



Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Lament in the Hebrew Bible

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### Point of View Reading of Psalm 39

Step 1:

a) Read the lament in Psalm 39 as a group, and list the voices or figures found in the lament. Be sure to include the psalmist and God, and note that some figures might be communal groups. Assign each figure found in the lament to a person in your group, who will reread the lament out loud to the group from their assigned figure's point of view. In other words, they will change the pronouns to the first person for the figure they are assigned and then read the lament as if they are that figure. Give your readers enough time to prepare to reread the lament with the attitudes and emotions they imagine of their assigned figures in this situation (gratitude for someone saved; anger for someone wronged, etc.).

b) Have each assigned person in turn read the lament from the point of view of their assigned figure. Those listening to the rereadings should not follow along in their Bibles, but instead focus on the version offered by the reader.

Step 2: When all rereadings are complete, address the following questions as a group.

1. What did you learn about the points of view of the different figures in this lament?
2. What did you learn about the relationships between the figures in this lament?
3. Did you identify, and in what ways, with any of the figures and their experiences? Did you identify, and in what ways, with their various responses to their experiences?
4. What drives or motivates the figures in their responses to their experiences?
5. Do the figures change here? What do you make of that?
6. What do the points of view expressed in this lament suggest to you more generally about the role lament does or could play in the church today?

Exercise heavily edited from D. Rhoads, J. Dewey, and D. Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).