

Psalms 38

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Psalms 38

Psalm 38

Pray for God's remembrance; Look to God in repentance

A confessional poem by David. The reason why David is in God's heart is not because he is perfect, not because he is better than others, but because he is honest with God, does not hide his sins, weaknesses, and feelings from God, and still holds on to God while repenting of his sins.

The psalm consists of 22 verses and can be divided into three sections: the first stanza is from verses 1 to 8, which is the psalmist's cry before God in the face of his sickness and pain. The second section, from verses 9 to 14, is David's description of his environment. The third passage ends in verses 15 through 22, where David again turns to God to truly confess his sins and cry out for God's help. David is called a man after God's own heart. Even when he was condemned by God for sinning, he remained convinced that he was in God's hands, that God would not despise sorrow and repentance, that He would save, and that He would help.

David knew that he had sinned against God, and he cried out to God not to punish him when he was angry. He prayed for God to discipline him with mercy. "I'm bruised, and I'm weary; Because my heart is troubled, I groan.' Sin brings great pain to our body and spirit, and the spiritual problem is solved spiritually, so we should confess our sins to God first, ask God for mercy, and not punish us too severely. When we confess our sins and repent, God will forgive our sins. David had a severe skin disease, even affecting the muscles and bones. Physically and mentally exhausted, I can't help but wail. David was completely true before God, and it was also completely true that he was sinful and foolish. Sickness is not necessarily a consequence of sin, but it can be. In John 5:14, Jesus said to the paralytic man whom he had healed, "You are healed, so sin no more, lest you suffer more." Alone and desperate, the psalmist revealed to God all that he had, "My heart's desire is before thee; My sigh is not hidden from you." He was so

weak and powerless, "My heart was beating, my strength was weak, and I had no light in my eyes." and his flesh and his spirit are gone. "Good friends" are those he loves, who are now hiding away because of his plagues, and no one is going near him. He seemed to be cut off, without strength, and helpless. His enemies had set a snare, and he seemed to have fallen into it. At this time, his eyes were blank, and he had no strength to struggle, and he could only hear his heart beating with fear. He could not save himself, but he could only ask God not to punish him in his wrath.

Verses 7–8 read, "We are destroyed by your anger and dismayed by your wrath." Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, and our hidden wickedness in the light of thy countenance. David not only knew God's wrath in his head, but also experienced it firsthand: God's wrath against him was like "an arrow into me" and "a hand pressed against me." Obviously this is a metaphor for the poet, expressing the severity of the poet's pain. In verses 3–8, the psalmist goes on to describe his physical and spiritual wounds and confesses that they were the result of sin:

The psalmist first reflects on his life by confessing his sins in the presence of God: 'My sin' 4, 'My foolishness' 5, 18, 'I confess my sins', 'I confess my sins', 'I grieve for my sins'. Jude 24 says that when we stand before the glorious Savior, the only God, we are to be "blameless" and "rejoice." Although we are imperfect and have many sinful natures, by the Blood and Redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are cleansed so that we can come to God's throne of grace and ask for help at any time!

Verses 15 to 18 begin with the word "because," "I look to you, O Lord!" Answer me, O Lord my God! (For) I said, 'Lest they boast unto me; When I stumbled, they exaggerated to me. (because) I almost fell; My pain is always before me. (for) I will confess my iniquity; I will grieve over my sins.'" These verses explain why the psalmist can be deaf and dumb, not responding to those who hurt him, not resenting those who are far from him, but waiting on Jehovah in silence. He only cried out to God not to punish him. The psalmist chooses to be silent because he looks to God alone, and he confesses his sins. His pain is always before him, so he does not respond to those who go against him, and he does not complain against those whom he loves, who are now far away from him, and on the other hand he does not complain against God, but only looks to God. David did not produce bitterness in his suffering, did not fall into accusations against others, and chose to repent of his sins and seek God. Sin can cause problems in relationships, people can easily stumble in sin, complain, blame, negativity, self-pity, self-destruction, despair, at the intersection of life, David chose to seek God and rise up to repent.

In verses 19–22, after sincere confession of sin, David again states to God his deteriorating situation, with an increase in enemies, including those he had treated kindly. In his grief, the psalmist cried out to God again: "Do not forsake me, O Lord!" My God, do not turn away from me! Help me, O Lord of my salvation! Indeed, God was David's only salvation at that time. God is also our only salvation and help!

Let's pray:

Lord, thank you for reminding us through the Bible that we almost stumbled and we fell into all kinds of troubles, Lord, when we come to you for help, pray that the Lord will enlighten us, that the Holy Spirit will remind us to see the darkness in our lives, and that we are willing to confess our sins before you, dear Heavenly Father, and that we ask for Your remembrance in our troubles. For we are all of You, in a situation of weakness and helplessness, and You alone are our Savior, help us from all sin, and ask for Your mercy that those who come to you for help may be saved by Your mercy and love. Thank you, Lord, for hearing our prayers.

In the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!

Psalm 38

Prayer in Time of Discipline.

A Psalm of David; to bring to remembrance.

**38 O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath,
Nor discipline me in Your burning anger.**

2

**For Your arrows have sunk into me *and* penetrate deeply,
And Your hand has pressed down on me *and* greatly disciplined me.**

3

**There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation;
There is no health in my bones because of my sin.**

4

**For my iniquities have gone over my head [like the waves of a flood];
As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me.**

5

**My wounds are loathsome and foul
Because of my foolishness.**

6

**I am bent over and greatly bowed down;
I go about mourning all day long.**

7

**For my sides are filled with burning,
And there is no health in my flesh.**

8

**I am numb and greatly bruised [deadly cold and completely worn out];
I groan because of the disquiet *and* moaning of my heart.**

9

**Lord, all my desire is before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.**

10

**My heart throbs violently, my strength fails me;
And as for the light of my eyes, even that has also gone from me.**

11

**My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague;
And my neighbors stand far away.**

12

**Those who seek my life lay snares *for me*,
And those who seek to injure me threaten mischievous things *and* destruction;
They devise treachery all the day long.**

13

**But I, like a deaf man, do not hear;
I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth.**

14

**Yes, I am like a man who does not hear,
In whose mouth are no arguments.**

15

**For in You, O Lord, I hope;
You will answer, O Lord my God.**

16

**For I pray, “May they not rejoice over me,
Who, when my foot slips, would boast against me.”**

17

**For I am ready to fall;
My sorrow is continually before me.**

18

**For I do confess my guilt *and* iniquity;
I am filled with anxiety because of my sin.**

19

**But my [numerous] enemies are vigorous and strong,
And those who hate me without cause are many.**

20

**They repay evil for good, they attack *and* try to kill me,
Because I follow what is good.**

21

**Do not abandon me, O Lord;
O my God, do not be far from me.**

22

**Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my Salvation.**

Psalm 38 is a penitential psalm attributed to King David. It expresses deep sorrow, personal pain, and a plea for mercy from God in the midst of suffering, largely as a consequence of sin. The psalm highlights the weight of guilt, the consequences of sin, and the need for God's mercy and forgiveness. It can be seen as both an individual lament and a confession of sin, capturing the inner turmoil that often accompanies repentance.

Overview and Structure:

The psalm is generally divided into three parts:

- 1. The Petition for Mercy and Recognition of Sin (Verses 1–8):**
In these verses, David acknowledges his sin before God, which has brought suffering upon him. He asks God to not forsake him despite his guilt, acknowledging the pain he is enduring as a result of God's wrath and his own transgressions.
- 2. The Depth of His Suffering (Verses 9–14):**
David describes the intense physical and emotional agony he is going through, resulting

from both his sins and the opposition from others. His pain is not only physical but also psychological, manifesting as shame, distress, and isolation.

3. A Plea for Deliverance and Trust in God (Verses 15–22):

In the final section, David expresses his hope and trust in God despite his suffering. He asks for divine intervention, acknowledging that only God can save him from his predicament, both physically and spiritually.

Important Verses and Their Meanings

1. Psalm 38:1-2

"O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. For your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down upon me."

Explanation:

David begins by appealing to God's mercy, recognizing that his suffering is a result of God's disciplinary action due to his sin. The imagery of "arrows" and "hand" conveys God's judgment and the severity of his anguish.

2. Psalm 38:3

"Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin."

Explanation:

Here, David clearly connects his physical and emotional suffering to the consequences of his sin. His body, his bones, and his whole being are affected by God's righteous anger.

3. Psalm 38:4

"My iniquities have overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear."

Explanation:

David feels the weight of his sin, which is so great that he cannot carry it. This verse expresses the profound feeling of guilt and shame that can come with sin, illustrating how it can feel crushing and unbearable.

4. Psalm 38:9-10

"All my longings lie open before you, O Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you. My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes."

Explanation:

David is transparent with God, sharing his deepest anguish. His physical and emotional exhaustion is evident, showing how sin has affected both his spiritual and physical state.

5. Psalm 38:15

"I wait for you, O LORD; you will answer, O Lord my God."

Explanation:

Despite his intense suffering, David expresses trust in God's timing and faithfulness. He is confident that God will respond to his plea for mercy and deliverance.

6. Psalm 38:18

"I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin."

Explanation:

This is a moment of sincere repentance. David openly acknowledges his sin and the inner turmoil it causes. This verse emphasizes the importance of confession and repentance in the process of spiritual healing.

7. Psalm 38:21-22

"Do not forsake me, O LORD; be not far from me, O my God. Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Savior."

Explanation:

David's final plea is one of desperate hope and trust in God's presence. Despite his deep guilt, he calls on God's name and asks for His swift intervention.

Spiritual Influence of Psalm 38

Psalm 38 carries deep spiritual lessons that have influenced believers throughout the centuries:

- 1. The Weight of Sin and the Need for Repentance:** This psalm powerfully illustrates the consequences of sin—how it affects both the sinner's relationship with God and their overall well-being. The overwhelming burden of guilt and the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain that sin causes serve as a reminder of the importance of repentance. This encourages believers to confess their sins and seek God's forgiveness.
- 2. God's Discipline and Mercy:** Psalm 38 acknowledges that God disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12:6), and that discipline can come in the form of physical, emotional, or spiritual suffering. However, the psalm also highlights God's mercy and the hope that those who repent will experience His forgiveness and restoration. It encourages believers to accept God's correction, knowing that it is ultimately for their good.
- 3. The Power of Prayer in Suffering:** The psalm demonstrates the power of prayer, particularly in times of personal suffering and crisis. David does not hide his pain or his guilt from God but lays it all before Him. This serves as a model for believers, teaching them to be honest in prayer, acknowledging their weaknesses and asking for God's help in times of trouble.
- 4. Trusting God in the Midst of Suffering:** Despite his intense suffering, David holds fast to his faith in God, expressing trust that God will answer his prayers and bring relief. Psalm 38 calls believers to maintain their trust in God, even when facing difficulties, knowing that God is faithful to His promises and will not forsake them.
- 5. God as a Refuge in Times of Distress:** This psalm emphasizes that, even in the face of great suffering and the sense of being abandoned by others, God is a faithful refuge. David calls upon God as his savior, showing that no matter how deep the distress, God is always available to provide deliverance and restore peace.
- 6. The Role of Confession in Spiritual Healing:** David's admission of his sin is not just an acknowledgment of wrongdoings but a step toward spiritual healing. Confession is essential for restoring a right relationship with God, and Psalm 38 teaches that bringing our sins before God with sincerity opens the door to His forgiveness and healing.
- 7. Hope in God's Restoration:** Though David feels forsaken and overwhelmed, he consistently looks to God for deliverance. Psalm 38 instills hope in the believer, reminding them that

God's restorative power is always at work, and He will answer the cries of those who call on Him in repentance.

Conclusion

Psalm 38 is a profound reflection on the impact of sin, the importance of repentance, and the merciful character of God. It shows that suffering can often be a result of sin, but it also offers hope for those who seek God's mercy. The psalm emphasizes God's readiness to forgive and restore those who sincerely confess and trust in Him. For Christians, it serves as both a guide to dealing with personal sin and a powerful reminder of the grace and mercy of God that lead to healing and reconciliation.