

Tough Life? Faithful God!

Psalm 39

I said, "I will guard my ways,
that I may not sin with my tongue;
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle,
so long as the wicked are in my presence."

I was mute and silent;
I held my peace to no avail,
and my distress grew worse.
My heart became hot within me.
As I mused, the fire burned;
then I spoke with my tongue:

"O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting I am!
Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is as nothing before you.
Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! *Selah*
Surely a man goes about as a shadow!
Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;
man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!

"And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?
My hope is in you.
Deliver me from all my transgressions.
Do not make me the scorn of the fool!
I am mute; I do not open my mouth,
for it is you who have done it.
Remove your stroke from me;
I am spent by the hostility of your hand.
When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin,
you consume like a moth what is dear to him;
surely all mankind is a mere breath! *Selah*

“Hear my prayer, O Lord,
and give ear to my cry;
hold not your peace at my tears!
For I am a sojourner with you,
a guest, like all my fathers.
Look away from me, that I may smile again,
before I depart and am no more!”

When you read this psalm, does the psalmist seem confused to you?
Tormented? Uncertain? Is he angry? Repentant? Confused? Afraid?

Probably all of the above.

Such is life in this world. There are times when everything is going well, and times when everything is falling apart. Times when our faith is strong, and times when our faith is shaken. Times when it seems as if God loves us, and times when He seems against us. Times when we want to praise Him, and times when we are, perhaps, angry with Him. Life isn't all sunshine and happiness, is it?

And at such times, it may be difficult to pray. We may want to keep silence, rather than tell God what we are really feeling in our hearts and thinking in our heads. That's what the psalmist says at the beginning of this psalm. But keeping it all in just makes it worse.

So he cries out to God, like a child to her father. How long is this going to go on?

We may not understand what is going on, but we know there is no where else to turn. Even if our sorrow is coming from God's own discipline, He is our only hope. Or as Jesus once asked His disciples, *“Do you want to go away as well?”* Simon Peter answered him, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You*

have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God”” (John 6:67-69).

As the psalmist confesses, our hope is in the Lord. He disciplines us for our good. If He takes away, it is so He can give what is better. If He casts down, it is so He can raise us up in Him. If He rebukes, it is so He can forgive. None of this is easy, but God never takes the easy way out. Just look at the cross. The easy way out would have been to simply destroy us and all His creation because of our sin. But He would not do that. Instead, in love, He chose the hard part - He sent His Son to die for the sin of the world. Your sin and my sin.

Read this psalm again. Can you imagine Jesus praying this psalm from the cross, while the sin of the world was pressing hard upon Him and the wrath of God against that sin was crushing Him? Jesus knows whatever it is you're going through. And He teaches us that even in those darkest of times, those most confusing of times, those most desperate of times, we can pray, *“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”* (Luke 23:46), and know that there is no better place to be.

And just as Jesus then rose from the dead, so will we. Sin, death, and all evil will finally be past, and we will smile again. And maybe smile now, too. As a child of my heavenly Father who is caring for me. Even in the dark times.

Lord Jesus, there is so much I do not know and I get so confused and afraid at what is happening to me and in the world! Help me to trust, as you did on the cross, that our Father is working all things for my good; that He does not forsake me. See me through the dark times and lead me by the light of Your Word, that I commit my body and spirit and all that I am and have, into Your hands - your hands that were nailed to the cross for me! For if You did that for me, will You not see me through now? Lord, I believe; help me unbelief! (Mark 9:24). Amen.