

Prayer List

Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What prayer of an afflicted man compares him to an owl living among ruins?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Moab's - Isaiah 16:2

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Psalm 38: The Burden of Sin **Steven C. Harper**

For the follower of God, sin is something that should never be forgotten; in reality, it never can be forgotten, if only because it touches everyone (Rom. 3:23). Even God's people are affected (1st John 1:8)! Sin touches all, but we also need to see it as something that touches and affects each one of us. It touches me. It affects me.

Sin's burden is heavy. If we truly understand its effect, we know that as long as it is in our lives, we are not pleasing to God. If we hide it, make excuses for it, try to justify it, and engage in it, sin will weigh on us and we can expect only God's wrath (Rom. 2:5). Disciples who remember this cannot rest easy with sin in their lives and it truly is a burden until its weight is lifted.

In the psalm under consideration, we read of one who lived under The Burden of Sin and who sought relief. We see how sin personally affects the guilty and how those around him sometimes behave as a result. But we also see in this burdened one a glimmer of hope — not in himself, but in the One who can deliver him from sin's weight. Let us consider his words and then consider our spiritual condition. Let us acknowledge the danger and the effects of sin on us — on me.

First, the psalmist pleads for mercy (vv. 1, 2). He pleads with God to withhold His righteous anger and to not rebuke him for he understood well, as did others, that none could stand before God in that situation (Nah. 1:6). He is not asking to be “passed over” for he knows he is not deserving, but that the Lord not rebuke him in His “hot displeasure.” Though his sins were extremely displeasing to the Lord, he knew he could not stand before the Lord in His anger.

It was, in fact, the weight of the Lord’s anger that weighed upon him! He speaks of it as “arrows” that pierced him deeply, and of God’s hand as it pressed him down. Knowing the Lord’s displeasure with him was what “pierced” him all the more, knowing his sin was the reason. He saw the Lord’s anger as a heavy weight that he could not bear and sought to be spared. Again, he is not saying that he is deserving of mercy; he just knows he could not bear God’s anger.

There was also the burden of his sin that weighed upon him. The mental remembrance brought physical consequences, with no soundness in his flesh or health in his bones (v. 3); the possible consequences of his sin made him feel overwhelmed (v. 4). He knew he could not make excuses for his sin or escape the consequences since God knows all. His sins were far more than he was able to stand, and too heavy for him to bear. He knew that sin — even the “smallest” one — was too much for him. [Is it any wonder he sought the Lord's help?] He felt wounded and weakened by the effects of the guilt of his sin (vv. 5-10), and was so weighed down by his sin that he could only say, “I am feeble and crushed” (v. 8). His conscience would not allow him to ignore his sin, and he was continually affected in his mind and body while his sins remained unforgiven. Part of his burden, too, was knowing how others viewed him in this state; his friends and family would have nothing to do with him (v. 11)! In his lowest time, even those who should have been close to him and who should have reached out to help were not willing. If this were not bad enough, he had to

deal with his enemies (v. 12) who sought his destruction! They looked for opportunities to bring him down, and saw his current condition as a means to their evil end. Their thought was, “Why not kick him when he is down?”

Though mistreated by friend and foe alike, he would not allow their words, plans, and behavior get him down. He refused to listen, “playing deaf and dumb” (vv. 13, 14). He would say nothing and act as if he did not hear. He would not allow their words of discouragement and trouble to override what he knew of the Lord, his help. You see, his helper would not fail! So he makes his plea...

As we might expect, his plea is to the Lord. Abandoned by his friends and no expectation of help from his enemies, he turns to the One whom he knows will not leave him in his lowest time (v. 15), even though he had transgressed. With this knowledge, the psalmist could plead for deliverance, and that his enemies would not see him fall (v. 16), lest they should rejoice over it. He knew his standing before all was a matter of the Lord's reputation, too, and did not want them to claim victory over him and his God. He pleads not with boastful arrogance, but with genuine sorrow (v. 17) and confession of his sin (v. 18). No excuses and no beating around the bush; he admits wrongdoing and expresses sorrow for the sin. He pleads with urgency lest his enemies find an opportunity (vv. 19, 20).

He closes with a simple plea: “Do not forsake me, O LORD!” (v. 21), and, “Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!” (v. 22). He wants the Lord to help!

Today, the faithful have been promised that when they sin, confession brings forgiveness and cleansing and, thus, relief from The Burden of Sin. Outside of Christ, though, there is still hope! If you submit to the will of the Lord, obey His commands, and strive to do His will, you may also have the hope of forgiveness and eternal life.

Why do you wait? Expository Files, 18.5 ~ May, 2011