



FAITH matters

March 23, 2026

Throughout our Judeo Christian faith, we have a long tradition of the practice of lament or lamentation. According to the dictionary, (Webster's, of course), to lament means "to express sorrow, mourning, or to strongly regret." According to the Harper Collins Study Bible commentary, the Book of Lamentations, is a series of 5 mournful poems, expressing the grief over the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, portraying a sense of bewilderment, anguish, and loss. We can relate.

Today we find ourselves lamenting over the destruction and human suffering being imposed upon those who have been deemed to be our enemy. We find ourselves mourning the loss of at least 175 people, mostly young boys and girls, who were killed when the Shajareh Tayyebah (which means "Sacred Tree") primary school was bombed in the City of Minah, Iran. We also mourn the loss of those soldiers whose lives have been taken in the midst of this tragedy. Regardless of who was ultimately responsible for the school's bombing, I think we can all agree that this was a tragic loss of life. I cannot imagine the anguish of those parents who dropped off their little ones to school, gave them a hug or kiss, and then left the school, never to see their fallen angels again.

We cry out, O Lord, why have you forsaken us? How could you let this happen? We yearn for times when the promises of Christ will be fulfilled
When Those who mourn will be comforted;

When those who are merciful will receive mercy;
When the meek (not the mighty) shall inherit the earth;
When the peacemakers will be called Children of God, and
When those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, will be filled.

Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3, reminds us that for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. Verse 4-5 tells us there is “a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance, a time to throw away stones and a time to gather stones together.”

Perhaps the time to gather stones together will come. Perhaps the words of Isaiah 58:12 will come alive once more; “Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt, you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.”

The Presbyterian Church has a history of doing so in Iran. In 1834, The Presbyterian Church USA appointed Rev. Justin Perkins as its first missionary to what was then known as Persia. The American Presbyterian Mission established the first modern schools in Iran, the first schools for girls, the first modern hospitals, clinics and nursing schools, and the first college and college for women in Iran. Westminster Hospital in Urmia, provided care during epidemics.

Perhaps there will be a season in which the Christian faith will lead the way in rebuilding the schools destroyed during the bombings of Iran. Perhaps the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) will play such a role. Perhaps our church could play a small role in helping PDA to gather stones together needed to rebuild, to become a repairer of the breach. Perhaps the time for peace will come. Perhaps...

In these turbulent, uncertain times, Faith truly matters. Let us remain faithful to the prayer found in Ephesians 3:20-21: “Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus in all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

~Written by Tom Webster

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