

hear what David says though in the last two verses of the psalm. *“Forsake me not O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!”* You see here how David’s refuge is God the Lord, the faithful covenant keeping God Who has promised to send an almighty Saviour for us to deliver us from all sin and guilt and the misery we have brought ourselves in on account of the sin and guilt.

David finds escape from sin and guilt with his Saviour God. As one put it, “He continues to believe that God is loving and merciful in spite of our sins and sinfulness. It is this rock-bottom conviction that God cares which prompts the penitential prayer also of Psalm 38. When conviction of sin is of God it leads to the only fountain from all sin and uncleanness and that is with the Lord Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour of sinners. The gospel truth is: Jesus was forsaken as Sinbearer when overwhelmed under the weight of God’s eternal wrath against sin, and with countless enemies against Him and tormenting Him, but Jesus Christ as almighty Saviour perfectly endured and overcame all the suffering and hell He went through in the sinner’s place. Yes, and now there can be and is complete clearing and cleansing and renewal from all sin and guilt in and through Him and His once for all sacrifice. None who repent of sin and believe on Christ Jesus and follow after Him will ever be put to shame, but saved now and forevermore, by God’s grace through Jesus Christ the Lord. What a gospel is this, something to be so rejoicing in and ever thankful for, even when the true knowledge and comfort of this only gospel is also by way of always realizing our sin and guilt before God by nature!

Guilty before God - in a Christian and truly spiritual way. Are you? Can anything be more needful in our lives and times and more blessed, really? Even so, “bless the Word, O Holy Spirit, with convicting power, we pray, in Jesus Name, Amen.”

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



GUILTY BEFORE GOD

Guilty before God. How do you really come to see this, and even more, how does that show in a person’s life, when you truly realize something of our guilt before God as sinner? In this gospel message looking especially at Psalm 38, let us learn what it means in a Christian sense when you realize something of your guilt by nature before God. It may sound strange, but how good it would be if more people would be convicted of their sin and guilt before God. We could even say it is the great need of our times, more true conviction of sin and our sinfulness before God. Come then, let us learn from a godly man who knew something of being guilty before God. When we are seeing something of our guilt before God, before the holy law of God when applied to our hearts and lives, notice what will be true of us, you and me.

For one, then there will be an **awareness of guilt** on our part. How does that come out in this psalm? David is going through great trials possibly involving physical sickness and rejection and persecution, but especially also spiritual trauma. Psalm 38 is one of seven penitential psalms [the others being Psalm 6, 32, 51, 102, 130, and 143], but this psalm might well be where David sinks the lowest in conviction of sin. One commentator wrote about this psalm, “There is perhaps no psalm which more fully describes human nature as seen in the light which God the Holy Spirit casts upon it, in the time when He convinces of sin”. It is a psalm which even when it may also refer to David suffering from some physical disease, is yet mostly referring to us suffering from the spiritual leprosy of sin. That David is aware of his sins comes out undeniably in verse 3 where he states his troubles are “because of my sin”. “*Mine iniquities*”, he says in verse 4, “are gone over mine head.” In verse 5 also David says, “*My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness*”, too often having gone his own way instead of God’s way. In verse 18 he further states, “*I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*”

Clearly you see from this psalm David feels something of the guilt of his wrongdoings before the face of God’s holy being and law. This is what happens when God’s law begins to expose us to our sin, then you begin to become aware of sin, and you start having a consciousness of guilt, an awareness that before God’s holy standard, you just don’t measure up in and of yourself, indeed, you fall short miserably so. Do you know of this

awareness of sin and guilt in your life? In a sense we can say every person on earth knows something of a sense of guilt in sin before God. No one can sin and violate God's holy laws without knowing deep down they are wrong in their ways. The natural man, however, just suppresses this sense of guilt and wrong and works hard to forget it or deny or overcome it by never allowing himself to go there, and instead, with positive talk and training just going on in life. So also the natural man is never totally at peace with himself, and just never can be because he is living with suppressed guilt.

How is it different for the Christian? You don't only have an awareness of guilt, but as the Law of God is driven home to your heart and life, you become also **burdened with guilt**, overwhelmingly so even. You can't live with your guilt in sin any longer. That David is not just aware of guilt and sin but burdened with his sin and guilt comes out plainly in verse 4 where David says even, "*Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*" In verse 2 David speaks of God's arrows penetrating him deeply, and God's hand pressing him down, making it all unbearable for him. "*I am ready to halt [or falter], and my sorrow is continually before me*" he says in verse 17, implying his burden of guilt and sin is making it virtually impossible to function at all anymore.

Christians will tell you this is what happens in becoming a Christian and in the Christian life too. Do you have an awareness of sin and are you burdened with your sins and sinfulness like David here relates? An awakened sinner and **Christian person**, seeing himself or herself in the light of God's holy law doesn't minimize his guilt and sin and God's righteous displeasure against it all. No, then you see your sin and guilt all over, and you realize God would be just to condemn you forever, left to yourself. C.H. Spurgeon wrote once in connection with this, "It is well when sin is an intolerable load, and when the remembrance of our sins burdens us beyond endurance."

Do you know why he said that? Because if and when you know the burden of sin, that is what brings you to true confession of sin before the Lord. If there is no conviction of sin in the way of awareness and burden for our sin and guilt, there won't be confession of sin and guilt either. But again with the true child of God this is what is known and experienced, **confession of sin and guilt** as seen also in this psalm. David confesses his sins and God's righteous judgment against sin and he pleads really for mercy from God and His saving help. You don't find David here excusing his sin or hiding his guilt, nor is he minimizing his sin and guilt, but seeing it as it is, overwhelmed with it all, we see him here confessing it all to God. When a person becomes guilty before God by the Law brought home to his heart and life, you put your hand on your mouth and say with Job, "*Behold I am vile; what shall I answer Thee?*" [Job 40:4] You then agree with David who expresses in Psalm 130, "*If Thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord,*

who shall stand?" Or like he says in Psalm 143:2, "*Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.*"

We can go even further as shown also in Psalm 38, when guilty before God by the law as a converted person it will show not only in **awareness** of sin and guilt, and being **burdened** with sin and guilt, and **confessing** your sin and guilt, but it will show in **despairing of self** regarding your sin and guilt. God's law, when brought home to our lives by the Holy Spirit, makes us see not only something of the multitude of our sins but something of the magnitude of our sinfulness. The fact is we are not only guilty of countless sins, but we are of ourselves hopelessly corrupted in and with sin. The cancer of sin infects us in the whole of our being, and the more God's holy law is applied in our lives, the more we come to see how totally depraved in sin we really are as fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

You notice in Psalm 38 David isn't out for trying some self-help program. No, he is humbled to the dust about his sin and guilt and he realizes it is hopeless for him to try to straighten anything out by himself. Hear what he says in verse 3, "*there is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*" He goes on to say things like, "*I am bowed down greatly....I am feeble and sore broken....my strength fails me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone.*" These are all poetic expressions not just to express perhaps some physical ailment, but much more and truly his spiritual condition, utterly hopeless in and of himself. If there is glimmer of hope for life in a person you can see that often in a person's eyes, but David's eyes express hopelessness in and of himself. The fact is there is no remedy from sin and guilt for us left to ourselves. None whatsoever! This is what a person learns when the law is truly and faithfully applied and it hits home in the heart. You become then just a plain poor and needy sinner without a hope, except God Himself be merciful to you and save you.

Do you know of this gracious law work in your life bringing you to see your hopeless sinful guilty condition in and of yourself? The proof of knowing of this law work in your life by the Spirit of God is then you will also look to find your **escape from sin and guilt** with the Lord God. Indeed, you then find and keep finding escape from sin and guilt nowhere but with the LORD! We see this very clearly also in Psalm 38. Despairing of self on account of conviction of sin when it is genuine shows itself in appealing to God and His revelation of Himself as only Saviour from all sin and guilt. See and hear how David does this in Psalm 38 too. He pours out his heart here before God about all his sin and guilt saying in verse, 9, "*Lord, all my desire is before Thee*"...and then verse 15, "*For in Thee, O LORD, do I hope: Thou wilt hear, O Lord, my God.*" You hear how David appeals to God for His mercy and saving help? And David could not know the extent of God's saving help and power as we today may know it, living in the New Testament age. Just