

Reflection on Burma

I would like to reflect on my country based on Chapter 5 of the Book of Lamentations. The author of Lamentations had seen the siege and destruction of Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC., when the Babylonian army burned and destroyed all the principal buildings and sent most of the surviving inhabitants into exile. What happened in the land of Judah, and what is written in Lamentations Chapter 5, is similar to what is happening in Burma right now. As the theme of the book of Lamentations said, "*There was nothing left to do, but weep,*" now is the time to weep for Burma and our people.

Here is Lamentations 5 within the Myanmar context.

1. "Remember, O Lord, what has happened to the people of Burma, look, and see our sufferings."
2. Our farms, lands and homes have been turned over to foreigners. Our villages have been burnt down and we have no more land to work. We have to move from place to place like nomads because of forced relocation.
3. Our children have become orphans and fatherless and our mothers widows. There are lots of orphans who are looking for their fathers and mothers.
4. We must buy the water we drink and the wood with which we cook. We have to buy everything.
5. We are exhausted and find no rest for fear of those who are searching to persecute us. We do not get enough sleep because we are afraid of being caught as porters. Our husbands and sons have disappeared and we see them no more; we do not even know whether they are alive or dead.
6. We beg Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, The Philippines and Singapore to get enough bread. Our people are oppressed and discriminated in other foreign lands. They are not treated properly. They are forced to work twelve hours a day and are not paid their fair wages. Some have become refugees, some beggars and others ask for money from welfare services.

7. Our forefathers did something wrong and now we are bearing their consequences.
8. Dictators rule over us, and we find no one to free us from their hands.
9. We have to find food just for daily survival amidst the guns in the forests. It is not safe to get food just for survival.
10. Our skins are hot and have become thick and hard like scars, from working very hard under the hot sun.
11. Women and children have been raped in insurgent areas by brutal and lustful soldiers. The situation has led young girls to become prostitutes.
12. Leaders are arrested and chiefs of the village have no voice.
13. Young men have to carry very heavy loads in forced labor. They carry their own rice, food, and medicines to labor camps where the soldiers are guarding. Some come back to their families alive, some are dying and some have died there.
14. No more advice, no more voice from the elders, no more music from the hearts of young men.
15. Peace and joy have disappeared from our hearts; our dancing has turned to lamenting and crying.
16. Woe to us, for we have also sinned; what have we done God? The crown of glory has fallen from our heads.
17. Because of these tragedies, our hearts are faint, our eyes are dim, our minds are dark. Our ways are lost. Our hopes, dreams and visions have disappeared. Our future is uncertain.
18. Our land is full of adversity God!
19. O Lord God, you are Alpha and Omega; your kingdom is eternal, and you reign for ever; you are the everlasting God.
20. O God, you say you love us and you take care of us; Why do you ignore us in this critical situation? Why do you forsake us so long?
21. Receive us to your peaceful arms, O Lord, that we may have rest; restore our peaceful days as of old.
22. Have you rejected us forever God? Is your anger beyond measure? If we have sinned, forgive us and heal our wounds. Let us come back to you and take rest, for we are very tired and dying.