲(56節)[註1]，就是言辭無法明確述說、心底深處的痛苦與渴慕。若是你不能述說、呼喊、哭泣、或呻吟，那麼你就保持緘默，神能詮釋一切。

然後祂就臨近(57節)。當然祂一直都在近處。「比呼吸的氣息還近。」祂賜下祂同在甜美的感覺。喪失親人或悲傷的深牢，突然因神顯現的光輝而明亮；這位全能的朋友臨近的腳步聲打破寂靜，祂從來未曾如此的親近，就在愛我們的人與朋友都不能幫助的時候。啊，祂是何等親切的臨近！孤獨確實有其迷人之處，因為它是我們救主的好時機；所以地牢變成值得嚮往的，因它是通往我們君王謁見廳堂的等候室。學會發現耶和華的祕密[註2]，並聽見祂說「不要懼怕」的人，是有福的！

[註1] 56節後半，和合本的「我求你解救，你不要掩耳不聽。」直譯可作：「你不要掩耳不聽我的氣息、我的呼籲。」

[註2] 詩篇二十五篇14節直譯可作：「耶和華的祕密與敬畏祂的人同在；祂將祂的約指示他們。」(NKJV)

Of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the nations. Lam. 4:20 (R.V.)

The people tell the sad tale of the pursuit of their foes. Swifter than the eagles, they chased them on the mountains, and laid wait for them in the wilderness. Then they narrate how their king fell into the hands of them who sought his life. He was dear to them as the breath of their nostrils; his person was sacred as the anointed of the Lord; they had thought that even though they were carried into captivity they would find some alleviation to their hardships in dwelling under his protection; they said, "Under his shadow we shall live among the nations." But even he was taken in their pits.

What a likeness and a contrast to our blessed Lord! There is LIKENESS. He is as the breath of our life. As we inhale the air around us, so we expand our souls to drink in of his most blessed nature. We open our mouths, and inhale Him as our vital element; his Spirit for our spirit; his blood for our souls; his resurrection strength for our bodies. He is the Anointed of the Father, who anoints us. Because He is the Christ (Anointed), we are Christians (anointed ones). His shadow is a most grateful and widespreading one, beneath which we may dwell in safety.

But how great the CONTRAST! Though He was once taken in the pit of Satanic malice and the shadow of death, yet now He liveth to be the shield and protector of his people wherever they are scattered among the nations. He that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger and thirst no more, neither shall the sun strike them. However far our bodies are from one another, we all dwell beneath the shadow of the Lord, which is as a great rock in a weary land.

我們曾論到他說，我們必在他蔭下，在列國中存活。 哀四20

百姓訴說仇敵追趕他們的悲慘故事。仇敵比鷹更快，在山上追逼他們，在曠野埋伏等候他們(19節)。接著他們敘述他們的王西底家，如何落入尋索他命之人手中。對他們來說，王是何等重要，如同他們鼻中的氣；王的身分神聖，乃是耶和華的受膏者；他們甚至還以為即使他們被擄，他們仍得以在他的蔭下減輕困苦；百姓說，「我們必在他蔭下，在列國中存活。」然而甚至西底家王，也在敵人的坑中被捉住(20節)。

這與我們可稱頌的主何其「相似」，卻又何等「不同」！「相似」之處乃是：主是我們生命的氣息。正如我們吸入在我們身邊的空氣，我們同樣張開我們的心，飲入祂極有福的性情。我們張開口，吸入祂作我們生命的要素；祂的靈為著我們的靈；祂的血為著我們的魂；祂復活的能力為著我們的身體。祂是父神所膏的，祂也膏抹我們。因為祂是基督(受膏者)，我們是基督徒(受膏的眾人)。祂的蔭庇令人愉快且遍及廣大範圍，在祂蔭下我們可以安然居住。

然而「不同」也何等大！雖然祂曾經落入撒但惡意的深坑、死蔭之處；然而祂如今活著成為祂百姓的盾牌與保護，無論他們散居在列邦的何方。祂坐在寶座上，張開祂的帳幕覆庇他們。他們不再飢、不再渴，日頭也必不傷害他們(啟七15)。無論我們的肉身彼此相隔有多遠，我們仍都住在耶和華的蔭下，祂的陰影如同疲乏之地大磐石的影子(賽卅二2)。

Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned. Renew our days as of old. Lam. 5 : 21

Weary of chastening, and longing to have again all the blessed enjoyments and privileges of the past, the backslider desires to be right with God, as he used to be. But he is often met with great initial difficulties. He would pray, but cannot; he would feel broken and penitent, but his heart is as hard as the nether millstone; he would take the old pleasure in the service and worship of the Most High, but it evades his grasp. This perplexes and daunts him.

What should be our attitude under such circumstances? There is nothing better than to adopt the cry of the prophet, and ask God to turn the soul, and renew its blessed and holy experiences. There will be no doubt of our being turned, if He turns us.

It is not difficult to recover the attitude, emotions, and work of past days, when we have yielded ourselves absolutely to God, and have cast on Him the responsibility of making us all that He has taught us to desire. Let Him assign what standard He chooses, there will be no difficulty in our attaining it, if He fulfils in us all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power.

The happy life is that which does not need to ask for the olden days to be renewed, because it is ever anticipating that it will be better further on, and that the dawn will grow into the perfect day; but where the past was better than the present is, let us ask that God would restore the years that the caterpillar and cankerworm have eaten. Just because God abides for ever, and his throne is from generation to generation, He is able to renew the soul with new pulses of energy and life. Each spring He makes the world as fair as on the morning of creation. "Renew our days as of old."

耶和華啊，求你使我們向你回轉，我們便得回轉。求你復新我們的日子，像古時一樣。
哀五21

這個墮落的人因責罰而厭倦，渴望再得到從前所有蒙福的享受與特權，他渴望與神有正常的關係，像從前一樣。但他常遭遇起頭時的重大困難。他想要祈禱，卻無法做到；他感到憂傷痛悔，可是他的心卻像下磨石那樣堅硬，他想要像從前一樣樂意服事敬拜至高的神，但他無法掌握這樣的心願。這種矛盾的心情使他困惑、沮喪。

在這種情況下，我們的態度該如何呢？再沒有比採納先知的呼求更好的態度了，就是祈求神使你的心回轉，復新你蒙福神聖的經歷。若是祂使我們回轉，我們就必回轉。

當我們完全向神降服，將「使我們像祂所教導的那樣渴慕」的責任交託給祂，那麼恢復昔日的態度、情感、工作就都不難。讓祂指定祂所決定的標準，我們達到這標準並不困難，如果祂在我們裡面成就祂旨意所喜悅的一切事，並用大能完成信心的工作。

幸福的人生並不需要祈求恢復到從前的光景，因為幸福的人生總是預期後來的情況比先前更美好，黎明要變成日午(箴四18)；如果從前的情況比現在好，就讓我們祈求神補還螞蚱和蝻子那些年所吃的(珥二25)。正因為神存到永遠，祂的寶座存到萬代(19節)，祂能使人恢復生命活力的新脈動。每一個春天，祂使世界美麗如同創造之初。「求你復新我們的日子，像古時一樣。(21節)」