

# *New Year 2021*

## *New Mercies (January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021)*

### PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

### DISCUSSION

#### **Opening Prayer:** (1-2 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.*

Thank the Father for loving us so much that He came to us in the person of Jesus to sacrifice Himself on our behalf while we were still sinners! Pray that as we navigate the chaotic waters of our cultural moment that we would humbly listen and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we seek to love one another, just as He has loved us. Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to remind us of the victory we have over sin in Jesus Christ! Pray that the Spirit would open our hearts to speak honestly with God our Father, see new opportunities to serve our neighbors, and continue to transform us into the likeness of Jesus!

#### **Discussion:** (45-60 minutes)

##### What's Going on This Week

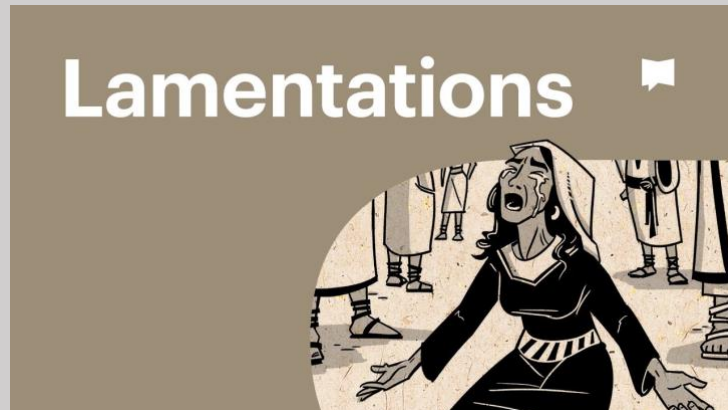
This Sunday, Pastor Buz Hannon led us into our New Year's sermon titled *New Mercies*. Pastor Buz brings our attention to *Lamentations 3* in order to point out a poem that personifies Israel in their bleakest moments. Pastor Buz shows us that when we are suffering, it is okay to come to our heavenly Father with all of our emotions and pain. In addition, Pastor Buz reminds us to remember how God has been good to us throughout our lives and is challenging us to take on that perspective as we navigate our hardships and trials. Finally, Pastor Buz challenges us to keep our eyes open to how God is continuing to move all around us moving our perspective beyond what is in front of us to what God is doing!

**“New Mercies does not mean that God has not been already merciful to us. New Mercies mean that God renews them for us, always, and continually.” – Pastor Buz Hannon**

## Suggested Questions

**Check-In: Icebreaker** – What is one of the positive things from 2020 that you would like to hold onto in 2021?

**Study Tip:** In this week's study guide, we will be looking at the heart of the entire book of Lamentations. As a whole, the book of Lamentations offers us a glimpse into the depths of the soul of Israel during their time of immense hardship. The Lamentations act as a series of poems that personify the destruction of Israel. While there is debate as to whether or not Jeremiah wrote the book of Laments, there is no doubt that the Lamentations are uniquely aligned with the events of Jeremiah who prophesied in Judah before, during, and after the fall of Jerusalem and her temple at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 B.C. As you walk through this study guide and this Bible Project video, take each line slowly and pay attention to the different elements of the poem that spark hope from the poet's point of view. Then take a step back and visualize how the book of Lamentations is foreshadowing the one who would grieve for the people of Israel and stand in the place of their suffering.



**Objective #1: Honestly identify your feelings and attitude towards suffering.**

*Primary Texts: Lamentations 3:1-15; Ps. 34:18* – Pastor Buz begins his sermon by pointing out that even though it may feel like the Lord is pouring out His wrath on us from a distance as we suffer, we can rest assured that the Lord is with us in our suffering. **As you read the opening laments of chapter 3, which lines resonate with you the most with you? Share why you selected that specific line.**

**Objective #2: Hold onto a specific verse in this section and remember God's goodness in our lives!**

*Primary Texts: Lamentations 3:16-33* – Next, Pastor Buz uses these passages to show how the poet of Lamentations reaches a point where he loses all endurance, hope, happiness, and peace. However, Pastor Buz points out that this is a key turning point in the entire book of Lamentations that points out how God's mercies are made new every day! **As you reflect on this segment of Lamentations (specifically verses 22-30) which line do you wish to hold onto as you move forward into the New Year? What are some previous life events that will help you remember that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases?**

**Objective #3: Keep your eyes open to how God is moving all around us!**

*Primary Texts: Lamentations 3:34-66* – Finally, Pastor Buz concludes his sermon by praying that the eyes of our hearts would begin to see how God is moving all around us rather than how our circumstances may be crumbling or deteriorating. **What stands out to you about the conversation the poet has with himself as he cries out to God about how to deal with his surrounding enemies? What are some of the ways that you can begin to have honest conversations with God so that He might alter your perspective so that you can begin to see His work?**

### **Closing Prayer:** (5-10 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.*

Thank our Heavenly Father for sending His son at the perfect time! Praise the Son for emptying himself by becoming a human in a humble manger so that he might give up his own life so that we could be free from the bondage of our spiritual enemy! Ask that the Holy Spirit would mold our hearts and continue to equip us to live, love, and forgive like Jesus. Finally, pray that we as a church would have the courage and boldness to proclaim the gospel of Jesus as we celebrate his coming and share time with our friends, family, and loved ones.

### **THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

**-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3crosses.org/coronavirus). If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

**-Community Groups 2021:** For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at [avanegas@3crosses.org](mailto:avanegas@3crosses.org)