**Reflection**

As I said in the beginning we decided to prepare a service focusing on age and as the majority of our congregation is older we chose this stage of life to focus on. In this reflection I have chosen to look at two things **Lament** and **Wisdom**.

Why you may ask, let’s start with lament which I feel is often done in private and perhaps needs to be talked about more and acknowledged as a way we might come to God. It can be helpful to us to talk about the troubles we might be having and perhaps a feeling of anger, loneliness and loss.

Wisdom on the other hand is something we might have assigned to us because we are seen as old and wise but perhaps we could develop this status and be truly wise.

**Lament** is to feel or express sorrow or regret for

the 4 steps of lament are

1) turning to God in prayer,

2) bringing our complaints,

3) asking boldly, and

4) choosing to trust (or praise).

We see this in the Psalms, e.g : (Psalm 130:1) “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!” and the one we heard today (Psalm 6:3-4) “My soul, is in deep anguish, How long Lord, how long? Turn Lord and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love”.

Lamentation can be described as a loud, religious “Ouch!” To begin with, the laments we find in Scripture are addressed directly to God. age creeping up on us and the loss of what we once had or the tragedies that have touched our lives

What is a LAMENT? To lament means to outwardly and visibly express sorrow or mourning or regret. It can even mean to wail!!! To cry. To yell. Even Jesus Christ lamented!

Hebrews 5:7 NIV “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears…”

Let this sink in. Picture Jesus out alone with His Father offering up LOUD CRIES and TEARS. The perfect Son of God, wailing, lamenting, crying. Does this astonish us and if so should it

Here’s an important point: BIBLICAL lamenting is far more than the grumbling and complaining we can do so readily. We are all probably quite good at whining from time to time.

Rather, biblical lamenting is learning to take our pain and our complaints TO GOD….And the ultimate goal is to trust him more…even if the pain remains.

We could say that godly lamenting is to move from “Grief to Belief.”

There are often things that happen in our life that seem unfair, unjust so railing against these things and telling God is often how we respond. but in time with faith and trust we learn and know we will be forgiven and this anger we might come with will go in time

Grief and pain can be untamed and vicious. So we must learn how to give voice to our pain. The Scriptures teach us how to voice it to God.

What we learn from reading about Lament is that it is ok “ expressing our distress to God is an appropriate response to suffering”

**Poem**

**Wisdom**

Wise old man/woman, does wisdom really come with age?

We know we possess a wealth of knowledge and experience and are still learning or on occasions choosing not to learn the latest technical development because we can get by without it! We can all identify those we consult on a variety of matters knowing we will get wise counsel and are also aware that some younger people approach us for guidance or thoughts on matters of concern to them

**Deuteronomy 32:7** Remember the days of old, consider the generations long past. Ask your father/mother and, your elders, they will tell and explain to you

This indicates the importance of honouring elders, the value of accumulated wisdom, respecting and learning from older individuals. I’m sure many of you could tell some family/whanau stories that have been passed down, environmental matters spring to mind. Stories will often relate to why you don’t plant things here and why it’s best not to fish there. A built up knowledge and respect for our environment.

Proverbs provide a great deal on gaining wisdom and knowledge and the importance of listening

James3: 13-15 The Wrong Kind of Wisdom Ambitious, boastful “know it all”

James 13: 17-18, The Right Kind of Wisdom is deeds done and humility

Wisdom is Moral

Wisdom is Relational

Wisdom is Spiritual

Wisdom is Humble

Wisdom comes from the Spirit. And it operates on a bigger scale than our human minds can comprehend.

Wisdom doesn’t just absorb facts about the world. It places those facts in the larger story of what God is doing in the world. And it leads you to live according to that end.

“Wisdom” that tells you to rely on yourself does not account for how limited and fallible we are as humans. However, true wisdom recognizes and embraces these limits. It admits it can’t calculate all that needs to be figured out. Nor see the whole picture affected by our individual actions. Nor even bring about the best hoped-for results through its best efforts.

True wisdom is humble before God. In wisdom, we look to Him for guidance through his Spirit. Without the Spirit, there is no wisdom.

The reading from Luke identifies two older people who were very aware of the Spirit in their lives they knew who Jesus was. Drawing attention to their ages shows that the right wisdom in this case was associated with age

James shows us that the desire to have the “smartest person in the room” kind of wisdom settles for so much less than what wisdom really offers. Instead, the Bible invites us into a wisdom that incorporates all that’s possible through the power of the Spirit.

When you seek to grow in wisdom you also glorify God.

In conclusion Lament is ok. We sometime need to vent we need to grieve we need to take our feelings out on someone and God is there for us and if we listen we will get some answers or get to understand the situation in a different way.

Wisdom is not bestowed on us all because we are old but we can ask for God to help us desire, orient us toward, and work in us to develop more of this right kind of wisdom.

Poem