“A Cry from the Pit”
(Lamentations 3:52-57)

Have you ever felt despair or deep discouragement? I hope no one here is discouraged today (…or this evening)!

1. You might ask, “Just how deep do you mean?” because discouragement feels a little different from time to time and from person to person. But most of us have felt that way at different times in our lives.

2. In what way(s) have you dealt with despair in the past? Were you satisfied with how you dealt with it?

3. God has taught us in the Bible how to react to things in our lives that lead to despair and discouragement.

4. Jeremiah’s book of Lamentations has a little something to say about this – If you recall, Jeremiah prophesied against Judah (as well as 9 pagan nations surrounding Judah). His words (really God’s words) were hated and opposed by the priests and false prophets of his day. God’s word through Jeremiah came to pass and Judah was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Lamentations is an account of mourning of one man, assumed to Jeremiah, over the desolation of Jerusalem, and the prophet’s appeal for restoration.

5. **Consider Lamentations 3:52-57** - Note especially the wording in verse 55:

> *52 My enemies without cause Hunted me down like a bird.*
> *53 They silenced my life in the pit And threw stones at me.*
> *54 The waters flowed over my head; I said, "I am cut off!"*
> *55 I called on Your name, O LORD, From the lowest pit.*
> *56 You have heard my voice: "Do not hide Your ear From my sighing, from my cry for help."*
> *57 You drew near on the day I called on You, And said, "Do not fear!"*

6. Can you think of others in the scriptures who called on God in times of trial or despair?

   Old Testament: Samson, David, Jonah, Daniel, Shadrach – Meshach – Abed-Nego Hezekiah

   New Testament: those tormented by unclean spirits, Paul & Silas in Philippi

   Some times the answers were no: Jesus in Gethsemane, Paul’s thorn in the flesh, Esau asking for a blessing after giving up his birthright, Elijah when fleeing from Jezebel

7. What do we learn from these examples?
   a) When we are “in the pit” of despair, we must turn to the Lord!
   b) He will see and hear us, if we have been faithful to Him.
   c) God is the God of mercy and deliverance as well as justice and judgment – he will not forsake us.
   d) We must be like Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego – we will not fail God whether He decides to deliver us right them from a trial. That trail may be test our faith and service.
   e) It is never too late to ask in faith – consider Samson before the Philistines, and Jesus in Gethsemane,