

## Psalms 38,39

**Psalms 39:4,5 Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is vapor**

In contrast to the Psalms where David boldly declares his righteousness, in our two Psalms today he is acutely aware of his sin.

**Psalms 38:** While it is arguably true that humans have always been interested in pain relief, it also seems fair to observe that we have taken this to new levels through modern technology. We have pills for back aches, for headaches, and for heart aches. In just about any case, the pharmacist can give you something to make you feel better. And, if the doctor won't help you, there is always self-medication. The David in Psalms 38 is a man who is in pain. The cause of his pain is his spiritual and most likely his moral failure. His painful symptoms are both of spirit and body. David's pain therapy is not a pill but prayer.

Notice first the depth of David's pain: In v. 2, Your arrows pierce me deeply and Your

hand presses me down. In vv. 3-8 there are the following expressions, There is no soundness in my flesh, nor any health in my bones, my iniquities have gone over my head, like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me, my wounds are foul and festering, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long, my loins are full of inflammation, there is no soundness in my flesh, I am feebly and severely broken, I groan because of the turmoil of my heart. In v. 10, My heart pants, my strength fails me, as for the light of my eyes it has also gone from me. All of this pain was internal, but David also had the external pain caused by the aloofness of loved ones and the active conspiracies of his enemies.

There is something to be said for the spiritual experience of confession of sin. When we think the same thing that God thinks about our sin then we agree with Him and this is the fundamental element of fellowship with God. David does not here describe the specifics of his sin but part of confession is to acknowledge the pain and misery that sin causes and David excels in this endeavor in our psalm.

Is there a remedy here to the pain? David does the right thing in response to

accusations, "But I, like a deaf man do not hear and I am like a mute who does not open his mouth." And David finds hope in God. Specifically, David sees the attacks from his enemies as against God's plan and He hopes and believes that God will be his salvation, he longs to be in the presence of the Lord and to have His help.

**Psalms 39:** Again, we encounter a very introspective psalm in which it seems that David is recovering from a serious mistake and it seems as though it is something that he said. First, he resolves to be silent and to hold his peace - musing as the fire burns.

Then, David looked to God for answers, "Lord make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am..." David's view here is somber, certainly colored by the disappointments and shame of recent experience. His pain is deep and wide. He's drowning. But he comes up for air and asks God for help. "And now Lord what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions." From our culture, the end of the psalm is a bit of a surprise, maybe even disappointment because David did not have an experience of immediate relief from pain. Was his pain judgment or mercy?