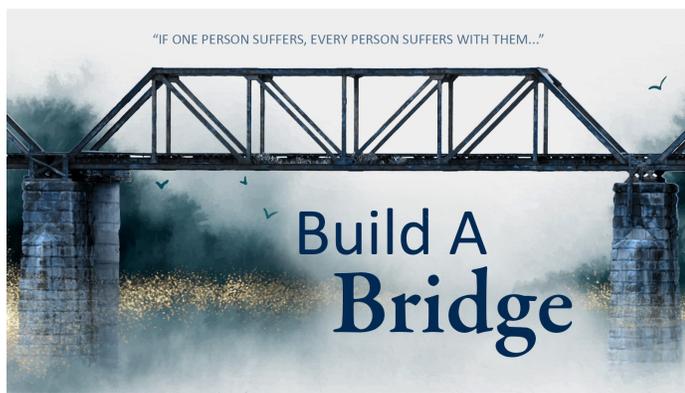


# SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE  
OF PEACE**  
Called to Connect



## Lament

*February 21, 2021*

God is at work in the world reconciling people to God and to one another. Followers of Jesus are called to join God in that work. To be peacemakers. To love our neighbor. To seek justice for all people. Throughout Lent we're going to explore the call of the Gospel to be a people who seek for and work for reconciliation. In particular, we're going to focus on racial reconciliation.

## SCRIPTURE TEXT: LAMENTATIONS 5:1-7

Read the scripture text together as a group.

### BACKGROUND INFO

The journey to healing and reconciliation begins with lament. If we are going to move forward, if we're going to move beyond the current racial tensions and brokenness, we must first acknowledge and grieve our broken past. This scripture reading provides a framework for that. The holy city of Jerusalem and Solomon's great temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians, who then took many of the Israelites as captives back into Babylon. The Israelites were homeless, ruled by a violent, foreign power, forced to buy even the water they drank. They deeply grieved their circumstances. In this passage they give voice to that grief.

The Israelites connected their current suffering with the sins of previous generations. Their broken present was connected to a broken past. And they lamented it. Read again to what it says, "Our ancestors sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment." Racial tensions in America are nothing new. Nor are attempts to resolve those tensions. Perhaps one of the reasons we have not been successful in healing our brokenness is that we've struggle to really acknowledge and lament our broken past. It's so easy, at least for us in the dominant culture, to think, "That was then. This is now. I'm not responsible for the past. I can't change it. Why bother dredging it up?" But what if we can't move forward without taking a step back?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever taken time to lament? What was that like for you?
- What can we learn from the Israelites in this passage?
- How might lament set us on the path of racial reconciliation?
- Why do you think we might need to take this step back before we can go forward?

**APPLICATION:** This week, spend time in prayer. Where might God be leading you to take a next step on your journey of racial reconciliation? With God, all things are possible. But first, we must lament.