

SBC – Aug. 4, 2024
Psalm 38 (NKJV)
“Godly Sorrow for Sin”

Psalm 38 (NKJV)
A Psalm of David. To Bring to Remembrance.

This is another Psalm of David. It is titled simply, “To Bring to Remembrance”.

When the Bible says “God remembers” people it doesn’t mean He had somehow forgotten about them through a lapse of memory and then suddenly remembered them.

Slide # 1

Genesis 8:1 (NKJV)

1 Then God **remembered** Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.

When God remembers it means that He acts in faithfulness in keeping with His Word and His character. It is remembering in the sense of putting into action what has been on hold in the mind of God.

Slide # 2

Psalm 25:6–7 (NKJV)

6 **Remember**, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old.

7 Do not **remember** the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy **remember** me, For Your goodness’ sake, O LORD.

The name Zechariah means “**Yahweh remembers**”. The name of Yahweh is the personal covenant name of God that emphasizes His faithfulness (Ex. 3:14). The name Zechariah is a great reminder that God will not forget His commitment to Israel but will bring about restoration as promised.

When the repentant thief on the cross said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom” (Lk. 23:43) he wasn’t simply saying remember we shared this time of misery together. No, rather he was saying, “Remember me and act for my good in bringing Me into Your kingdom”.

So, when David writes over Psalm 38, “To Bring to Remembrance,” it is really a plea for God to act in accordance with His restoration promises.

Slide # 3

Psalm 38

“Godly Sorrow for Sin”

vv. 1-8 - Sufferings from Sin

vv. 9-15 – Loneliness of Sin

vv. 16-22 – Confession for Sin

Psalm 38 is one of what is called “The Penitential Psalms” (cf. Ps. 6, 32, 51, 102, 130, 143). Penitential psalms express feelings of repentance and sorrow for sin.

David had fallen into sin and here shares his experience. We are not told what was the occasion on which David fell or what was involved, but clearly, David understood what he was going through was discipline for sin. It was a miserable experience.

1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure!

2 For Your arrows pierce me deeply, And Your hand presses me down.

David, as a consequence of his sin, felt God’s deep displeasure. God was not happy with him and he felt it. It is like when my dad would spank me. It was not a happy occasion. He wasn’t happy with me and I felt it.

Sometimes people say that discipline should never be out of anger. I guess God doesn’t realize this. The truth is anger needs to be controlled, but certainly, there is a place for anger in the matter of discipline. That is certainly true for God according to David’s testimony.

David in poetic language described the piercing of God’s discipline and the heavy hand of God’s pressure. It was very oppressive involving acute pains as if pierced by arrows. Discipline is painful!

David, in effect, pleads with God to stop the discipline because of the pain being inflicted.

3 There is no soundness in my flesh Because of Your anger, Nor any health in my bones Because of my sin.

4 For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

Sin is anything that offends God's holiness.

Iniquity = crookedness or bent. That which is not straight. And iniquity is premeditated sin.

Because David had intentionally sinned, he was now experiencing discipline involving physical affliction, as seen in the language of "my flesh" and "my bones". David found this situation overwhelming – too heavy to bear.

David here acknowledges his guilt! As God's children we are forgiven forever in terms of the PENALTY of sin because Jesus paid for it all. However, in discipline, we can experience lingering consequences.

Note David did not play "the victim card" but rather admitted that his own sin was the cause. He did not fault God at all! Rather he owned it which is the stuff of true repentance!

5 My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

We don't know exactly what all this affliction involved but again David says it was because of his foolishness that he is experiencing it. The affliction was constant as he was troubled and bowed down in mourning all the day long.

Not only did he have great physical affliction but also experienced severe depression as seen in his constant mourning.

7 For my loins are full of inflammation, And there is no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.

We don't know what this physical affliction involved – some suggest something like kidney stones – but we really don't know.

Whatever it was David was broken physically. He was weak and broken.

And not only was his affliction physical but he also knew great turmoil in his heart. He was a total mess both outward and inward.

Are we having fun yet? The consequences of sin are not fun. The Bible talks about “*the fleeting pleasures of sin*” (Heb. 11:25). The believer may sin, but he will not long enjoy it, and then comes disciplinary consequences, which are very painful inside and out.

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

The thing about David is that he was very transparent with God – whatever he was going through. He rehearses the fact that God knows all he is going through. Even in our darkest hour, it is comforting to know that God knows – He is sovereign over all that we are going through.

10 My heart pants, my strength fails me; As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.

David was so low he felt like his very life’s light was leaving him. It was a miserable condition.

11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, And my relatives stand afar off.

In his condition, David was ostracized by both friends and family who wanted nothing to do with him. They treated him like he had the plague – a deadly contagious disease. This word “plague” was often used in reference to leprosy (cf. Lev. 13:3). The sense is that David’s friends and family were treating him like a leper.

Few things are more hard than to lose the support of family and friends. That is hard! And then there are always wicked enemies just waiting in the wings to exploit any weakness.

12 Those also who seek my life lay snares for me; Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction, And plan deception all the day long.

In leadership, there are always those who seek your demise, and that was certainly David’s experience. They continually plotted his downfall – and sought to take advantage of this time of vulnerability. Nice guys – not!

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

14 Thus I am like a man who does not hear, And in whose mouth is no response.

David's response was one of a non-response. Sometimes this is the wisest thing a person can do. David was deaf and silent to his malicious critics, but he would speak to God about it, which was the right thing to do!

15 For in You, O LORD, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God.

Instead of replying, David would wait on the Lord to deal with them. In our inability to defend ourselves, it causes the godly to look to God all the more. We find our refuge in God!

Here David humbles himself before God recognizing God as his hope – his refuge. And he expresses confidence (faith) that God will hear – meaning He will answer and deliver him.

Slide # 4

Despite his spiritual depression, David clung to **hope** in the LORD. Though he did not feel it, in faith he said, **You will hear**. David chose to allow his affliction to press him toward God instead of away from the God who was his only hope. – **David Guzik**

Verse 15 contains three different Hebrew words most commonly used for God.

Slide # 5

Psalm 38:15 (NKJV)

15 For in You, O **LORD**, [YHWH] I hope; You will hear, O **Lord** [Adonia] my **God** [Elohim]

LORD = YHWH (The unchanging/faithful Covenant of God of Israel)

Lord = Adonai (Master emphasizing God's sovereign authority)

God = Elohim (Plural word for God emphasizing Him as the supreme being)

Thus David's hope was in God in all His fullness as revealed in all of the Holy Scriptures.

16 For I said, “Hear me, lest they rejoice over me, Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt themselves against me.”

David had confidence God would answer him (v. 15) and yet continues to plead with God for intervention. And the reason he gives, “Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt themselves against me.”

That sounds rather self-serving, but in reality, it was not just about SELF for David. David was very closely linked to God. He was God’s anointed chosen king. To rejoice over David was really to claim victory over God in the sense that His anointed had been put down. In exalting themselves over David they would really be exalting themselves against the God of David. Thus, David desired they would not succeed in this!

17 For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me.

David was desperate -just barely holding on! He was pleading to God for help in the midst of continual sorrow and affliction.

18 For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.

In many other Psalms David declares his innocence, but not here! Here he admits his guilt – even though we don’t know exactly what he did. It was however grievous sin and he admits it. He declares it meaning he confesses. To confess means to agree with God concerning our sin. It names it as the sin that it is! It admits guilt!

Often people are full of excuses which is not true repentance. True repentance calls my sin for what it is. That is true confession.

And then David says, “I will be in anguish over my sin.” That is godly sorrow which is in contrast to worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow is broken over offending God, worldly sorrow feels sorry for self because of what the person is going through.

Slide # 6

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV)

10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Godly sorrow over sin which produces repentance is always accepted by God.

Slide # 7

Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV)

13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, But **whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.**

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

9 If we **confess our sins**, He is **faithful and just to forgive** us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

19 But my enemies are vigorous, and they are strong; And those who hate me wrongfully have multiplied.

David was weak and vulnerable but his enemies seemed vigorous and strong. They had the upper hand (humanly speaking) in this situation. And these enemies were piling on. Yes, David had sinned, but they had no personal reason to be opposed to David. They were dead wrong in their hatred of David as his sin was not against them.

Sinners like to pile on when a good man is down! This is the devil's work!

20 Those also who render evil for good, They are my adversaries, because I follow what is good.

These were really wicked people. They render evil for good. They were David's adversaries simply because he followed what is good. Clearly these were the devil's people doing the devil's work.

The devil likes to take advantage of any foothold he can get ahold of and he uses his people to maximum advantage in that situation.

When a man of God falls be careful who you side in with – especially in the case of a repentant man of God which was the case with David. David had fallen, but at the same time he was a follower of good – a follower of God.

The Hebrew word translated **adversaries** is the root for the title *Satan*. (Guzik) "They Satanically hate me, as if they were transformed into so many breathing devils." – **John Trapp**

21 Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me!
22 Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!

David concludes this Psalm with three rapid-fire requests...

Slide # 8

- 1) Do not forsake me
- 2) Be not far from me
- 3) Make haste to help me

By way of application, God promises the believer in Hebrew 13:5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." In James 4:8 we have the promise, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." And in James 5:16 we are promised that "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

Thus, God is forever with us, He is close as we stay in fellowship with Him, and He is ever a present help in trouble.

The Holman Christian Study Bible translates the end of verse 22 as "Hurry to help me, Lord, my Savior." What a great prayer. We so often need HELP and the situation is urgent. Where do we look? We look to our God and Savior! This is what David did and this is what God's children still do!

Discipline is never joyful but always painful!

Slide # 9

Hebrews 12:11 (NKJV)

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

God has purpose in bringing discipline into our lives – namely to build holiness into our lives.

Discipline is actually indicative of God's love for us. He is a responsible heavenly Father who loves us too much just to let us get away with sin.

Slide # 10

Proverbs 3:11–12 (NKJV)

11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction;

12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

And it is in this vein that God disciplines all of His children as needed.

Slide # 11**Hebrews 12:7–8 (NKJV)**

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

One thing that comes across in Psalm 38 is that discipline in the life of the believer for flagrant and intentional sin is very painful! It is good for us but it is painful!

But here is the thing: We don't have to experience God's discipline as long as we stay on God's path and when we get off we need to get right immediately by confession. We need to keep short accounts with God.

Slide # 12**1 Corinthians 11:31–32 (NKJV)**

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

We need to deal with sin in our lives before God does – otherwise, it will be very painful! If we would judge our sin then we would not experience God's disciplinary judgment!

“If we don't listen to the words of His heart, we will have to feel the weight of His hand.” – **Warren Wiersbe**

The take away from Psalm 38 is that sin is serious and it is talking in reference to the believer. Don't think, “Oh, I am a believer therefore it doesn't really matter how I live.” Take a lesson from David!

Listen to the words throughout this Psalm that describe the stinging consequences of sin in the life of a believer:

Rebuke, chasten, arrows, presses, no soundness, no health, heavy burden, wounds, troubled, bowed down, mourning, inflammation, feeble, broken, groan, sighing, strength fails, light gone, plague, stand aloof, seek my hurt, ready to fall, sorrow.

How does that sound to you? That is painful and miserable!

David is telling us by way of testimony that it is serious business for a believer to fall into sin. The discipline of God is real and very painful.

Therefore, we need to take the issue of SIN very seriously!

1 Peter 1:14–16 (NKJV)

14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;

15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

God in His discipline brings us back to where we say with David, “For in You, O LORD, I hope” (v. 15).

He is a faithful Father Who always acts for our ultimate good even in discipline!

God help us as a way of life to walk as obedient children, but praise God for His loving discipline when necessary to get us back on the path!