



# SOUTHSIDE

## MIDWEEK NEWSLETTER

### 9.30.20

### The Lost Language of Lament – Barrett

Several of you have asked me for the nine requests that are common to the Psalms of lament in the Old Testament. I went through these in my sermon this past Sunday. Mark Vroegop, in his book *Dark Clouds Deep Mercy*, details these requests and I simply connected each of the requests to a specific place of lament. Our pain takes us to a certain place. Here is the list of the nine requests:

“Arise, O Lord!”	place of longing
“Grant us help.”	place of helplessness
“Let justice be done.”	place of injustice
“Remember your covenant.”	place of loneliness
“Don’t remember our sins.”	place of brokenness
“Restore us!”	place of weariness
“Do not be silent.”	place of doubt
“Teach me”	place of awareness
“Vindicate me”	place of hurt

One of my favorite stories about my kids is when we were at the breakfast table one morning and had been learning about the 10 commandments. I asked the kids if any of them could tell me the 3<sup>rd</sup> command. Milbrey Ann was probably about 4 years old at the time and she quickly shouted out, “It’s to not speak in Spanish.” Confused, I asked her, “What are you talking about?” And she responded, “You know, Daddy, the 3<sup>rd</sup> command is to not take the Lord’s name in Spain.”

It’s hard enough learning how to speak a language that is familiar to us. Learning how to speak a new and unfamiliar language is very difficult and takes time and practice. If it is true that lament is the “lost language of the church” then we need help in learning how to speak a language that is unfamiliar to our tongues. All of us have probably attempted to learn a foreign language at some point in our lives. I took three years of Spanish in high school, another year of Spanish in college, and then took classes in Greek and Hebrew while working on my Master’s degree at Lipscomb University. I can recall in all three instances creating little lists like the one above to help me to memorize vocabulary, conjugations, and grammar rules. Similarly, as we grow in our understanding of the language of lament, the above list gives us a tool to help us know what to say when we find ourselves at one of these places. Let me encourage you to cry out to God from your place. The place that is specific to you pain. The psalms of lament give us the language to use.

## The Conversion of St. Gregory – Gregory Williams

A few years ago I stood before the Southside family and shared this story and I want to share it again.

*You've heard the saying, "Kids can be so cruel". Humans can be cruel at any age, but it seems more damaging when we are kids. When I was a kid, I wasn't very masculine. I didn't like baseball. I didn't like basketball or football. In fact, I wasn't into sports at all. I had more feminine qualities than other boys – the way I walked, the way I talked. My mannerisms were not what our culture would call masculine. I was a magnet for ridicule from other kids, mostly boys. I often got called a sissy. Other names were thrown my way that I won't mention here – names that I didn't even know the meaning of, but they hurt all the same. And so, I was labeled. "You're a girl". "You're a sissy". "You're not like other boys". As kids, we don't have the skills to filter out lies like we do when we are older and wiser, so I believed that what they were calling me was true. I really believed it. I didn't have the voice of any other person in my life to speak the truth of who I really was.*

*I have many other labels I could share with you – labels that literally became ingrained into my DNA. Years of reinforcement of these lies were exactly what the enemy had in store for me.*

*BUT GOD, rich in grace and mercy, started me on a journey in the mid 1990s – a journey of healing. He wanted to make me new – BRAND NEW. I was resistant and afraid. I asked him to make me new overnight and he said no. I didn't understand his answer of no, but I do now. You see, he knew that the lies that took years to soak into the core of my identity could take just as much time to replace them with the truth of who HE says I am. It's a spiritual surgery; a 'lies-ectomy', if you will. There is beauty in a long journey that can't be experienced on a quick trip.*

*Over the past 25 years, my journey has been very productive. God has opened up doors and has given me the motivation and courage to step through them. He has put incredible people in my path.*

*One particular day several years ago, as I sat in my counselor's office, he asked me what my new name was. I didn't understand what he was asking me. But, he knew that God wanted to give me a new name. I left his office that day with that name. It's two words. The second word is my given name – Gregory. I've been called Greg all of my life, but there is something about being called Gregory that is new. I like it. It reminds me that I'm not who I used to be. I am who I was born to be. I am who I was destined by my perfect father to be. So, that's the second part of my new name.*

*The first part of my new name is Saint. God sees his children as saints. That's a label I want to wear. This world doesn't understand that label, but the world also doesn't know Him. My email address starts with 'saintgregory'. I've gotten mixed reactions from people when they see my email address. My mother thought that I had converted to Catholicism. Other people see the word 'saint' and they think that I'm proclaiming that I'm perfect. It's led to some good conversations.*

*I'm still on this journey and will be as long as my heart is beating. There are days when I don't believe my new name. I slip back into believing the lies, but it's getting better all the time. Now, you don't have to call me by my new name. I will still answer to Greg. But, if you ever think to call me 'Gregory' or even 'Saint Gregory', it sure would mean a lot. I need that reminder often.*

*Praise our Father who loves us enough to make us new and call us by a new name.*