



[Psalm 137:2-6](#)

(2) We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.
(3) For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song,
And those who plundered us *requested* mirth,
Saying, "Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion!" (4) How shall we sing the
LORD's song
In a foreign land?
(5) If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *its skill!*
(6) If I do not remember you,
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

New King James Version

This describes the bitterness of exile into which [God](#) forced Judah. Have we ever felt this way? Have we sighed and cried for the abominations of the church? That is what the Judeans who really learned the lesson of the exile did. It absolutely broke them down. They had to sit down and weep.

There is something to exile, to scattering, that God finds very good. It is not all grief. We know that God does nothing that is not for our good - either immediately or ultimately. One of the results of exile, if a person responds to it, is [repentance](#), which is what God is looking for.

He wants our grief to be turned, as Paul says ([II Corinthians 7:8-11](#)), into zeal, into putting our whole hearts into our sorrow and then into the fruit that can be built from it. He wants us to get angry that we allowed things to go so

far and to clear it out. Anger can be used to scour away [sin](#), to be righteously indignant. We can use it like Drano[®] to clear the pipes and then direct that zeal to become righteous and holy once again, to do the things that God commands.

God will do whatever it takes to get us on the same page with Him, and if it means turning our lives upside down, turning us inside out, He will do it because He loves us. He still has us in the palm of His hand. We are still the apple of His eye, but He is not like a modern liberal who will not punish. He is a God who knows how to produce sons and daughters, and sometimes the worst punishments produce the best results. If He thinks the punished person will cooperate and learn the lesson, God is willing to take it that far.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[How to Survive Exile](#)



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