

## **FIVE REASONS WE HAVE A GOOD HOPE**

**By Henry T. Mahan**

**Lamentations 3:21-26**

**TV-494b**

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Over in the Old Testament there is a Book called Lamentations. I'm going to be speaking from that passage of scripture, in **Lamentations Chapter 3**. I'd like for you to open your Bible's because I'm going to be going verse by verse. We'll be going through several verses and the points that I'll be making are found in the verses. I'd like for you to open your Bible's to the Book of Lamentations, Chapter 3. Now, these are the writings of Jeremiah, the prophet, Jeremiah. He's called the weeping prophet. He said, in Jeremiah 9, "*O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for my people.*" These are the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Now, some people apply these Lamentations to the Messiah, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they may well be applied to the Messiah. If you will look in **Lamentations 1:12**, watch these words, "*Is it nothing to you, is it nothing to you that all pass by?*" Do you remember the talking about the cross; they passed by wagging their heads while Christ was dying on the cross? They passed by and were wagging their heads, and saying, "He trusted in God, let's see if God will have Him now." They passed by wagging their heads and saying, "If you be the Christ, come down and we will believe on you. He saved others Himself, but He cannot save." That's Jeremiah taking up the cry of our Lord, right here. "*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, behold and see if there be is any sorrow like my sorrow? Is there any sorrow like my sorrow, which is done unto me, where with the Lord has afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger? (It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief, when He made His soul an offering for sin). All ye that pass by, is it nothing to you? Is there any sorrow like my sorrow which is done unto me where with the Lord has afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.*" Yes, these are the Lamentations of our Messiah.

The Lamentations and the comfort belong to the Lord's people, to the believers in Christ. What is said of Him is said of us. What is true of Him is true of them, for He is not ashamed to call them brethren. He's not ashamed to be numbered with them, even in their transgressions and they are one. Listen, in **John 17**, when He prayed to the Father for His people, that entire **17<sup>th</sup> Chapter of John** is the great High Priest, interceding and praying for His people. In **verse 23**, He said, "*Father I in them, and thou in me, that they may be one, even as we are one, and the glory which thou has given me, I have given them.*"

Yes, lamentations of Jeremiah the prophet, lamentations of Christ the Messiah, and the lamentations, and the end results, the comfort for all of His people who are in Him. And these words that I've chosen in **Lamentations, Chapter 3**, would you turn to it? Beginning with **verse 21**. These words in my text are the very foundation of the believer's comfort. That's right, the very foundation of the believers hope. Our hope of life, our hope of heaven, our hope of salvation, and our hope of glory, is found right here. I call this message: "**Five Reasons We Have a Good Hope.**" I find 5 reasons in this text, in these few verses of **Lamentations 3**; I find five reasons why we have a good hope of life, of glory, of salvation, of heaven and forgiveness of sin.

**Verse 21**; look at it. Do you have it there? Lamentation 3:21, He said, "*This I call to mind, therefore, I have hope.*" In other words, what I'm about to relate to you is the reason I have hope. "*I call all of this to mind and therefore, I have hope.*" I reach back and get all of this that God has taught me and revealed to me and this is the reason I have hope; "*I call this to mind, therefore I have hope.*" You know, Peter said that we ought to give reason for the hope that is in us. We ought to be able to. We must be always ready. Listen, in **First Peter 3:15**, "*Be ready always to give a reason for the hope that is in you, to anyone that asks you and do it with meekness and humility and reverence.*" Jeremiah is saying that very same thing, "I'm ready to give you a reason, as a matter of fact, five of them, five reasons why I have a good hope of eternal life and salvation. All right, "*This I call to mind, therefore I have hope.*"

**Verse 22**: "*It's the Lord's mercies that we're not consumed,*" it's the Lord's mercies that we're not condemned. It's the Lord's mercies that we're not destroyed. We have a hope because He is merciful, not because we're preachers or deacons or elders or Sunday school teachers or church members. We have a good hope because the Lord is merciful to sinners. Psalm 103: 8 says, "*For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, plenteous in mercy.*" That's the reason we have a good hope. It's found in Him, not in us. It's found in the fact that He delights to show mercy. Listen to **Psalm 116**, "*Gracious is the Lord and Righteous, because yes, our God is merciful.*"

One time John Wesley was crossing the Atlantic Ocean, coming to America from England. This was way back in the Colonial Days. This was around 1700 and something. Wesley and Whitfield preached all up and down the Eastern Coast, Georgia, Virginia, and the Carolina's. He was coming back to America, from England and on board the ship was the Governor of Georgia. The King had appointed this man the Governor of Georgia. He had all of his servants with him, and people waiting on him. He had a special cabin on the ship. One of his servants had stolen some of his wine and the governor of Georgia was going to have him whipped and stripped and beaten, out on the deck of the ship, in front of all the people. When they brought him out on the deck of the ship in front of all the people, Wesley went to the Governor of Georgia and pleaded with him to show mercy and to forgive. The Governor of Georgia replied to Mr. Wesley's plea to show mercy to this unfortunate man. The Governor replied, "I never forgive, I never show mercy." Mr. Wesley said, "Well Sir, I hope you never sin, for if you will, or if you ever do, you'll never

be forgiven and never have mercy.” Our God is merciful; He’s plenteous in mercy and delights to show mercy. That’s the reason this sinner has a hope. God is merciful.

**Micah 7:18** says, “*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity? He retaineth not his anger because He delights to show mercy.*” Who is a God like unto thee?

Let me ask you a question. Have you ever noticed, that all of the so-called gods of the world are strict, mean, hard, unforgiving, and demanding type of gods? They are keeping people in fear and bondage and slavery, always afraid. That’s the gods of this world. “*But, who is a God like unto thee, O Lord?*” *Who forgives iniquity, who delights in mercy?*” He’s not only able to save but willing to save the greatest sinner who will come to God by Him. “*Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*” That’s why He came to save sinners of whom I’m the chief. People say, “Well, I’m such a great sinner.” He’s a great Savior! “Oh, but I’m so weak.” He’s so strong! “*And when I’m weak, then am I strong!*” “I’m afraid I’ll fail again.” You will, and He’ll forgive again and again and again. “*He delights to show mercy.*” “But I’ve been so wicked, my past is one of the worst stories that can be told.” “*He delights to show mercy and is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.*” That’s the reason He says, “*Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come to the water, ye that labor and are heavy laden; come and I’ll give you rest.*” Why do we have a good hope? The reason is because He’s merciful, ever merciful, and ever merciful.

**Here’s the second reason: Verse 22**, the second reason for a good hope, “*His compassions fail not.*” He’s not only merciful; He loves us. My friend, listen to me a moment, will you? Love is not something that God does, love is what God is. The scripture does not say that God is a God of love, the scripture says, “*God is love.*” There is no love outside of God. God is love and that is His nature. His love for Christ and for us in Christ is everlasting. He’s always been love; He is love. It is everlasting, both ways. He said, “*I’m alpha, the beginning and omega, the end. I’m the beginning and the end.*” He said, “*I’ve drawn you with an everlasting love. I’ve loved you with an everlasting love.*” He’s always loved us.

Not only is His love everlasting, it’s unchanging. He said, “*I’m the Lord, I change not. He’s the same today, yesterday, and forever.*” His love never altered. The love of people changes, but not His; His is always the same; “*I never change.*” His love is infinite. Our Lord prayed in **John 17**, He said, “*Thou has loved them as you loved me.*” Can you imagine that? How much does God love His children? He loves them as much as He loved His only Begotten Son. “*Thou has loved them, even as you loved Me.*” His love is free. “*Herein is love, not that we loved God.*”

Our love so often, is in (response). If someone loves us, we love them. If someone does something for us, we do something for them. If someone forgives us, we forgive them. It’s usually a response, isn’t it, most of the time? His love is not a responsive love. “*Herein is love, not that we love God at all, He loved us.*” “*We love Him because He loved us.*” His love initially came to us, it’s free and it is sovereign. His love is for sinners, grave sinners. Don’t worry about the depth of your sin; you can never bring a sinner to Christ, whom He cannot cleanse. He’s able to save all sinners. “*God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” He said, “*I didn’t come to call the*

*righteous, I came to call sinners.*” His love is in Christ. That’s where it is, so don’t look anywhere else. It’s in Christ. *“Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord,”* (Romans 8:39).

“Oh love of God, how rich, how pure, how measureless, how strong, everlasting, infinite, free, sovereign, infinite in Christ, everlasting. It shall forever more endure the saints and angels song. Could we with ink the ocean fill, where the skies of parchment made, every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade, to write the love of God above, and drain that ocean dry. Nor could the scroll contain the whole nor stretch from sky to sky.”

You school teachers will appreciate this. A little fellow came to the teacher and said, “Can I have a clean paper, I’ve messed up mine.” She said, “Anytime, anytime.” And this school boy has to forever go before my merciful, gracious Lord who’s compassion fails not, and say to Him, “Could I have a clean piece of paper, can I start over; I sure did mess up this one?” That’s right! If we can confess our sins, He’s faithful and just and He’s compassionate and merciful to forgive us of all our sins. I like that, yes I do.

“Come ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore. Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power. Yes, pity, mercy, love and power!

All right, here’s the **third reason** that we have a good hope, **Verse 23**. The third reason for a good hope is, *“Great is His faithfulness.”* It’s not because we’re faithful that we’re saved and have a good hope, it’s because He is. Somebody said, “Are you going to heaven?” Somebody else replied, “Yes, I’m holding on and keeping on.” No, that’s not the reason that I’m going to heaven. That’s not the reason I’m saved. I’m saved because He holds me. I’m kept by the power of God through faith. *“He that hath begun a good work is able to finish it in the day of Christ.”* He’s faithful, He’s merciful, and He’s love and faithful. God is faithful to Himself.

**Numbers 23** says, *“God is not a man that He should lie.”* You can bank on it. God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life before the world began. *“God is not a man that He should lie, neither the Son of Man that He should change or repent. Hath He said; shall He not do it? Hath He spoken, shall He not make it good?”* That’s my reason. He said, “He’ll do it.” He spoke it and He’ll make it good. God’s faithful; He’s faithful to Himself, and He’s faithful to His purpose. *“Whom He foreknew, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, in whom He predestinated He called, and whom He called, He justified, and whom He justified, He glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God can be for me, who can be against me?”* (Romans 8:29-30).

God is faithful to His Son. *“All that my Father giveth me shall come to me, and Him that cometh to me, I’ll in no wise cast out. I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of Him that sent me. This is the will of Him that sent me, that all of which He hath given me, I’ll lose nothing.”* He’s faithful to Himself, to His purpose, and to His Son. He’s faithful to His people. His gifts and calling are without change.

Question! Do you expect to see the thief on the cross, the man that died on the cross? Do you expect to see him in heaven? “Well yes, preacher, I do.” He never preached, he never witnessed, he never worked, he never washed, he never walked a step for Jesus and he never won a soul. What did he do? (Nothing, but believe on Christ). Well, how do you know that he’ll be in heaven? Christ said so! “*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*” If He said it, you can bank on it; He’s faithful. There’s no other reason. That’s a good reason for a good hope.

God is merciful, God is love and God is faithful. “*My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life and they will never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand, my Father gave them to me. No one is greater than my Father and no one can pluck them out of my Father’s hand and I and my Father are one.*” They are secure. You have my word on that.

The **fourth reason** why we have a good hope is, God is merciful, God is love, and God is faithful. Now listen, **Verse 24:** “*The Lord is my portion, sayeth my soul, therefore will I hope in Him.*” The Lord is my portion, therefore, I hope in Him. There’s no hope in me, in the church, not in my priest and not in my pastor. I hope in Him (Jesus Christ). He’s my portion! Now, when we think of the word, portion, if you were to ask a boy or a girl, “what is a portion, you would say an allotment?” They would say a part or a portion is an allotment. There’s a portion of a pie or something. That is not what the word is here. “*The Lord is my portion, sayeth my soul, therefore will I hope in Him.*” The word here, the Lord is my inheritance. The Lord is my reward. That’s what God said to Abraham in **Genesis: 15**, “*Abraham, I am your shield, (your protection), and I am your exceeding and great reward.*” I’m everything to you. “*In whom we have an inheritance, It’s incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*”

It’s not a what, it’s a (whom). Christ is our inheritance. It’s not the pardon; it’s the person. It’s not the benefits; it’s the being. It’s not the gift; it’s the giver. It’s not the place called heaven; it’s the person called Christ. You see, your children; they feel secure in your home. They have food, they have clothing and they have shelter. My friends, their confidence and trust is not in the food, or in the clothing or in the shelter, they’re confidence and trust and hope is in the parent. As long as the parent is there, they have all of these things. If you take the parent away, these things are gone. That’s the reason I say; “*The Lord is my portion.*” He is my inheritance; He is my life. He is my hope of glory. Do you see that? Our hope is in Him, who is our inheritance.

Once it was the blessing, now it’s the Lord. Once it was the feeling and now it’s His Word. Once it was the gifts I wanted and now it’s the giver I own. Once I sought the healing and now for Him, alone. The Lord is my expectation and inheritance. “*He’s my portion.*” He’s all and in all.

Now, **the fifth reason**, and I'll close. Look at **verse 25**. What are the five reasons? Do you remember? First, we have a hope. When I call this to mind, all of this, who He is, who I am, what salvation is, what the law requires, what justice demands, I have a good hope because He is merciful to sinners. He loves His people in Christ. He's faithful to His word; He's faithful to His purpose, faithful to His Son, faithful to His people whom He calls. I'll tell you this, "*He is my portion*," and He is my inheritance. He's my heaven.

The fifth reason, the Lord is good. "*He's good unto them that wait for Him.*" He's good to the soul that seeks Him. He's good to them. Our God has a time for all things. For all that He does and for every purpose under heaven and He will bless those that wait for Him. The Lord is good to them that wait for Him. What did David say in **Psalm 27**? "*I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*" I wait for the Lord. "*Be of good courage and He will strengthen your heart, wait I say, on the Lord.*" He's good to them that wait for Him. Wait for Him; just wait! In His own time, in the fullness of time, He'll bless. He's good to those that are patiently waiting on Him. He's good to them that seek Him. They seek Him in His Word, they seek Him sincerely and they seek Him continually.

There was a woman that came to Him one day, a Canaanite woman. She said, "*Lord, have mercy on me.*" He didn't answer her a word. She didn't leave. She said, "Lord have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously ill." He said, "*I'm sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.*" She still didn't leave. She said, "Lord, have mercy on me." He said, "*It's not right to give the children's bread to dogs.*" She said, "Lord that's true and I'm a dog and I'm unworthy, but I'm your dog, and dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Master's table. I'm staying here until you give me some crumbs." He said, "*O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou desire, thy faith hath made the whole.*"

Oh, I'll tell you, the Lord is good! He's good to them that wait. They know there is no one else to whom they can turn. There is nowhere else they can go. There is no other fountain. They must have Christ, they must have Him, and so they wait and seek Him. They seek Him in His Word. They seek Him sincerely. They seek Him continually and wait upon Him. The Lord is good to them that wait on Him.

That's my message, five reasons for a good hope. I have a good hope. Why? Because of what you've done and who you are? No, not at all! It's because of who He is. He's merciful, He's love, and He's faithful. Yes, He's my portion, and He's my hope, and the Lord, I have found, is good to them that seek Him and to them that wait.

