

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith XXXVIII. Overcoming The Harmful Effects Of True Guilt By Handling Sin (Psalm 38:1-22)

I. Introduction

- A. 1 John 1:10 teaches that we believers in Christ have all committed acts of sin as believers.
- B. When we **do** sin, it is imperative that we *face* this fact and *confess* it unto the Lord, for we suffer very harmful effects of true guilt as explained in Psalm 38:1-22, effects we do well to avoid (as follows):

II. Overcoming The Harmful Effects Of True Guilt By Handling Sin, Psalm 38:1-22.

- A. The introductory remarks in the English Bible comprise verse one of the Hebrew text, (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1007), but we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible for clarification with this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 38:1-22 as follows:
 - 1. "O Jahweh, do not in Your anger rebuke me, and in Your wrath discipline me," Psalm 38:1.
 - 2. "Because Your arrows have pierced me, and Your hand has come down on me," Psalm 38:2.
 - 3. "There is no health in my body 'from the face of' Your indignation; there is no soundness in my bones 'from the face of' my sin!" (Psalm 38:3)
 - 4. "Because my guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear," Psalm 38:4.
 - 5. "My wounds fester and are loathsome 'from the face of' my folly," Psalm 38:5.
 - 6. "I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning," Psalm 38:6.
 - 7. "For my back is filled with searing pain; there is no breath in my body," Psalm 38:7.
 - 8. "I am benumbed and utterly crushed; I roar with groaning of my heart," Psalm 38:8.
 - 9. "Adonai, all of my desires lie conspicuously open to You, and my sighing is not hidden from You," v. 9.
 - 10. "My heart pounds, my strength fails me; and even the light of my eyes is gone from me," Psalm 38:10.
 - 11. "My friends and my companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stand far away," v. 11.
 - 12. "Those who seek my life set their traps; those who would harm me talk of my ruin; all day long they plot deception," Psalm 38:12.
 - 13. "But I am like a deaf man who cannot hear; and like a mute who cannot open his mouth," Psalm 38:13.
 - 14. "I have become like a man who does not hearken, whose mouth cannot offer a reply," Psalm 38:14.
 - 15. "Because of You, O Jahweh, I wait; You (emph. pron.) will answer, O Adonai, my Elohim," Psalm 38:15.
 - 16. "Because I said, 'Do not let them gloat over me or exalt over me when my foot slips,'" Psalm 38:16.
 - 17. "For I myself am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me," Psalm 38:17.
 - 18. "For my iniquity I confess; I am troubled by my sin," Psalm 38:18.
 - 19. "Many are those who are my vigorous enemies, and many are they who hate me without a cause," v. 19.
 - 20. "Those who repay my good with evil slander me when I pursue what is good," Psalm 38:20.
 - 21. "O Jahweh, do not forsake me: O my Elohim, do not be far from me," Psalm 38:21.
 - 22. "Hurry to help me, O Adonai, my Savior," Psalm 38:22.
- C. We note significant observations of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. True guilt negatively and comprehensively harms the body (v. 7), mind (v. 13-14) and relationships (v. 11 of friends; v. 12, 19-20 of foes). Thus, problems in any such area should cause one to see if he has sinned.
 - 2. One can discern true guilt by the overwhelmingly harmful effects of God's conviction of real sin (Psalm 38:4), where false guilt leaves one questioning whether or not he has truly sinned. Since sin is the violation of God's law (1 John 3:4), i. e., His Word, that Word is the final definer of one's sin or innocence.
 - 3. Psalm 38:1-22 is an excellent psalm to read when facing a strong temptation to sin, for it snaps the believer back to the reality of the overwhelmingly negative impacts of true guilt were he to choose to sin!

Lesson: David described the overwhelming and negative impacts of God's conviction of sin on one's body, mind and even relationships both with one's friends and his foes. David also exemplified the need for the believer who sins to face the fact that he has sinned and confess it unto the Lord for His forgiveness and restoration to blessing.

Application: (1) If we suffer overwhelming physical, mental or relational trouble, we should first examine our hearts in light of Scripture to discern if we have sinned against the Lord. (2) If we discern that we have sinned, may we face that fact and confess our sin unto God for His restoration to blessing. (3) If we are tempted to sin, may we recall its negative effects in Psalm 38 and resist it in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:16.