

## **A Time to Know Our End!**

### **Scripture Reading: Psalm 39**

#### **To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.**

I said, ðI will guard my ways,  
Lest I sin with my tongue;  
I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,  
While the wicked are before me.ö  
I was mute with silence,  
I held my peace *even* from good;  
And my sorrow was stirred up.  
My heart was hot within me;  
While I was musing, the fire burned.  
*Then* I spoke with my tongue:

***“LORD, make me to know my end,  
And what is the measure of my days,  
That I may know how frail I am.***

Indeed, You have made my days *as* handbreadths,  
And my age *is* as nothing before You;  
Certainly every man at his best state *is* but vapor. Selah  
Surely every man walks about like a shadow;  
Surely they busy themselves in vain;  
He heaps up *riches*,  
And does not know who will gather them.

ðAnd now, Lord, what do I wait for?  
My hope *is* in You.  
Deliver me from all my transgressions;  
Do not make me the reproach of the foolish.  
I was mute, I did not open my mouth,  
Because it was You who did *it*.  
Remove Your plague from me;  
I am consumed by the blow of Your hand.  
When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity,  
You make his beauty melt away like a moth;  
Surely every man *is* vapor. Selah

ðHear my prayer, O LORD,  
And give ear to my cry;  
Do not be silent at my tears;  
For I *am* a stranger with You,  
A sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.  
Remove Your gaze from me, that I may regain strength,  
Before I go away and am no more.ö

Last Lord's Day, Pastor Stoos began our Advent Season with a sermon entitled, "A Time Where He May Be Found." The Advent Season or the Christmas Season, as has been pointed out before is that time of the year when we actually pretend that what the Bible says is true. We sing songs with words that include the phrase, "Joy to the World the Lord is Come." As Pastor Stoos rightly pointed out in his message last week, *"There is great blessing for those who know Jesus as their Savior, knowing that their sin has been forgiven, In fact, This is the only true joy to be found in the Christmas season."*

His text in last weeks sermon read in part "For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found." This week we will be looking at a different Psalm and hopefully we can show how they relate to one another.

Psalms 39 begins with the introduction. I have gone to Church my whole life and one of the things that I have heard countless Pastors say over and over again is that the Chapter numbers and verse are not part of the inspired text of Scripture. This is absolutely true. For example David did not sit down one day and decide he would write the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. The numbers were added later by people who compiled the Psalms and the other books of the Bible. One thing that I was not as frequently told, but is equally true is that in the Psalms the Chapters very often begin before what most people recognize as the first verse.

Perhaps the most famous Psalm is the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Most everyone knows that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalms begins with the statement, "The Lord is my Shepherd," However, the actual first words, and these are written in most of our Bibles and we tend to gloss over them, are the words, "A Psalm of David."

The 39<sup>th</sup> Psalms which we are looking at today begins with the phrase

### **To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.**

Jeduthun is the name of the leader of the musicians, maybe the equivalent of what we might call a choir director. The name Jeduthun means *"praiser."* Jeduthun is directly named as the recipient of 3 of the 150 Psalms. The 39<sup>th</sup>, which is our text today as well as the 62<sup>nd</sup>, also written by David, and the 77<sup>th</sup> Psalm, which is written by Asaph. When we read 1 Chr. 16 we read about David's appointment of Jeduthan as his music minister

<sup>31</sup> Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest. <sup>32</sup> They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order. <sup>41</sup> With them were Heman, Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen and designated by name to give thanks to the LORD for His faithful love endures forever. <sup>42</sup> Heman and Jeduthun had with them trumpets and cymbals to play and musical instruments of God. Jeduthun's sons were at the gate.

Since this Psalm is addressed to the Chief Musician of the tabernacle service this was a Psalm that was intended to be used during the worship service. But from the general tone and content of the Psalm it seems equally obvious that it was written during a time of trouble and of doubt. We cannot know exactly what the occasion was, but we do know that it was a time when David was in great affliction and trouble and he was struggling to see God's wisdom or plan.

As Pastor Stoos showed us last week, David needed to seek God to find God's plan.

The first three verses of this Psalms give us a glimpse, not of what particular issue David was dealing with, but of how he was dealing with it. I think this is important, this makes this Psalm applicable to every situation that comes our way.

I said, ðI will guard my ways,  
Lest I sin with my tongue;  
I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,  
While the wicked are before me.ö  
I was mute with silence,  
I held my peace *even* from good;  
And my sorrow was stirred up.  
My heart was hot within me;  
While I was musing, the fire burned.

Everyone of us finds ourselves in situations where we are ready to fly off the handle. Many of us are wronged, and we may feel completely justified in blowing someone's doors off. But I want us to notice very carefully how it is that David deals with his situation.

ðI will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue.ö

Answer me a question, ðHow does one sin with his tongue?ö

Wellí . As you can probably tell there are a multitude of ways. I am going to name a few, but let me be clear this is one of those areas where the more troubled we are the more we need to guard our ways.

1. Skeptical Speech, doubting God or God's Word.
2. Careless Speech ó A prime example of this kind of speech is found in Luke 9:51-55
3. Untruthful Speech ó Be careful of precise stories that actually obscure the truth (ðWell technicallyí ö)
4. Angry passionate Speech. (Just because you are passionate does not make your anger righteous)
5. Malicious Speech - Proverbs 18:21 *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.*

Note the author says he will restrain his mouth with a muzzle while the wicked are before Him. Just because you have the absolutely perfect response at a given time does not always mean you should use it. We are to guard our tongues. Guard what we say. A prime example of this kind of speech is found in Luke 9:51-55

<sup>51</sup> Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, <sup>52</sup> and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. <sup>53</sup> But they did not receive Him, because His face was *set* for the journey to Jerusalem.

<sup>54</sup> And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, ðLord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?ö<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>55</sup> But He turned and rebuked them, <sup>[f]</sup> and said, ðYou do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

I held my peace *even* from good;  
And my sorrow was stirred up.  
My heart was hot within me;  
While I was musing, the fire burned.

Often as we contemplate certain events that we have determined to be unjust or not right we find our selves in David's exact situation Our sorrow is stirred up and our heart is hot within us. Situations may make us angry, confused, or bitter, it is to this that the next statement is addressed.

How do we deal with this temptation of ðsinning with our tongues?ö Living a life of folly and foolishness.

The Psalmist goes to the one place that brings fear to many of us and he prays that God would make Him to know his end, and what is the measure of His days.

I want to skip a head just a little bit here.

*Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah*

As Pastor Stoos mentioned last week, Selah is a word for which we don't have an exact English equivalent. Essentially though we must remember that the Psalms were written for singing, and it is a musical directive to "Stop here, and pause awhile, that you may take time to consider and apply this truth." What truth? That every man is vanity."

The Rock group Kansas, has a song that was and still is fairly popular. "Dust in the Wind." I've always loved the song, and there are echoes of many of the themes of Psalm 39 in that song.

*Dust in the wind All we are is dust in the wind  
Now don't hang on Nothin' last forever but the earth and sky  
It slips away And all your money won't another minute buy.*

Notice I said there were echoes of Psalm 39 in the song. They echo the fact that all men are but vapor, and they also echo the fact that the fate of us all, rich, poor, great or small is the same. In the end, we are all dust.

Encouraging??? Just makes you feel all warm inside.

No, I didn't think so either. So why does David go to this place to deal with this despair?

Because the theme of this Psalm is not that our days are short.

The theme is not that we are but dust.

What then is the theme? Verse 7 tells us that our hope must be in the Lord. This is the great theme of this passage.

Psalms 130:5-6 I wait for Jehovah, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O  
Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.  
And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

During the season of advent one of the things that we must keep in our minds is that our only hope is in the Lord. I remember a conversation I had with Mark Echols about 3 years ago about this glorious season of Advent. He said, something similar to this. "I love to be reminded of how God became man and dwelled among us."

Pastor Sproul at the Heritage of Hope Banquet spent a little bit of time dealing with that 400 year period of silence between Malachi and Matthew. A period of 400 years where the Word of God was silent. The last promise received was "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. "

**My hope is in thee.** ; David is making us to understand that all the contemplation of life's mysteries. All the worry, and all the doubt, all our victories, and everything we attempt to do are meaningless and will fade, the only hope that remains is in the Lord. Making the Lord the object of his hope and trust, expecting all good things, grace and glory, alone from him; and this is the hope which makes not ashamed.

Like David, we too must wait on the Lord. Christ has conquered death. Jesus told us in Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

I have said many times in our Wednesday night study that when the Bible speaks of our heart is not speaking of the organ that distributes blood throughout the body. It is speaking of the innermost part of man, Our mind, our focus, our being. Is our heart dealing with the vanities of life or are we focused on our only possible hope?

Yes, it is true, that life is a vapor, and contemplating on this alone can be a downer, but we have a certain hope.

Jesus Christ came into this worldô this fleeting, fallen, fickle worldô and did the greatest thing that will ever be done. As the perfect Son of God, He died in our place, absorbed the wrath of God, paid the penalty for sin, provided the righteousness of the law, and rose invincible from the deadô all in a vaporø life of thirty-three years.

Because of that, we have hope. Yes we must know our end. And knowing that we must also see our hope.