

Eliana Ah-Rum Ku. *Lament-Driven Preaching: Proclaiming Hope amid Suffering*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2024. 270 pages. \$36.

Amidst countless poignant crises and profound suffering that permeate the world and our daily lives, many preachers often find themselves tempted to proclaim a God of formidable power, who breaks through silence to offer us hope. This book questions such an image, aspiration, or perhaps illusion that preachers may hold regarding God, thereby leading to a deeper exploration of the fundamental purpose of preaching. By tempering the tendency to hasten toward easy hope, the author proposes that lament not only bridges suffering and hope but also deepens theological perspectives on the world's pain. Throughout this book, Ku provides a broad and nuanced understanding of lament—one that may enable preachers to engage with human suffering and confront unresolved questions of faith.

In Chapter 1, the author delves into theological interpretations and hermeneutical approaches to the Book of Lamentations, highlighting its significance as a sacred text for preaching. She explores how the mourning voices within Lamentations strive to engage in dialogue with God in the face of perceived divine silence. Special attention is given to Lamentations 5, which presents the communal aspect of lament, illustrating how collective grief fosters a shared conversation about suffering. Ultimately, lament paves the way to diverse voices and multiple perspectives on suffering rather than adhering to a singular theological viewpoint.

In Chapter 2, Ku expands the discussion of lament beyond biblical experiences by employing a cultural lens, especially within the Korean context of public crises and structural injustice. She emphasizes the concepts of *han*, a deeply internalized grief, and *hanpuri*, the acts of expressing pain and demanding justice. The author then suggests that the relationship between *han* and *hanpuri* can facilitate Christian dialogue on social justice while enriching personal faith.

In Chapter 3, the author shifts the focus of the discussion to the theological significance of lament, linking it specifically to the Paschal Triduum narratives as “an expression of divine participation and solidarity in the reality of [human] suffering” (81). Ku invites the reader to contemplate the biblical imagery of Jesus's descent into hell and Holy Saturday, framing this space as a merging of divine and human lament. Divine lament is thus portrayed as a transitional space that connects the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

In Chapter 4, Ku investigates recent homiletical discourses on lament since the 1950s to explore their connection to genuine hope. Despite the limited interest in lament among homileticians, some scholars advocate for its practice by highlighting the dynamics of suffering and hope. Drawing on insights from four scholars—Paul Wilson, Luke Powers, Joni Sancken, and Christine Smith—Ku illustrates the transitional role of lament and establishes its theological and homiletical viability.

In the final chapter, the author proposes practical guides for lament preaching. Moving beyond homiletical rhetoric, she incorporates psychological concerns and pedagogical aspects of lament to enrich the lament preaching. Based on these diverse considerations, she offers eleven practical insights for lament-driven preaching that enable congregants to envision God's future hope while acknowledging the reality of suffering. The book then concludes with a call for lament to be embraced and proclaimed as an integral part of the gospel.

This book is a timely and significant contribution to the discourse on lament within the context of preaching, offering readers a profound understanding of the complexities of suffering and hope. The author challenges the binary perception of suffering and hope, presenting God as being on the move amid suffering—an embodiment of hope for faithful people. She expands the

limited understanding of lament as mere inner sorrow by providing a broader interpretation. Skillfully interweaving theological, social, and cultural insights on lament with practical applications, she creates a rich resource for preachers and faith leaders alike. By underscoring lament as an integral part of the gospel, the author encourages deeper engagement with the human experience of suffering in ways that are both compassionate and theologically sound. This work not only enriches the homiletical field but also offers valuable insights for other practical theological areas, including pastoral theology, faith formation, and Christian education, where the lives of congregants are critically considered. Ultimately, this book invites a broader conversation about the role of lament in fostering community resilience and spiritual growth, making it essential reading for anyone seeking to navigate the complexities of faith in today's world, where grieving voices yearn to be heard.

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