

Lamentations

Chapter 3

Great Is Your Faithfulness

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; 2 he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; 3 surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long. 4 He has made my flesh and my skin waste away; he has broken my bones; 5 he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; 6 he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. 7 He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has made my chains heavy; 8 though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; 9 he has blocked my ways with blocks of stones; he has made my paths crooked. 10 He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding; 11 he turned aside my steps and tore me to pieces; he has made me desolate; 12 he bent his bow and set me as a target for his arrow. 13 He drove into my kidneys the arrows of his quiver; 14 I have become the laughingstock of all peoples, the object of their taunts all day long. 15 He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood. 16 He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; 17 my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; 18 so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD." 19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! 20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. 21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: 22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. 27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. 28 Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; 29 let him put his mouth in the dust—there may yet be hope; 30 let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. 31 For the Lord will not cast off forever, 32 but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; 33 for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men. 34 To crush underfoot all the prisoners of the earth, 35 to deny a man justice in the presence of the Most High, 36 to subvert a man in his lawsuit, the Lord does not approve. 37 Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? 39 Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins? 40 Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD! 41 Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven: 42 "We have transgressed and rebelled, and you have not forgiven. 43 "You have wrapped yourself with anger and pursued us, killing without pity; 44 you have wrapped yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through. 45 You have made us scum and garbage among the peoples. 46 "All our enemies open their mouths against us; 47 panic and pitfall have come upon us, devastation and destruction; 48 my eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. 49 "My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, 50 until the LORD from heaven looks down and sees; 51 my eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the daughters of my city. 52 "I have been hunted like a bird by those who were my enemies without cause; 53 they flung me alive into the pit and cast stones on me; 54 water closed over my head; I said, 'I am lost.' 55 "I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit; 56 you heard my plea, 'Do not close your ear to my cry for help!' 57 You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!' 58 "You have taken up my cause, O Lord; you have redeemed my life. 59 You have seen the wrong done to me, O LORD; judge my cause. 60 You have seen all their vengeance, all their plots against me.

61 “You have heard their taunts, O LORD, all their plots against me. 62 The lips and thoughts of my assailants are against me all the day long. 63 Behold their sitting and their rising; I am the object of their taunts. 64 “You will repay them, O LORD, according to the work of their hands. 65 You will give them dullness of heart; your curse will be on them. 66 You will pursue them in anger and destroy them from under your heavens, O LORD.”

In this lament, each Hebrew letter appears in alphabetical order at the beginning of three verses as if to nail down each thought. Advice on how to bear chastisement reads like a page from Proverbs or Job. A full confession of guilt and an unreserved plea for pardon are needed if there is to be an escape from the consequences of sinning against the Lord. Yet deliverance is as certain as if it had already come to pass. In order to awaken faith in God’s promises, the poet lets an unnamed person testify how the Lord heard his cry “from the depths of the pit” (vv 52-57) (TLSB)

3:1–2 *I... me.*† The author speaks not only for himself but also for the suffering community of which he is a part (see “we” and “us” in vv. 22, 40–47). The Hebrew text of v. 1 is at the exact center of the book. (CSB)

3:1 *affliction.* Here Jeremiah writes in setting forth his own experiences as characteristic of the misery which is often the lot of God’s children in the world, as He Himself chastises those whom He loves. (Kretzmann)

rod of his wrath. See Job 9:34; 21:9. The reference is to Babylon. (CSB)

Cf Jb 16:6–17; 19:8–22; Ps 38; 88; 109; 143 for similar outbursts of pain caused by the Lord. (TLSB)

his. God’s. (CSB)

3:2 *darkness without light.* See Job 12:25; characteristic of the “day of the LORD” (Am 5:18). (CSB)

This is the manner in which the pious of all times have regarded adversity, as though they had been shut out from the rays of God’s mercy. (Kretzmann)

3:3 *again and again* – This is continual and severe chastisements. It is smiting without ceasing. (Kretzmann)

3:4 *skin waste away.* They were wasting away with sickness and premature old age. (Kretzmann)

3:5 *bitterness.* Lit. “poison.” (CSB)

This is (travail), that is, with poison and heavy afflictions. (Kretzmann)

3:6 *darkness.* The grave. (CSB)

Death terminates all physical sight. The prophet considers himself dead to God. (TLSB)

3:7 *walled.* The Hebrew for this word is the same as that for “barred” in v. 9 (see Job 19:8; Hos 2:6). (CSB)

cannot escape. See Ps 88:8. (CSB)

3:8 *shuts out my prayer.* This is a refusal to hear and making the afflictions all the harder to bear. (Kretzmann)

3:9 *blocks of stone.* Of enormous size, like those used in the foundation of Solomon's temple (see 1Ki 5:17). (CSB)

made ... crooked. Or "ruined/destroyed" (as in Isa 24:1); for the imagery see Job 30:13. (CSB)

The prophet cannot see his way out of the dilemma. The rubble in the street becomes a metaphor for the spiritual trouble he experiences. (TLSB)

3:10 *Like a bear ... like a lion.* See Ps 10:9; 17:12; Jer 4:7; 5:6; 49:19; 50:44. (CSB)

The bear is lurking to pounce upon his prey and the lion is crouched in ambush, ready to spring upon the unsuspecting traveler. (Kretzmann)

3:11 *tore me to pieces* so that he went astray, so that his members were as severed from his body; casting him away, lonely and miserable. (Kretzmann)

3:12 *as a target.* God was taking deliberate aim at His target (Israel). (Kretzmann)

3:13 *kidneys.* This was the vital organs of the body, as we now speak of the heart. (Kretzmann)

3:14 See Jeremiah's complaint in Jer 20:7. (CSB)

laughtingstock. This was as when they mockingly set aside his advice not to go down to Egypt, so that they made him their laughing-stock. (Kretzmann)

3:15 *filled me with bitterness.* The Hebrew underlying this phrase is translated "overwhelm me with misery" in Job 9:18. For the significance of the bitter herbs eaten during the Passover meal. (CSB)

3:16 *grind on gravel.* He had only stones and grit to chew rather than bread (cf Mt 7:9). (TLSB)

3:18 *My endurance ... my hope.* Other sufferers were tempted to give up hope. (TLSB)

His vitality was sapped by his afflictions, and his hope and trust in Jehovah had left him. Thus even children of the Lord are at times so deeply affected by the griefs which they must bear that they come very near to despair. (Kretzmann)

the LORD. The first mention of God in ch. 3. (CSB)

3:19 The poet remembers all these experiences and verbalizes them once again. (CSB)

affliction and ... wandering. See 1:7. (CSB)

His was the sufferings about which he has just complained so bitterly. (Kretzmann)

3:21–26† The high point of the book of Lamentations. (CSB)

3:21 *I call to mind* – Namely, the fact that his soul is deeply afflicted by the mere remembrance of his sufferings, he is taking it to heart. (Kretzmann)

I have hope – Throwing off the feeling of despair which threatened him, he thinks of the fact that God alone can help him, and upon this fact he places his hope. A consideration of the boundless mercy of the Lord strengthens his hope. (Kretzmann)

3:22-33 There is so much sadness in this book. All sadness, and the trials and traumas that cause it, is deserved, though that is not the way we typically think. Jeremiah, generally assumed to be the author of the book, has seen the collapse of Judah, including the exile into Babylon. Thus he now laments the horrible tragedy. This tragedy has been brought on by the leaders, who departed from submission to the headship of God Almighty. But, of course, the people followed and rebelled themselves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

There is an interesting structure for this book. Chapters 1–2, 4 have each verse beginning with a different letter of the alphabet. In chapter 3, Jeremiah writes 22 sets of three lines with each set using a new letter. Our pericope has *cheth* through *kaph*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

The beauty of this passage is that, in the midst of delineating the sadness, God promises good—perfect relief in the form of hope and exhortation to wait for God. The theme of patience is strong here. The focus is Yahweh, and it is he for whom one must wait. The exhortation is to wait patiently and to wait in quietness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

3:22-24 These verse stand at the center of the laments and offer the clearest expression of hope. (TLSB)

3:22 *steadfast love*. See v. 32. The Hebrew for this phrase is plural (as also in Ps 107:43) and denotes the Lord’s loving faithfulness to his covenant promises (see Ps 89:1). (CSB)

chesed, the “steadfast love,” of Yahweh fail? Never! Why? Because there is no end (*lo’-tamenu*) to his compassions (note the plural here: *rachama*). It demonstrates that God cannot end his desire to have good come to his people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

steadfast love ... mercies. Plural to show how the Lord will multiply His blessings to the people. (TLSB)

3:23 *They*. The “great love” and “compassions” (v. 22) of the Lord. (CSB)

every morning. See Isa 33:2. (CSB)

chadash, “new” every morning. It’s not that there are actually new ones, but that every morning they are still there as if a whole new set of compassions have come. *’emunah*, “steadfastness, faithfulness.” God will always be true to who and what he is. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

great is your faithfulness. It is beyond measure. (CSB)

This is the outflow of His compassionate love in fulfilling His promises. These wonderful facts the sacred writer now applies to himself. (Kretzmann)

3:24 *The LORD is my portion*.† See Ps 73:26; 142:5. (CSB)

He can claim God for himself as confidently as an heir asserts his right to his inheritance (cf Ps 119:57; 142:5). (TLSB)

cheleq, “portion,” that which makes a life of meaning and value; that in which we rejoice and even thrill for the eternal nature of it. *’ochil*, “wait” (some translations, “hope”). With the true meaning of life that comes from his being my portion, I can wait, both for what he will bring to me in this life and for the next life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

He can claim God for himself as confidently as an heir asserts his right to his inheritance. (TLSB)

therefore I will hope. The Hebrew for this phrase is the same as that for “therefore I have hope” in v. 21 and serves as a refrain. (CSB)

Jeremiah is resting his trust in Him in the certainty of faith. (Kretzmann)

3:25 *The LORD is good.* See Ps 34:8; 86:5. (CSB)

tov, “good” as in Jesus’ response to the rich young ruler, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone” (Mk 10:18). God is the only true source of goodness. Out of that goodness flows the very best for us. The best is to be in his presence, though cloudily now but perfectly then. *tidrāsh*, “seek”: Those who seek are those who already belong to him through their faith, not unbelievers, who do not seek God, but flee from him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

whose hope is in him. See Ps 25:3; 69:7. (CSB)

Jeremiah is looking to Him alone for help and deliverance. The thoughts of Jehovah are always good and kind, even when He causes pain. Though man be in trouble, he should yet perceive the goodness of the Lord, so that he cannot defiantly murmur or faint-heartedly despair. (Kretzmann)

3:26 *It is good.* Trials are sent by God for a wholesome purpose and should be borne with patient submission (Jb 5:17–18; Ps 37:7–8; Heb 12:6). (TLSB)

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “An unlearned person (as I truly confess myself to be) never acts more unlearnedly than when he presumes to teach what he knows not. Therefore, to teach is the business neither of the unlearned in his rashness, nor of the monk in his boldness, nor of the penitent in his distress... I invite and entreat you ... at least by the example of my silence, to learn from me to be silent, you who press me in your words to teach what I do not know” (*SLSB*, pp 113–14). (TLSB)

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wəyachil wədumam, “wait quietly” (or silently). Waiting is emphasized today. That for which one waits is God’s timing, not ours, and for God’s answer. One doesn’t tell God what is best. One waits quietly, which means, in part, no complaining. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

salvation - litəshu ‘at, “salvation.” This is that for which we wait. There is nothing more important for which to wait. This could be an earthly salvation, such as rescue from enemies, or it could be eternal salvation, that is, heaven. Either way, it is for God that we wait and for that which he brings to us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

3:27 *a man that he bear the yoke of his youth.* Echoes the thought of v. 1: “the man who has seen affliction.” (CSB)

Undergo training as a young ox would and so learn the Lord’s discipline and ways. (TLSB)

ki-yisa’ ol binə’urayw, “that he bear the yoke in his youth.” Nothing better than learning early what it means to suffer, and then to do it well. In one’s youth, one is still pliable, moldable, and the lessons learned will stay, to be used later. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

The disciplinary value of various sufferings may have an opportunity to work patience in his heart and enable him to bear the burdens of age with greater fortitude and trust in the Lord. He who has learned to take up his cross in patient resignation while he was still young will have no trouble in exercising the proper submissiveness when he is old. (Kretzmann)

3:28 *sit alone.* Reflection of repentance, without complaint about what God has sent or allowed. (TLSB)

yeshev badad wəyiddom, “let him sit alone in silence.” This means that one simply sits quietly without complaining or despair. One of the hardest things in life is to suffer and then wait without complaining. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

it. The yoke (see v. 27). (CSB)

3:29 *in the dust - be’aphar*, “in the dust.” How strange that one would prostrate himself so that his mouth is in the dust. It symbolizes that one bows very low before the Almighty because of the stark difference between our lowliness and God’s holiness. With one’s mouth full of dust one cannot talk, thus indicating even more that one is to be silent before God. *tiqwah*: can there be “hope” in prostration? Hope is only in God. Therefore, one bows most humbly before God Almighty in complete submission. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

there may yet be hope. See Job 11:18. (CSB)

Namely, that God will have compassion and withdraw His chastening Land. (Kretzmann)

3:30 *give his cheek.* See Mt 5:39. (CSB)

There’s more to come to the one who is being disciplined. *ləmakehu lechi*, “his cheek to the one who strikes.” Turning the cheek identifies one with the Messiah. This suffering is more than just good for self, though that is plenty enough. It is for the good of those nearby. A believer never looks only to self and the salvation of his own soul. *cherpah*, “reproach.” This word is reminiscent of Ps 69:9, used also by St. Paul to tell the good news of how the Jews’ (and our) reproaches fell on Christ (Rom 15:3). Further identification with the Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

filled with insults. See Ps 123:3–4. (CSB)

This is the scorn which men heap upon him for his trust in God. Note the climax beginning with the easiest matter and ending with the most difficult, the patient bearing of insults, if it serves the glory of the Lord. (Kretzmann)

3:31 They went on as if nothing had happened. Outwardly, they worshiped the Lord as before. They continued to claim a special relationship to Him. They reminded Him of His promise to Abraham, whose descendants they were. But they did all the evil they could. Under such conditions could the Lord forgive them? (PBC)

Israel implies that her misfortune, by which she was receiving an everlasting mark, was due entirely to the Lord's unreasonable anger. (Kretzmann)

3:32 The same God who judges also restores (see Job 5:18; Ps 30:5; Isa 54:8). (CSB)

hogah, a hiphil, causative of “grief.” Yes, as hard as it is to comprehend, God does cause grief, as each needs. We should not be surprised that God works within the sinful condition in which we live. We should count it joy that we have been found worthy of discipline from God himself. *racham*, “compassion.” God acting again. Compassion comes according to his nature of steadfast love—he cannot do otherwise. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

steadfast love. Faithfulness and unflinching love are often used together to sum up God’s covenant mercies toward his people. (CSB)

His grace and love outweigh the burden of even the severest affliction. (Kretzmann)

3:33 *does not willingly afflict or grieve*. See Eze 18:23, 32; Hos 11:8; 2Pe 3:9. (CSB)

God takes no sadistic delight in making His creatures miserable, but His compassion and steadfast love assure us that the pain does not last longer than necessary (Ps 103:9; Jer 3:12; 31:20; Hos 11:8–9). (TLSB)

It is not because the Lord takes a vindictive delight in punishing men that He lays afflictions upon them, but because His chastisement is necessary for sinful men, for the furtherance of their soul's salvation. Cp. Heb. 12, 5-1. (Kretzmann)

‘innah, “afflict,” and *yagah*, “grieve.” God does not do this willingly. It is his alien work. But as with all Law, it drives the sinner to Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

3:34 *crush underfoot*. As the Babylonians had done in 586 B.C. (CSB)

Ambrose says, “The Lord humbles all the prisoners of the earth under His feet, in order that we may escape His judgment. (TLSB)

3:35 *deny a man justice*. As the leaders of Judah had done, in direct violation of the law (see Ex 23:6). (CSB)

This is as when a judge perverts justice before the very eyes of God, who sees and hears it all. (Kretzmann)

in the presence of the Most High. In the presence of those whom the Most High designates to dispense justice. (CSB)

Most High. The titles “most high,” “lord of heaven” and “creator of earth” were frequently applied to the chief Canaanite deity in ancient times. Terminology and location (Jerusalem was in central Canaan) thus indicate that Melchizedek was probably a Canaanite king-priest. But Abram, by

identifying Melchizedek's "God Most High" with the Lord (see v 22), bore testimony to the one true God, whom Melchizedek had come to know.) (CSB)

3:36 *subvert a man.* Men might, but God never does (see Job 8:3; 34:12). (CSB)

He very decidedly does not favor such injustice. The thoughts naturally arise at this point whether the Lord, then, has nothing to do with all such happenings. (Kretzmann)

3:37 *spoken and it came to pass.* He very decidedly does not favor such injustice. The thoughts naturally arise at this point whether the Lord, then, has nothing to do with all such happenings. (Kretzmann)

3:38 This is so that the one as well as the other is done by His command or permission. (Kretzmann)

3:39 *complain.* As the Israelites did in the desert (see Nu 11:1). (CSB)

WHEN PUNISHED – That is, to rectify the evil in the world, let each one lament over his sins. It is only by daily contrition and repentance that we make any headway in combating the evils of this present world. If we grow weary of this lifelong battle, acts of wickedness are bound to multiply. (Kretzmann)

3:40 *examine our ways.* Hebrew verbs for searching. (TLSB)

This is done in true contrition, to find the reason for God's displeasure and returning all the way, in sincere repentance. (Kretzmann)

3:41 *lift up ... hands.* This is a description of expectant prayer. (TLSB)

heaven. Where God is enthroned (see Ps 2:4). (CSB)

This is done with the last shred of hypocrisy banished. (Kretzmann)

3:42 *We have transgressed and rebelled.* For similar confessions see Ps 106:6; Da 9:5. (CSB)

Unless those who have transgressed and rebelled against the Lord seek His pardon, their sins remain unforgiven, creating a fatal separation between themselves and God. (TLSB)

He had not, like a weak earthly father, overlooked and condoned the transgression, but had meted out the punishment which it deserved. (Kretzmann)

3:43 *with anger ... pursued us.* See v. 66; Jer 29:18. (CSB)

killing without pity. See 2:21. (CSB)

The veil of His wrath kept Him, as it were, from feeling a weak sympathy. (Kretzmann)

3:44 *no prayer can pass through* – There was no help, therefore, was not forthcoming. (Kretzmann)

3:45 *scum and garbage.* They are cast out among the nations, which despise them. (TLSB)

Israel was ground down to the dust and had become an object of contempt among the heathen nations. (Kretzmann)

3:46 Their enemies would be gaping at them in a gesture of scorn and derision. (Kretzmann)

3:49 *my eyes will flow without ceasing* – There will be no abatement of the feeling of grief and therefore also no cessation of tears. (Kretzmann)

3:50 *until the from heaven looks down* – Namely, to make an end of His people's misery, to have mercy upon them. (Kretzmann)

3:51 *my eyes cause me grief* – Literally, "my eye puts an ache upon my soul," the pain of the eye from its ceaseless weeping affecting the soul as well. (Kretzmann)

daughters of my city. See 1:4, 18; 2:20–21; 5:11. (CSB)

Their fate was most deeply to be deplored. (Kretzmann)

3:52-63 Jeremiah details the depths of the deadly disasters from which God delivered him. (TLSB)

3:52 *like a bird.* See Ps 11:1. (CSB)

They were hunting him down like fowlers did. (Kretzmann)

3:53 *into the pit* – Though Jeremiah was plunged into a watery pit (cistern cf v. 54), he would have died of starvation rather than by drowning. (TLSB)

cast stones on me. See Lev 20:2, 27; 1Ki 12:18. (CSB)

They were desiring to destroy his life by taking such extreme measures, and cast a stone upon me, heaping this further indignity upon him as he was helpless in their power. (Kretzmann)

3:54 *waters closed over my head.* This is a picture of a flood of waters being used to give some idea of the greatness and intensity of his suffering. (Kretzmann) (Kind of like waterboarding)

I am lost. See Ps 31:22; Isa 53:8. (CSB)

He felt abandoned by God, removed from the comfort of His fatherly eye and hand. To such heights does the feeling of being forsaken by the Lord sometimes rise that the believers consider themselves shut out entirely from His mercy. (Kretzmann)

3:55 *called on your name* – He was thus overcoming the despair which was trying to paralyze his faith. (Kretzmann)

depths of the pit. This was out of the pit which threatened to become his grave. (Kretzmann)

3:56 *cry for help.* See Job 32:20; Ps 118:5. (CSB)

He cries out in the triumphant confidence of his faith as he recovered his breath sufficiently to lay his case before Jehovah once more. (Kretzmann)

3:57 *near when I called.* See Ps 145:18. (CSB)

Do not fear. Reminiscent of Jeremiah's call to prophesy. (CSB)

3:58 *redeemed my life.* See Ps 103:4; see also note on Ps 25:22. (CSB)

God is rescuing him from what seemed to be certain destruction. (Kretzmann)

3:59 *wrong done to me* – The Lord has seen how his rights were violated by the enemies and is securing for him the right which he knew was on his side. (Kretzmann)

3:63 *Sitting and rising.* Engaging in any kind of activity (see Dt 6:7; 11:19; Ps 139:2; Isa 37:28). (CSB)

Jeremiah is observing all the conduct and doing of the enemies. (Kretzmann)

taunts. Jeremiah is the object of their derisive songs. (Kretzmann)

3:64-66 Jeremiah prays for vindication. (TLSB)

3:65 *darkness of heart.* See 2Co 3:15. (CSB)

your curse will be on them! Contrast Ps 3:8. (CSB)

3:66 *destroy them* – This was so that they would be forever removed from the sphere of Jehovah's kingdom of the world, thereby losing all their opportunity to do any more harm. Christians may well pray that God would foil all attempts of the enemies to take away His honor and to harm the cause of His kingdom in the world. (Kretzmann)

Ch 3 Jeremiah describes the great suffering of God's people at the hand of the invading Babylonians. He makes no excuse for their sin, but he encourages them (and us today) with God's great compassion and unfailing love. The people have been crushed but not utterly destroyed—their hope must be in the Lord and His great love for them. We are often our own worst enemies, responsible for our suffering through our own choices. No matter how bad things get, our hope is always in the Lord because He loves us in Jesus Christ and never abandons us. • Lord, do not treat us as our sins deserve, but forgive and restore us to Your unfailing love through Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)