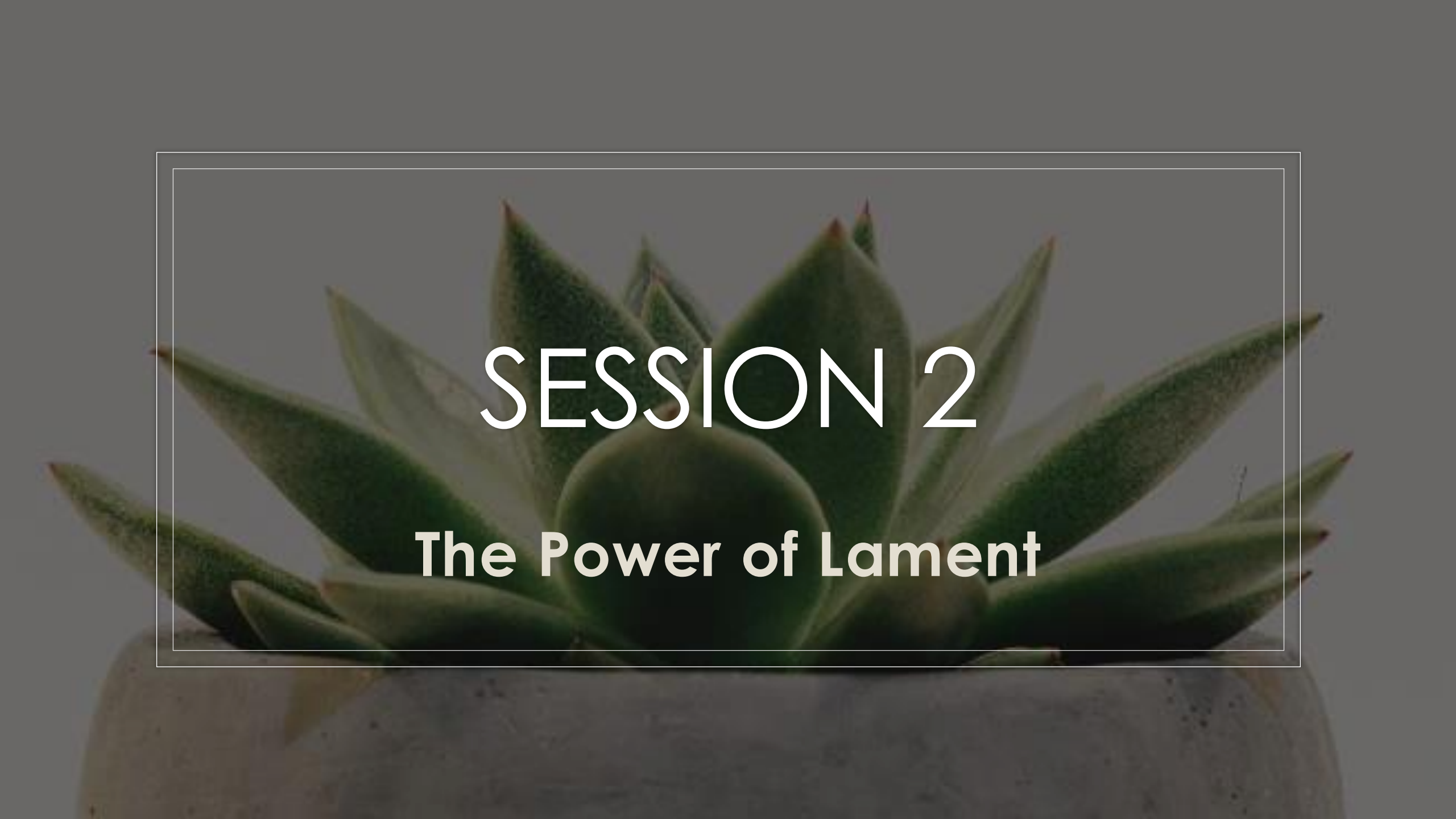


A close-up photograph of a succulent plant, possibly a Sedum or Crassula, with thick, pointed green leaves and small red tips. The plant is growing out of a light-colored, textured pot. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey rectangle, which serves as a background for the white text.

SESSION 2

The Power of Lament

Agenda

Universal Human Question

Jesus Identifies with This Question

Pastoral Uses of Lament

Lament Gives Structure / Voice to Emotion

Lament Gives Permission and Space to ask taboo questions

UNIVERSAL HUMAN QUESTION



WHY?



OBJECT OF THE QUESTION:

Why God?

Reactions

Rejection of God / religion

Denial of questions – focused on distraction

Denial of questions – focused on God, but denies their own emotions

Assume that anything other than positive emotions means that something is “wrong”

JESUS IDENTIFIES WITH THIS QUESTION

“My God, My God why have
you abandoned me...”

Psalm 22:1a (NLT)



Jesus identifies with our humanity

He felt the gravity of humanity's physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual pain

- He suffered physical pain
- He was abandoned by his closest friends
- He was humiliated

- If God the Son, can say to God the Father, “why have you abandoned me?” Maybe it is okay for us to express our true questions and emotions to God!

Permission to Wrestle with God

Psalm 88 reading

- Make yourselves comfortable
- Close your eyes
- Think of one of the worst moments of your life

Debrief – Discuss at your tables:

What was it
like to hear
Psalm 88 read
in that way?

Did it resonate
with you?

What part
touched you?

Pastoral Use of Lament



Ask

“Did you resonate with that?”

“What part touched you?”



**Psalms of Lament
give voice to
emotions that are
often suppressed,
repressed, or simply
believed to be
wrong.**



**Therapeutic
intervention could
be:**

Write your own Psalm of
Lament



LAMENT – PERMISSION AND SPACE TO ASK THE HARD QUESTIONS

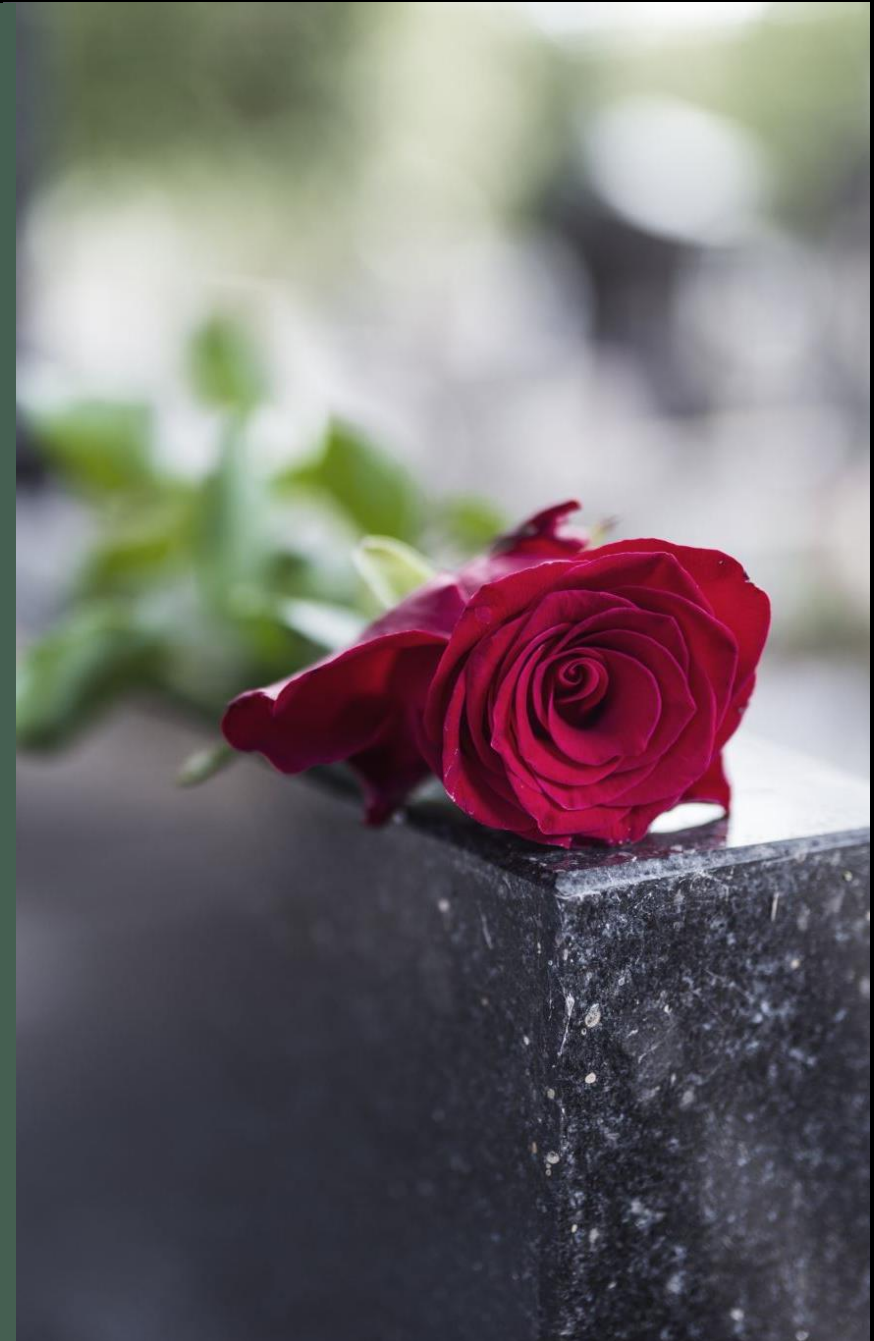


What questions or topics would you consider “off-limits” to ask God?

Why?

Questions of the Psalmist to God:

1. Are your wonderful deeds of any use to the dead? (v. 10a)
2. Do the dead rise up and praise you? (v. 10b)
3. Can those in the grave declare your unfailing love? (v. 11a)
4. Can they proclaim your faithfulness in the place of destruction? (v. 11b)
5. Can the darkness speak of your wonderful deeds? (v. 12a)
6. Can anyone in the land of forgetfulness talk about your righteousness? (v. 12b)





God, I've heard about your miracles, where are they when I need one?



God, what's the use in my suffering?



God, how much good am I to you if I'm dead?

Paraphrase
of the
Psalmist's
Questions:

Emotion in Lament

- “I am forgotten, cut off from your care” (v. 5b);
- “Your anger weighs me down . . .” (v. 7a);
- “I stand helpless and desperate before your terrors. Your fierce anger has overwhelmed me. Your terrors have paralyzed me.” (vv. 15b–16)

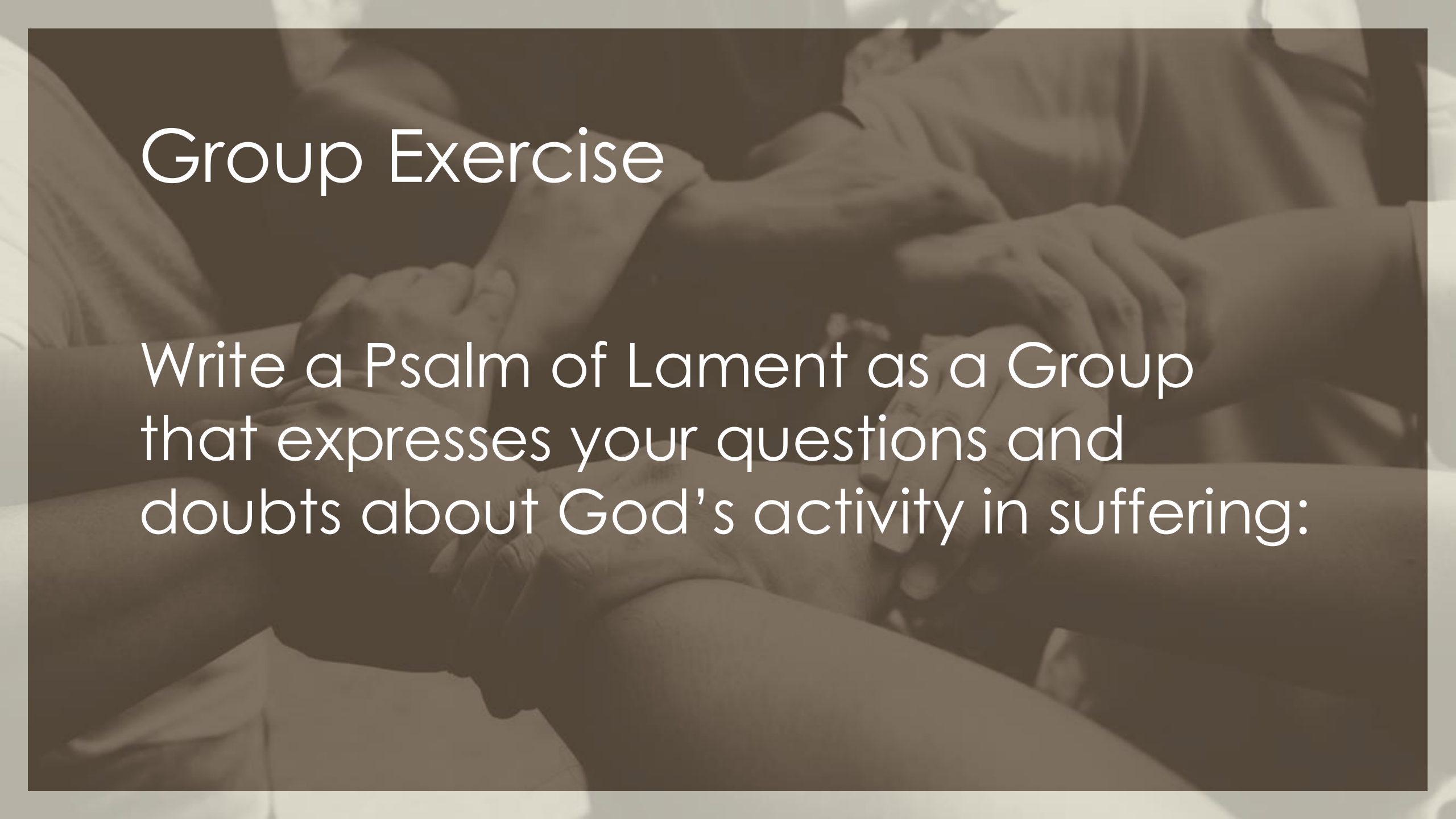
Psalms of Lament Give Structure and Voice to Emotion

Psalms of Lament can help to articulate what one is thinking and feeling.

People suffering from Moral Injury and / or PTSD following a traumatic event often struggle to articulate their feelings



A WORD ABOUT PROFANITY

A background image showing a group of people's hands clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The image is in a muted, brownish-grey tone.

Group Exercise

Write a Psalm of Lament as a Group that expresses your questions and doubts about God's activity in suffering:

Need for Permission / Space to Lament

Far too many “Christian” therapies attempt to bring a person out of the place of disorientation too soon.

We are either too:

- Uncomfortable with the questions.
- Uncomfortable with the silence.
- Shallow to be able help others with tough questions.

Keep Communication Open

- Chaplains must encourage people to express:
 - Emotion
 - Doubts about God
 - Questions they think are taboo



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Importance of helping people lament



Expressing emotion and doubt
are part of disorientation



People often feel that they
have no safe space to talk
about their true thoughts and
feelings



People who are still willing to
engage in a conversation with
God have hope for “saving the
relationship”



QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION



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