

MIDWEEK OF LENT 2: STUDENT

THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS: PSALM 38

THEME VERSE

“Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!” (Psalm 38:22)

TEXTS

Psalm

38

Small Catechism, Confession: *What do you believe according to these words?*

INTRODUCTION

Last week, we heard about some of the physical effects of sin (*stomach pain, guilt*). This week, we will hear more about that, plus we will hear about the effects of sin upon friendships and how Satan uses our sin to drive a wedge between us and our friends and relatives. But God is merciful! There is a way out of this vicious cycle of sin.

QUESTIONS

Q1. Read Psalm 38:1–2. What does it mean to rebuke and to discipline? Is this Law or Gospel? Does God still discipline us, or was discipline ended with the resurrection of Jesus? Why or why not?

Definition of rebuke: an expression of strong disapproval

Definition of discipline to punish or penalize for the sake of enforcing obedience and perfecting moral character

Q2. Read Psalm 38:3–10. What is the cause of all of the psalmist's problems? How does this section compare to Psalm 32 and its description of the effects of sin?

Q3. Read Psalm 38:11–12. How has sin affected David's relationships with friends and family? How has your own sin affected your relationships? Where in Jesus' Passion do we see this same thing taking place? How can these things happen to Jesus even though He did not sin (see 2 Corinthians 5:21)? How are we supposed to bear one another's burdens (see Galatians 6:2)?

Q4. Read Psalm 38:13–14. Why is the psalmist like a deaf man? Why does he have no rebukes? Read Romans 3:19, Matthew 7:3. Why are we so tempted to offer rebuke and correction to others, but find it so hard to receive such correction from God Himself?

The author made this statement “Sin by its very nature blinds us to our own faults, and yet magnifies the sin we observe in others.”

Q5. Read Psalm 38:15–16. What is the psalmist waiting for God to do? Why? How concretely will God answer his prayer? How does God answer your prayers for forgiveness? Is there ever a time when God won't forgive our sins?

Q6. Read Psalm 38:17–18. David seems at the end of his life, and he confesses his own sin. When is it appropriate to confess our sins? Is it ever inappropriate to confess our sins? Can dwelling on our sins lead to more sin? Is this all rather depressing?

Q7. Read Psalm 38:19–20. David is not afraid to confess his fear of his enemies. Did Jesus express fear during His Passion at any time? How might David's enemies see to harm him when God has forgiven him? How can someone try to harm you even though you have been forgiven by God through Holy Absolution?

Q8. Read Psalm 38:21–22. It is not a sin to ask God to hurry up. Luther reminds us that we are to pray “with all boldness and confidence . . . as dear children ask their dear father” (Small Catechism, Lord's Prayer, Introduction). How does this help us to understand what to confess and why? Where do we know these words from in verse 22? (Hint: morning and evening prayer services in the hymnal.)

CONCLUSION

God is merciful. He does hear our prayers. He does forgive, and He uses sinful men to deliver that message day after day, week after week, year after year. Although there may be earthly consequences to our sin, God's forgiveness is here now, and His forgiveness lasts to all eternity.

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 38

Do Not Forsake Me, O Lord

A Psalm of David, for the memorial offering.

38 O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath!

2 For your arrows have sunk into me,
and your hand has come down on me.

3 There is no soundness in my flesh
because of your indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.

4 For my iniquities have gone over my head;
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for
me.

5 My wounds stink and fester
because of my foolishness,

6 I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;
all the day I go about mourning.

7 For my sides are filled with burning,
and there is no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and crushed;
I groan because of the tumult of my heart.

9 O Lord, all my longing is before you;
my sighing is not hidden from you.

10 My heart throbs; my strength fails me,
and the light of my eyes—it also has gone
from me.

11 My friends and companions stand aloof from
my plague,
and my nearest kin stand far off.

2 Corinthians 5:21

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 6:2

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

12 Those who seek my life lay their snares;
those who seek my hurt speak of ruin
and meditate treachery all day long.

13 But I am like a deaf man; I do not hear,
like a mute man who does not open his
mouth.

14 I have become like a man who does not
hear,
and in whose mouth are no rebukes.

15 But for you, O Lord, do I wait;
it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.

16 For I said, "Only let them not rejoice over
me,
who boast against me when my foot slips!"

17 For I am ready to fall,
and my pain is ever before me.

18 I confess my iniquity;
I am sorry for my sin.

19 But my foes are vigorous, they are mighty,
and many are those who hate me wrongfully.

20 Those who render me evil for good
accuse me because I follow after good.

21 Do not forsake me, O Lord!
O my God, be not far from me!

22 Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!

Romans 3:19

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Matthew 7:3

3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Additional scripture:

Question 1:

2 Samuel 7:14

I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,

Psalm 94:12

**Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord,
and whom you teach out of your law,**

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Revelation 3:19

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

Question 2:

Psalm 6:2

**Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;
heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.**

They weigh like a burden too heavy for me. That is, heavier than I can bear, as is written in Ps. 65:3: "Lord God, the deed of our sin has overwhelmed us; be gracious toward our iniquity." Thus our sin treads us underfoot until grace comes, treads sin underfoot, and raises our head above it so that we become master and rule over sin, not sin over us. Those, however, who lie in sin, who are either dead or too holy, do not sense these things. Therefore it is an amazing thing: He who has no sin feels and has it, and he who has sin does not feel it and has none. For it would be impossible for him to complain about and against sin if he did not live in righteousness and grace. One devil does not drive out the other (Luke 11:18); sin does not accuse its kind; and one wolf does not cry out against the other. And yet it is impossible for him who cries out against sin to be without it, for he dare not speak to God in fiction. It must be true that he has sin, as he says, and yet also true that he is without sin. Just as Christ was at the same time truly alive and dead, so also those who are real Christians must be full of sin and without sin at the same time. (AE 14:157–58)

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Question 3:

Looking at our sins that Christ bore for us, the passion.

Luke 22:48

but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Matthew 26:56

But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Question 5:**2 Samuel 12:10-15 (example of sin and discipline by God)**

10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' **11** Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. **12** For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'" **13** David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. **14** Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord,[a] the child who is born to you shall die." **15** Then Nathan went to his house.

Luther writes, "These are words of a true and strong faith, which in time of trouble lets everything else go and clings to the Word and grace of God, and does not doubt that God will hear and help him. Yet he does not prescribe to God the time or manner but simply says: 'Thou wilt answer; I will hope and continue to hope' " (AE 14:160).

It is not Private Confession versus General Confession, or confessing to the pastor versus confessing to your neighbor or friend. God uses many different ways to deliver forgiveness to us (e.g., Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Word, Absolution). We have no need to try and prioritize or rank them. Forgiveness is forgiveness, and each has its place where it will offer the most comfort.

Question 6:

Luther states: The wise, righteous, and proud saints are prone to accept peace and rest, comfort and honor; they see nothing to cause them sorrow and pain. They are always pleased and satisfied with themselves; for they hide their sin and do not publish it, do not even think of it, but think only of their own piety and the sins of others, as the following verse says. A really sincere person, on the other hand, is altogether different, as the holy apostle Paul says in Rom. 7:8, that sin dwells in him and in sin he lies captive, although outwardly he has done no evil but much good. Also Christ commands His own to hate their souls (John 12:25). Now there is nothing to hate but sin. And how do sins come into the pious that they should hate them? For He does not say that they should hate only past sins

which are forgiven and atoned for, but the soul and life which evidently is still in them. This sin the proud righteous do not take into account at all; they go on smugly and say that these are daily sins and not against God's command. If this were true, why does He say they should be hated? And why does the apostle complain that he is their prisoner (Rom. 7:23)? They claim that against daily sins there is no command and that these do not ensnare anyone. (AE 14:161–62)

Question 7:**Matthew 26:39**

And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

Evil for Good:

Genesis 44:4

They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good?"

1 Samuel 25:21

Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good.

Proverbs 17:13

If anyone returns evil for good,
evil will not depart from his house.

Question 8:

Luther in his explanation of the Lord's Prayer paints our relationship with God as that of a father and child. A child is and should be free to ask anything of the father. The father may not give the child what he has asked, but knowing that freedom is there is integral to the trust relationship between parents and children.