

**FROM THE SERVANT GENERAL**  
**LESSONS FROM LAMENTATIONS**  
**(Part 4)**

**BRETHREN AND BETRAYAL**

One of the most painful things that can happen to us is betrayal by brethren, those closest to us, those whom we love and shared our mission with. Jesus experienced this with one of his disciples, Judas. We experienced this with our brethren in CFC who betrayed our calling by veering away from our charism and marginalizing Christ. On top of that, they betrayed us personally, with their vilification campaign, lies and distortions, and all-out effort to destroy our restored work. Such betrayal continues even now.

Some wonder how supposed Christians, and elders at that, can act in such ways. Judas was the same way. He remained in Jesus' band of apostles, up to the time he handed him over. But he was just preoccupied with one thing: "he looked for an opportunity to hand him over." (Mt 26:16). He was no longer an apostle. What had happened? "Satan entered him." (Jn 13:27).

When Satan has entered, even if one is confronted with the reality of his sin, he will continue to deny it. Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." (Mt 26:21). Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" (Mt 26:25).

If such act of betrayal of the Lord can happen to an apostle who walked with Jesus himself, then it can happen to anyone of us who profess to walk with Jesus. How can we help assure that such will not happen to us?

We need to steadfastly live out our covenant. Since there was a veering away, we need to learn the lessons of Lamentations.

Today's readings have much to teach us. We turn now to the lessons God wanted to teach us two years ago. Here is the reflection offered in 2007.

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**Day 37**  
**Principles and Values of Covenant**

*"The Lord God is my help"*  
*(Isaiah 50:7a)*

April 4  
Isaiah 50:4-9  
Psalm 69:8-34  
Matthew 26:14-25

Isaiah 50:4-9 is the third of the four "Servant of the Lord" oracles. We already saw these verses last Sunday. We now take a second look, drawing out principles of covenant

within the context of a servant of God. We apply these verses to God's people who are in covenant with Him, those whom He will use to accomplish His will for the life of the world.

Being in covenant with God requires a heart and posture that can really make us useful to Him. These are:

Being an evangelizer, including the ability and boldness to speak to people about how God has changed our lives and how God wants to change their lives as well, such that those who are weary will be energized, those who are despairing will be encouraged, those who are in darkness will have hope (Is 50:4a).

Faithfulness to God in daily prayer, and growing in being able to discern the voice of God speaking to us (Is 50:4b).

Obedience to God's commands, submission to His will, openness to being used in any way God wants (Is 50:5).

Willingness to suffer for Christ (Is 50:6; Ps 69:8).

Perseverance and single-mindedness for mission, knowing that God is with us (Is 50:7).

Courage in the face of obstacles and opposition, knowing that God upholds, sustains, supports and provides for us (Is 50:8).

Confidence in God's victory (Is 50:9).

In addition, we add to the list taking from the psalm for today.

Zeal and passion for building God's kingdom on earth (Ps 69:10a).

Doing spiritual warfare including fasting (Ps 69:11a).

Repenting for wrongdoing (Ps 69:12a).

Recognizing God's generous love and great mercy (Ps 69:17).

Looking to and trusting in God in times of affliction and pain (Ps 69:30).

Being thankful for God's blessings and having a constant attitude of praise to God (Ps 69:31).

Having a heart for the poor (Ps 69:33-34).

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Here was the response we needed to have. It is still the same now two years later, and forevermore.

**Lamentations action:** Consider how much is involved in our covenant with God. Consider how many of the above 7+7 postures and attitudes are in place in your own life. Resolve to grow in all areas.

Go through each and every one of the above 14 points. Evaluate yourself prayerfully and honestly. Where you fail, repent and resolve to change. Where you are striving but are not doing so well, ask for the Lord's grace and strength.

There are many other lessons of Lamentations contained in the book “Forty Days of Lamentations.” These can greatly help you understand the meaning and profound implications of covenant.

Lam 101

Lam 201-207 (7 R’s of Covenant)

Lam 211-217 (7 Effects of Covenant)

Lam 221-227 (7 Fundamental Aspects of Covenant)

Lam 231-237 (7 Basic Principles of Covenant)

Lam 241-247 (7 Aspects of a Covenant Heart)

Lam 251-257 (7 Responses to Covenant)

Lam 261-267 (7 Benefits of Covenant)

Look them over, study them intently, discuss them in your households, and live them out.

In the face of continuing betrayal by brethren, I reiterate our posture from the very beginning: do not retaliate or respond in kind, look on the buffets and spitting as a privilege of participating in Jesus’ passion, rejoice in affliction, speak the truth, and trust completely in Jesus.

And have this prayer: “But I pray to you, Lord, for the time of your favor. God, in your great kindness answer me with your constant help.” (Ps 69:14).

God bless us all.

(April 8, 2009)