BIBLE STUDY

**Becoming A Person of Prayer**

**Lesson 6C: Prayers from the Bible: Psalm 38**

**DISCUSSION**

The story is told of a minister who had the habit of making profound prayers, many times resorting to words beyond the comprehension of his modest flock. This went on week after week, to the dismay and frustration of the congregation. At last, one of the church mothers in the choir decided that she would take matters into her own hands. On this particular Sunday, as the minister was beginning to wax eloquent, she reached across the curtain separating the choir from the pulpit. Taking a firm grasp on tail of the preacher’s robe, she gave it a good yank, and was heard to whisper, “Jes call Him Father, and ask Him for something!

Psalm 38 is one of seven poems called “penitential” psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).

Penitent: feeling or expressing sorrow for sin or wrongdoing and disposed to atonement and amendment; repentant; contrite.

* Penitence - regret for one's wrongdoing or sinning; ***contrition***; repentance.

The first psalm we studied was Psalm 51, a prayer of **repentance**. David appealed to God’s love and compassion as he sought forgiveness and cleansing from his sin.

Psalm 6 is a prayer for **relief**. David appeals to God to relieve him of the great suffering that he is experiencing.

Psalm 38 is a prayer for **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.

**DISCOVERY**

**Psalm 38**

Superscription:

*A Psalm of David to bring remembrance.*

With this psalm/prayer David could be:

* Reminding God of his plight so that God might act, or;
* Reminding himself and others of his past predicament in hopes that when found in similar circumstances, he and they might cry out to God during their times of acute suffering.

In the first ten verses of this psalm, David mentions his physical agony fifteen (15) times.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Arrows sunk into me | No health in my bones | Bent over and brought very low | No soundness in my body | Heart races |
| Hand has pressed down on me | Iniquities have flooded over my head | Mourning all day | Faint and severely crushed | Strength leaves me |
| no soundness in my body | Wounds are foul and festering | Insides are full of burning pain | Anguish in my heart | Light of my eyes have faded |

David pleaded that the Lord stop chastening him in His wrath.

\*Have we seen this before?

What David experienced was apparently very painful and harsh – indicated using the figures of *arrows* and hand. (*The motif is used in other places in scripture*.)

**Deuteronomy 32:19-23; Job 6:4, 16:12-13a; Lamentations 3:12-13**

David lamented his sufferings for the chastening of his sin.

**Psalm 39:11**

Because of his sin he had lost his **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and his **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** (soundness; on bones).

He had been made to bear his **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, which had overwhelmed him.

v.4

His illness was a festering, painful, debilitating one brought on by sinful foolishness.

vv.5-6

He was crushed in body and spirit (he was feeble … crushed, and in anguish).

\*Do you feel that David’s testimony here could have an affect on someone who reads/hears it? How so?

David then described the effect of his suffering on others.

vv.11

David could have benefited from the encouragement and comfort from his loved ones, but they kept their distance.

Adding insult to injury, David’s beloved friends and family had abandoned him to his suffering.

* “…friends and neighbors avoid me…”
* “…relatives stay far away from me…”

\*Can you recall anyone else in Scripture with this experience?

Furthermore, his enemies planned, plotted, and schemed to bring about David’s demise.

v.12

* “…set traps to kill me…”
* “…plan trouble…”
* “…all day long they think up lies.”

How does David describe his response to his detractors in verses 13-14?

* “I am like a deaf person…”
* “I am like a speechless person…”
* “I am like those who cannot hear and give a response…”

Despite his grief and misery, David’s **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** was still in the LORD.

vv.15-16

\*How easy or difficult is it *for you* to keep your hope in the LORD when you are experiencing tremendous suffering?

David’s heart and mind are consumed with his sinful failure. What does he say is the remedy for this?

vv.17-18

* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

David contrasts his condition with his enemies:

* He is weak…they are strong;
* He was about to die…they were very much alive;
* He was sick…they were vigorous.

David closes his prayer with three requests:

* “Do not abandon me…”
  + **Deuteronomy 4:31, 31:6, 8**
* “Do not be far from me…”
  + **Psalm 16:8, 34:18**
* “Hurry to help me…”
  + **Psalm 28:7**
  + **Isaiah 41:10**
  + **Romans 8:33-39**

**DIRECTION**

**Find three Bible verses that give the assurance that God will hear and answer your prayers.**

**Read Psalms 32, 102, 130, 143**