



**SUMMER-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS**

**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**

*June 21, 2023*



Photo: Our Daily Bread

## IT'S EMPTY NOW

*How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!*

Lamentations 1:1

**READ Lamentations 1:1, 12-13, 16-20**

My brothers and our families spent the day moving our parents' belongings from our childhood home. Late in the afternoon, we went back for one last pickup and, knowing this would be our final time in our family home, posed for a picture on the back porch. I was fighting tears when my mom turned to me and said, "It's all empty now." That pushed me over the edge. The house that holds fifty-four years of memories is empty now. I try not to think of it.

The ache in my heart resonates with Jeremiah's first words of Lamentations: "How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!" (1:1). An important difference is that Jerusalem was empty "because of her many sins" (v. 5). God exiled His people to Babylon because they rebelled against Him and refused to repent (v. 18). My parents weren't moving because of sin, at least not directly. But ever since Adam's sin in the garden of Eden, each person's health has declined over their lifetime. As we age, it's not unusual for us to downsize into homes that are easier to maintain.

I'm thankful for the memories that made our modest home special. Pain is the price of love. I know the next goodbye won't be to my parents' home but to my parents themselves. And I cry. I cry out to Jesus to come, put an end to goodbyes, and restore all things. My hope is in Him.

**By Mike Wittmer**

### **PRAY & REFLECT**

**Father, thank You for giving me a home in Your forever family. Amen**

What place holds fond memories for you? Thank God for the people who loved you there. How might you make new memories today?

### **SCRIPTURE INSIGHT**

The book of Lamentations lyrically expresses the grief associated with the devastation of the city of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Seven times the book mentions Jerusalem by name - the chief city in the land of Israel (1:7, 8, 17; 2:10, 13, 15; 4:12). Jeremiah wasn't the only person in Scripture who wept over Jerusalem. Jesus shed tears over the city. "As [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace" - but now it is hidden from your eyes' " (Luke 19:41-42; see also 13:34-35). – By **Arthur Jackson**

*Used with permission*