

## Some penitential Psalms

### Psalm 38 - In the sin bin

This Psalm says F.B. Meyer –is ‘the cry of the needy penitent’. Here we have a long drawn out sigh or lament regarding his pain. Some have linked it to Psalm 32 and 51 in respect of timing with David’s fall and repentance. You will see it is filled with a real sense of God’s judgement and a deep consciousness of sin. Tyndale heads it ‘the outcast’.

As Christians how do we view ourselves? We certainly know two things – 1) we are utterly sinful, and 2) We are totally forgiven and saved by the death of Jesus. To hold these two truths together may be for us quite difficult at times. Perhaps Psalm 38 may help us.

#### *Under God's wrath* v 1 – 11

v1-2 What is David terrified about?

How are we to view discipline? See Hebrews 12v7-11

v3-8 Look at all the descriptions of how the burden of his sin is affecting him. Can you identify with any of these? Notice his remedy is to bring it to the Lord in prayer.

David is almost brutal in the way he sees himself – the sickness of sin just penetrates to the very core. Infested with its disease (v3) drowning in its ocean (v4) rotting from its poison (v5), and therefore deeply depressed (v6) and then squashed by its terrible weight (v8)

v9 Does this verse scare you or challenge you or comfort you?

‘Secret tears for secret sins are an excellent sign of a holy heart and a healing balsam for broken spirits. (Samuel Lee –Treasury of David)

v10-11 Ever felt like this? How do we treat past sin? Is it something to joke about as from our youth? Let us remember that real grieving over our sin is because the Holy Spirit in us and is also grieved.

#### *Approaching God's throne* v 12 – 17

The real mark of a true believer is that they can honestly look into themselves and acknowledge what they really are; but at the same time let that draw them closer to the Lord. He is the One Who is merciful and can forgive.

v12-14 See the contrast between the voices against him, and David’s quietness. As Tyndale says –it is a reminder of our Lord’s silence and its relevance to us. 1 Peter 2v18-25

Right at David’s lowest point - note v 15 – see his patience and his confidence. See 39v7

v17 See also Psalm 51v3

#### *Seeking God's forgiveness* v 18 – 22

v18 ‘I confess’ - -David does now wallow in his sin, no self pity nor does he hang on to it. Note how he lays it before the Lord and leaves it there!

v19-20 David’s claim of wrongful attack –does this seem surprising? Perhaps we have experienced that, particularly v20 –‘repay my good with evil’.

v21-22 Desperate, and a sense of urgency, but where is David’s confidence?

Utterly dejected and ashamed of his sin, but at the same completely confident in God who forgives only through the cross of our Saviour, Jesus. Surely that is the way that should be for believers. We may come to Him, Who is holy and awesome, in both confession and with great joy. Read -1 John 1v7-9 Forgiveness has a cost and a condition. As Brian Edwards says in Grace, Amazing Grace – ‘repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation’ must always go together.

D.J.

#### *PRAYER POINTS:*

Pray for our leadership of Elders and Deacons, also Church Management Team.

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