

Psalm 39

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Date: 26 January 2025

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[0 : 00] Today we will be looking at Psalm 39. For those who were here last week, it has a similar feel to Psalm 38.

They're pretty challenging and heavy and real psalms. So let's read through this together and then we'll look into what we can learn from it.

Okay. To the choir master, to Jejithun, a psalm of David. 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. And then I spoke with my tongue. Oh Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days.

[1 : 02] 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, oh 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, oh Lord, and give ear to my cry.

[2 : 06] 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.

Before we go in, let's quickly pray. Father God, please open our hearts to hear your word and to be taught by your Holy Spirit.

Please guide my words as I speak today, that they may be honoring to you. And as we explore some challenging topics today, please help us to see your goodness in all of it.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. It's been a real privilege to work through the Psalms over the summer period.

It is really an incredible book. I found that if you're ever looking for evidence that God really understands what it is to be struggling as a person, and it empathizes with that, I mean, even with the ones that are self-inflicted from our own sin, Psalms is an incredible place to look.

[3 : 16] In particular, I find David's Psalms to be a great source of that kind of encouragement. I mean, David was a seriously unique guy. Like, he was a great warrior. He was absolutely ruthless on the battlefield.

He was a great leader of armies. You know, when he was offered to marry Michal, and King Saul asked him to go and kill 100 Philistines to show that he was, you know, worthy, almost pay a bride price, that wasn't good enough for David.

He comes back with 200. And I think that's, when we look at this man, we see a man of passion, a man of determination, and, like, you see that across all, like, parts of his life.

Another thing that stands out about him is he was deeply respectful of the authority that God put above him, and this being King Saul. And even when he and Saul are disputing, and he's got an opportunity to kill him and end this whole scenario where he's being chased down by him, it would solve his problem, but instead he chose not to because he wanted to show respect to that authority that God had put over him.

I mean, Saul himself rose out of complete obscurity. He just gets plucked out of it. When a prophet turns up one day, he's like, yep, you're going to be the king. And then over the coming years, we see him being able to rise to that position of being a godly king.

[4 : 37] But then all this that we see about Paul absolutely pales in comparison to his passion for and dedication to God. You know, the scenario that comes to mind for me is he's bringing the Ark of the Covenant back into the city of Jerusalem, and he's there and he's dancing before it.

And to him, he stripped off his royal garbs. He saw himself as nothing before God. He was humbled before him. He's taking joy in the presence of God. And he was that kind of guy in his dedication to the Lord.

But with all that context, there's something quite incredible about what we get in David's psalms. And we see this guy who's highly esteemed.

He's as big of a public figure as you can get. And yet he's writing songs that will be shared publicly that are highly personal. You know, it's quite incredible then, not only that he did that, but then God also preserved it so that we could read them today.

You know, and the psalm that we're going to look at today is definitely one that you would put in the category of highly personal. What we see from David is very honest in this psalm, and it's very raw about his experience and his feelings.

[5 : 57] In some ways, it's actually a bit hard to read this kind of psalm because you read it, and because it is so real, it, like, really hits you. He talks about questions and ideas and thoughts that we have in our own lives.

So the occasion of him writing this psalm is not clear from it, but what we get is really deep emotional distress, and we see that he is facing a great trial of some kind.

You know, I think it's good that we're looking at this kind of thing and that we work through all of the psalms, no matter how challenging, because it would be easy to focus on the nice parts of Scripture. We spend all of our time looking at the promises of salvation, which are fantastic.

The stories where it ends well for God's people, and they're flourishing. But this psalm, and the one we read last week, show us real and hard emotional situations that we as Christians will face.

David bears his distress with no pretense. He bears his struggles openly, and thank God that he has, because in doing so, we can read the psalms and see that, you know, when we're feeling that way, it's actually normal, and it's normal for a Christian to feel that way.

[7 : 11] And also, what we see in David is a good response, and we can see that pattern of response from him and learn how to respond to those challenging times well. This psalm in particular uncovers some of the most challenging truths of the human condition.

I'm not a pastor, and I'm not a trained theologian, and so I'm going to try and guide us through this today. And to some extent, we'll lean on the practical, because that's who I am. But we pray that the Lord would teach us through it and encourage us in it.

So, we're going to break the psalm into three parts to look through. So, the first will be verses 1 to 3, and we're going to see there David holding his tongue before the wicked.

Then we'll look at verses 4 to 6, where David is contemplating life's futility. And then we will look at the remaining part of the psalm with a focus on repentance.

So, we'll start where David started, verse 1. David is clearly in distress. He says, I said, I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue.

[8 : 20] I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence. So, as we've seen, he is vexed by something. It was possibly related to the wicked people around him.

Likely anger, if he's trying to guard his tongue. And given what follows, it could be related to the death of somebody. You know, losing someone close to him, maybe the wicked around him are, you know, like joying in the death of somebody that he cared about.

That theory would almost certainly be wrong. And I even challenge that myself as we keep reading through. But the context isn't specifically important, or we would have been told.

But what we see is clearly that David is vexed and challenged by those around him. He was tempted to lash out with his tongue, based on the situation that he was in, and to speak sinfully to those around him.

But despite his distress, he's specifically guarded his mouth with a muzzle. And the word guard here that you see is the same word we see in 1 Kings 2.4, where David is getting a promise from God for his future.

[9 : 31] And it means to pay close attention. And so in 1 Kings 2.4, we read, So this guarding is a deliberate action.

This guarding is to take deliberate action to guard against sin. In this case, it's sin of the tongue. And we know from James that it's particularly damaging.

He calls it to be like a fire. And he's guarding against that. David's wisdom saw him keep silent in that company that he was in, despite the toll that was clearly taking on him.

In the second verse, he says, I was mute and silent. I held my peace to no avail. And my distress grew worse. I think this is honorable.

Like, we see the world around us, the pattern of when we have moments of distress, they say, just speak out. You know, rant about these things. Tell the world about them. You know, they portray the unbridled tongue as if it's some kind of virtue or some kind of strength.

[10 : 42] You know, we live in the age of the protester. Hundreds of people will go to the streets and they'll be protesting, frankly, anything and everything. And so often you end up saying that those people don't even really know what they're there for.

They just want to be part of the protest because somehow that gives them some great virtue. In 2011, Time magazine named the protester as being their person of the year. And they were very explicitly claiming that speaking out to your enemies is this great virtue or great strength.

You know, we're always encouraged to speak out as if we're gaining power by vocalizing. And even when what we're saying isn't even true. You know, plenty of false things are spoken out as if they're true and that is claimed to be virtue.

But this isn't really a value that we should have. It's not what we saw David doing. Here we see David showing genuine true strength.

The strength to restrain and guard his tongue. And it's not just David that we see exhibiting this strength in Scripture. I think the most powerful example of that is when we see Jesus.

[11 : 56] Days before, just before he's been crucified, he's standing for the Jewish council. They know what they want to do with him and now they want an excuse to do it. They were peppering him with accusations, peppering him with questions, and they wanted him to slip.

They wanted him to give them something, something that he would sin in his words or lash out at them so that they could hold that against him. But he held his tongue.

We read in the Gospel of Mark that the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? But he remained silent and had no answer.

Jesus, surrounded by wicked men, held his tongue. He stayed silent. That is true strength. The strength to stay silent when you're before wicked men.

We're not meant to remain silent forever though, and we see with David that his distress grew. In this case, it was right for David to remain silent before the wicked, but it wasn't helpful for him entirely just to keep it pent up inside and not ever say it.

[13 : 14] I mean, we see that it then goes on to eat at him. You know, the solution was not being an emotional bottler because he still needed to get it out. He had to share his distress with somebody so that he could get out of his own head.

The thing we should take note of though is, where does David turn? When it's too much for him, when it's burning hot inside of him, and we read from verse 3, my heart became hot within me as I mused the fire burned.

Then I spoke with my tongue, O Lord. O Lord, he starts. O Yahweh, it's the personal name of God. He calls out to the personal God when he is overwhelmed and distressed.

I mean, when we're overwhelmed and distressed, who are we calling out to? I mean, when you're mourning or hurting, what's your first cry? Is it, O Lord?

You know, I'm sure many of us, me included, you feel a bit sick, things are not going so great, and your first cry in reality is, O Google, here are my list of symptoms, what is wrong with me, and how can I fix it?

[14 : 24] And, like, yeah, it sounds like a joke when we say it, but the truth is, I mean, I've done it, I'm sure many others have done it, that I've actually looked for that answer from somewhere other than God before I gave my distresses to him.

So when you're distressed, vexed, and struggling, it is right to seek help with that, and you shouldn't just bottle it up, but your first port of call should be taking it to God. In this church, your brothers and

sisters are there for you, and you can share with them.

Your pastors and elders are there for you, and you should absolutely reach out to them, and share your distress with them. But first, start with God. Always first start with taking it to the Lord before you then take it to others.

You should start with God because God is the God of all comfort. He will hear your prayers, and he can do infinitely more than the most well-meaning pastor or elder.

So as we continue through this psalm, it starts to get pretty heavy. It gets pretty existential. If we read together now from verses 4 to 6, we're going to see some pretty heavy questions being asked. [15:42] David says, 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. 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. Life is fleeting.

It can also feel very meaningless. David beautifully describes our life as a shadow. I think that's an incredible way to describe something which has absolutely no impact.

You walk along, and your footsteps will have impact on the ground. You engage with the things around you. You move things. You change things. You interact with things, and you impact them. Your shadow will follow you in all of these places.

[16:51] It will be everywhere with you, but it impacts nothing. It leaves no footsteps or imprints. It has no impact. It changes nothing. It makes no difference whatsoever.

I think the question is, is that going to be our lives? David sees this. It's not just life's actions that he sees as being of no consequence, but even life's turmoils.

Even the turmoil that's so distressing him right at that moment. What does it matter when we're distressed, when we come and go in a few hand breaths? Our lifetime, just a mere breath to God. It can be really hard to accept, but David is right. And when God showed him the brevity of this futility, it struck him. What is the point of a life that's this futile?

He cries out, Oh Lord, for what do I wait? To what point? What is the point of this futility? But David does have an answer, and his answer is, that my hope is in you.

[18:02] His hope is in God. The point of this fleeting life is found in God. That is what we were to use this fleeting life for.

Life in and of itself is meaningless. Life without Christ can be meaningless. This psalm, if you were to hear it today, would be most likely sung at a funeral.

And that's not to suggest that the person who's dying is dying in futility. But it's done for the psalm to be an example to us all, to remind us of how fleeting life is, with a view to not waste the fleeting life that God has given us.

Last week, Shem opened up the Heidelberg Catechism for us all, and we learned from that. And I'm going to follow suit from him. I'm going to have another catechism, but from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which for any of you who aren't familiar with that, it's a shorter version, so they're easier to remember.

And it's a great tool for teaching and memorizing God's truths. We use it to teach our kids, so they go through memorization to try and learn them. And it's a great foundation. And the first question in that catechism is, what is the chief end of man?

[19:23] The question is essentially saying, what is the purpose of man? That's where you start. The answer to that is that man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

That's a truth that I believe we see that David grasps. When he was despairing about the futility of life, and he turns directly to God to find his hope and to find his purpose.

So it's clear that we find our purpose in God. So I would challenge us to take a look at this short life of ours and honestly ask the question, how deliberately am I seeking to glorify and serve God with my life?

Your salvation was brought at a great cross by Jesus Christ. He took on our sins and the punishment for those sins that we deserve.

And because of that, you and I owe Him everything. So what does that mean for how you endeavor to not waste the fleeting days that the Lord has given you?

[20 : 35] So before we dig into that more, I'll take a slight moment just to point out for the sake of clarity, because some people get stuck on this sometimes. We're going to talk about works for the Lord, but I want to really make it clear around how that separates from salvation.

To make it very clear, you are saved by faith and not by works. So let's not mistake that. So as we talk about this, we're not talking about works for salvation. I think Ephesians 2 is very helpful for us in understanding how this all fits together.

So let's look at it together. It says from verses 8 and 9, for by grace you have been saved through faith. And it's not your doing, it's the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. It's perfectly clear. You are saved by faith. As we read on to verse 10 though, we see the place of works in this. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

So you are saved by faith. Your works cannot and will not ever buy your salvation. However, you have been created to do good works.

[21 : 57] Salvation through faith does not excuse us from wasting this fleeting time that God has given us to serve Him in the great works that He has prepared for us. James famously tells us, show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

And we see there that when we are saved, when we are saved in Christ, that a natural outworking of that active faith is going to be the good works that were prepared for us in advance.

You don't actually have to do those works to glorify God in order to be saved. But if you are saved through Christ and you really grasp the price paid so that you might have that salvation, you will want to do works that glorify Jesus in response to that.

This is something that I find regularly, I speak to particularly young men, where they feel aimless. They feel like they don't have purpose. And it's because they miss that they've been saved and they're grateful for that.

But particularly in young men, they have a, what now? Now I want to serve this God. Now I want to serve Christ. And they struggle to find how to do that. So in this psalm, David laments the man who heaps up wealth but does not know who will gather.

[23 : 23] This is a man who works out his fleeting life in the vanity of simply heaping up wealth. He has no plan for it. It has no purpose. It has no use.

Serving the Lord for so many Christians, if I can challenge us, is potentially like that. We go to church, we might read the Bible and pray every now and again.

But we're not actively seeking how we might serve God. We're not centering our life around that. We're not being deliberate about it. If you were in a business, that wouldn't fly.

You have goals, you plan, you strategize, you work out how you're going to achieve those goals in the most effective way possible. Yet for some reason, when we're in the Christian life, we act as if being deliberate and planned and having a specific plan for ourselves and how we will achieve God's glory is somehow frowned upon and it's something that we shouldn't do.

But as I look through Scripture, that's not what I see. There are plenty of examples. I've pulled out a few because I want people to see that this is across Scripture. So it's Colossians 2, 3, 2 chapter 3, verse 23 to 24.

[24 : 36] Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Ephesians 5, 15 to 16. Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time because the days are evil.

And finally, one passage that I think really captures this with the essence of what David is seeing in this fleeting life is Ecclesiastes 9, 10.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol to which you are going. This is our chance to serve the Lord.

When we have good works prepared for us, we should work heartily. We should work as to the Lord and not to men. We should be looking carefully how we walk, that we would walk as wise and not as unwise, that we would make the best use of this fleeting time we've been given because the days in which we walk are evil.

[25 : 55] Doing good work for the Lord is commendable. And while David laments the man who heaps up riches with no plan for their use, the issue here isn't the work, it isn't the wealth, it isn't the riches, it's the vanity and the futility and meaningless of the work being done.

You know, work that the Lord brings us is the thing in which we will find some meaning and value and that work will look different for different Christians. We all have different callings, different skills, different talents that the Lord's given us.

You know, there are Christians whose good work will involve accumulating wealth, but it's not going to be vanity and pointless like David. It's going to be a way that wealth is funneled through to the kingdom for works honoring the Lord.

I mean, someone has to pay for our pastors, for our missionaries, for the ministries that we run. And in my experience, often you wouldn't know who those people are in churches because they don't carry their wealth as vanity.

They are humble. There are Christians whose good wealth will be service of the Lord in teaching of the word, in preaching of the word, in sharing of the gospel. There are Christians whose good works will involve raising the next generation of children, being a mother, is one of the highest callings of serving the Lord.

[27 : 16] There are children whose, there are Christians whose good works will be to serve in practical ways in church. You know, we should never forget the work put into setting up chairs beforehand or the work that the musicians put in to learn the songs and play them well that we might be able to be worshipping the Lord without distraction and focusing on God's glory.

We all come together as a body in the church and we work together for the Lord in our parts that we play. Some of the greatest examples I've seen of good works in churches have been elderly women who have a call to prayer and they will uphold the church, the church members and people in the church in prayer diligently and upholding the Lord's work.

And God is glorified when we share of the hope we have with our kids, our colleagues, our friends, like we heard about this morning from Tim. God is glorified in that and we probably all have a part to play in that piece.

So working for the Lord doesn't have to be formal ministry. We shouldn't be looking at our past and saying, you're working for the Lord and I work for the man. We all work for the Lord. And when we work in whatever it is that we should be doing, we should be doing as unto God and to seek His glory.

So my personal suggestion, I said I'm pretty practical, so I like to kind of give a practical approach, is to actually think about this and set goals for yourself.

[28 : 45] We would do this in business, we do it, you know, we set New Year's resolutions and things, so why not actually say, what is our purpose here? How will I seek to honour God in that? So my practical suggested approach is start in prayer.

Always start in prayer. Pray that God would give you direction as you guide and plan what it is that you're going to do to honour Him. You know, the best laid plans of ours will be pointless if we are not in the will of God.

So start with Him. And I challenge you to expect Him to actually guide you in that. I mean, we see David come to the Lord in prayer to understand about the futility of life and God gives him understanding for that.

And a question he didn't have, he gets an answer. The Lord helps us to understand. So don't think of prayer as, you know, throwing good thoughts into the ether. We don't have this kind of, you know, untouchable God.

He is a personal God who has a relationship with us. Then I suggest, this is the strategic business part of me, that you break it into different elements of your life. Because serving the Lord isn't just, what do I do in church and what service team am I going to sign up for, even though that's a good thing.

[29 : 53] It's all of life because it all plays together. Different aspects of the life interact with each other. And so, if you want to serve him fully, you should think about that. And we see in scriptures one example to pull out in 1 Corinthians 6, 19 to 20.

It says, Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price, so glorify God in your body.

I mean, even to take that to a practical level, your fitness and health is a determiner of your capacity to serve the Lord. If we're sick, we're unhealthy, we're unfit, we're not going to be able to serve the Lord.

So it seems weird to stand in front of a church saying maybe a goal would be to get fit, but that could be honouring to the Lord. So, some areas of your life you might think about. Primarily, your

relationship with God.

Super important because you have to start with him. But what are your goals in your relationship with your family, your spouse, your friends? Maybe goals in your vocation. goals for your health which enable that capacity to serve.

[30 : 58] Goals for your work in the church and as part of the community that God's put us in. I think in a framework kind of way, so I build a framework around that and work out what I will do.

If anyone wants help with that, sure, you can ask me. But I think just make an effort for it. We'll make New Year's resolutions as we come to January 1st and set goals and be like, oh, I'm going to eat better or exercise better or whatever because I want to be healthier.

But I challenge you to set goals going, I want to glorify the Lord. I want to glorify God and enjoy him forever and what does that look like in my life? My experience is that there is great joy to be found in seeking the glory of God in our lives and this potential futility of work is heavily upset when we focus on working as unto God in all that we're doing.

And this, when you sit down and you start thinking about it, it can seem really intimidating when you think about the things that you want to improve to bring the Lord glory.

But I want to encourage you that God sent a helper for us. He sent the Holy Spirit to help us in this and the Holy Spirit will help us to glorify the Father.

[32 : 12] So in these good works that he has prepared before you, you're not doing them alone in your own strength but we should seek to do them with all of our might. I could potentially rant on that for a long time so I will restrain myself and for good reason because there's something probably even more important that we head to in this psalm.

It's something that David pulls out when he sees the futility of life. We read on and we see that David sees this distress as a discipline for his sin.

Now we don't know the scenario as I said before and to challenge my own theory from the start of the message, it's very likely that this situation was caused by David's sin.

He seems to believe that and to know it to be true. We know for David that there are definitely scenarios where it's confirmed to us in scripture that he is being disciplined for his sin.

The whole drama that he has with Absalom is explicitly called out as a consequence of the sin that he did with Bathsheba. So we know that God does work in David's life in that way.

[33 : 27] I'm not going to dig deeply into the topic of the relationship between sin and sickness and misfortune. I'm very grateful that Ian did a great job of that last week. So for those who were not here last week at the wedding or elsewhere, I encourage you to find the sermon online in the recording and listen to that because it will probably then also add more to what you get out of this psalm when you consider that as well.

There are a couple of things though in regards to this psalm specifically that I will still call out with this kind of train of thought. Firstly, David acknowledges that the challenge he's having, the distress he's having is discipline from God.

So he is being disciplined by God for sin. And what I would like to pull out is as we explore that idea in Scripture, it's very clear that God disciplines those that he loves.

We see it, it's peppered all through Scripture. So when God disciplines those he loves, he's actually disciplining them as a blessing.

It's like disciplining a child and training them in the way they should walk. It's uncomfortable in the moment but it is seeking to bless and love the child. So Hebrews 12, 6 says, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives.

[34 : 58] That's not isolated as well. There are a lot of verses that say very similar things throughout Scripture. So that was New Testament but even in Old Testament, I won't read them all out but I'll point out where they are for those who like to write down Scripture references and look them up later.

You've got Proverbs 3, you get a similar theme there. Job 5, I mean Job is the classic story of the Lord's, you know, what is the Lord's discipline and what is not the Lord's discipline.

If you want to explore this more read that, Psalm 94 and Psalm 119 both dig into that idea as well and there are plenty more. So we know that God loves us and so to some extent we should expect that he will discipline us in various ways and then the challenge for us as Christians is when we have these times is to actually see them as a blessing because the Lord is disciplining us because of his love for us.

Now I wouldn't sit here and try and say this scenario is discipline and this scenario is not. I think only the Lord truly knows that. But if in any challenges and turmoil we face, if we can seek to have an attitude of seeing it as a blessing and seeing what the Lord might be teaching us, it definitely can't be a bad thing.

So the next thing I'd like to pull out is when we look at David, what we see is a man with a healthy fear of God, particularly when it comes to sin. And I think that's something that we should all grasp. [36 : 33] It doesn't mean that we're running and hiding from God in fear. Through Christ, we know that we definitely don't need to do that. We don't need to hide from God as sin is forgiven in Christ.

It does, however, mean that we should understand that God expects repentance from us. And while we have this forgiveness in Christ, we should seek to see sin in the way that God sees sin.

We shouldn't take our forgiveness as a way to trivialize how seriously we see sin. So David had that fear. He knew God and he knew that God was the God of justice and that sin was a serious and real problem and something that God had to punish.

So maybe we should consider that. You know, when we think about this misery and distress that he's feeling, we actually think about the fact that David sees this as caused by his sin.

That that suffering in the psalm is something that was caused to lead him to the Lord, which is what he does in this psalm. So we can't know for sure the circumstance, but what we can see is where David starts as he goes to the Lord.

[37 : 54] And we need to start with the Lord in our repentance. Verse 7, And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? When he's at his deepest existential moment, thinking about the futility of life, his hope is in God.

Then he goes on to plead forgiveness for his sins. So he's at his lowest, he's in a pit of despair, and then he remembers the Lord. And what does he do in response?

He pleads for forgiveness of his sins. Deliver me from all my transgressions. Do not make me the fool of the scorn, he pleads. So when David has had a revelation of the brevity of life, when he's seen the potential futility of his life, what does he do?

He comes to God in repentance, knowing that God is his only source of hope. David feels the weight of his sins so heavily upon him in this psalm and in many others, but he knows that he can come to God in repentance and be forgiven.

David was saved by faith, the faith that he had in God and the obedience that he showed God. And like us, David was not perfect, but he did come to the Lord in repentance of sins, and we should be doing the same.

[39 : 15] Your life is but a few hand breaths. You don't know when it is going to be over, so repent now to God and turn from your sins.

Repent always and be turning from your sins. In Acts 26, Paul is speaking to a gripper, he's telling him his conversion story, and then he gets to what he's preaching and he's preaching to both Jews and Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with repentance. So what are these deeds in keeping with repentance? Well, repentance is not just being sorry for your sins, repentance is actively turning and seeking to put that sin to death.

So that is the deeds in keeping with repentance. So none of us will do this perfectly. Have no expectations, you will do that perfectly, sometimes even well, but we are called to try.

In practice, again, I like to be practical, for the Christian, this is again a deliberate action we take for the Lord. And it actually looks similar to what you would do with your plan.

[40 : 31] Start in prayer. If you're struggling with sin, start in prayer. Firstly, repentance, but seeking the Lord to know how you might do a deed in keeping with repentance and turn from it. God wants you to turn from your sins and he will help you to do that.

And then secondly, have a plan. Actually think about when I was tempted and when I sinned against the Lord, what led me to that? Have a plan in advance for how you will respond when you're tempted again because you will be.

It might be walking away from a situation or removing yourself from it. It might be like David's scenario where he just had to be careful to guard and say nothing so that he might sin.

If you can turn to God in prayer in those moments or if you can open his word in the situation you're in, that is always very helpful. And again with this sort of thing, if you need help with this, reach out to a pastor or an elder or someone in the church that you're comfortable with.

This fellowship that we're in in this church is a great blessing and we should make the most of it so that we're upholding each other to bring the Lord glory and to enjoy him.

[41 : 42] So use the fellowship that you have to have others help you if you need help fighting sin. Life is simply too short and too fleeting to dwell in unrepentant sin and none of us know the days when our hand breaths will be done.

So if you're sitting here and you haven't ever come to Christ, that's a really clear message for you. The pointlessness of this fleeting life is not how it has to stay.

And while I've talked a fair bit in this about works we can do to honour the Lord, it's not required to be saved. This forgiveness of sins is available to you as well.

And we learn in 2 Corinthians 5 that it was for our sake that God made Jesus be sin even though he never did sin.

Jesus then goes and dies on a cross under the punishment of God taking the punishment that we deserve that we might be reconciled with God. We've been reading that David was afflicted because of his sins but Jesus was afflicted because of our sins.

[43 : 02] It's because of this that you can be forgiven from any and all sins when you call on Christ. And for those that know him it should be this that motivates us to come to him in repentance repentance and to seek to fight sin and that we might live lives that bring him glory and the glory that Christ truly deserves.

So as we come to a close today I want to call out a few things for us to take away with us. Firstly remember that when David was in distress he was still deliberate to hold his tongue and guard his tongue before the wicked.

He was deliberate to not sin before the wicked. There is a strength in that, a strength in that self control and strength in that silence before the wicked. He didn't remain silent though and nor should we but he put his words of distress before the Lord.

He came to God, this God that he has relationship with and so do we and that is a pattern that we should have for ourselves. When you're in distress take your cares to the Lord.

Know that he cares and he listens to his people. Remember also that life is fleeting, it's but a few hand breaths and without God it will not only be short but meaningless.

[44 : 34] Our purpose here is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever and let us take that seriously. We are saved by faith, we have nothing in which we can boast but we were created with good works prepared for us in advance.

So let's do those good works that we can bring God the glory that he so truly deserves. Not because we have to but because we want to and that's the natural response to the incredible work of salvation through Christ.

and finally remember I would ask all of you to not let this day end without coming to the Lord in repentance and remembering that deed in keeping with repentance it's not just saying sorry for our sins but it's owning them and when we're asking for forgiveness receiving that and actively seeking to turn away from our sins to fight sins and remove them from our life.

If you've been a follower of Christ for years this is still an important message for you. If you're not a follower of Christ and you don't know the freedom and purpose available through Jesus Christ then this is an even more important message for you.

Last week when Ian was sharing from Psalm 38 he said it kind of ends on a cliffhanger. We don't really get a conclusion and this is true as well for Psalm 38.

[46 : 06] 39. We're so close to a conclusion and we'll hear more from Roy next week on Psalm 40 but I don't want to leave us hanging there because it's a pretty hard psalm to read.

So let's finish up today by reading the first few verses of Psalm 40 which give us some encouragement that the Lord hears the prayer of David. I waited patiently for the Lord.

He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction out of the miry bog and set my feet upon a rock making my steps secure.

He put a new song in my mouth a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly Father God we thank you that you hear our prayers as you heard David's. We thank you that you care for us as a heavenly Father even so much that you love us that you would discipline us for our good.

[47 : 23] we fall short Lord time and time again and you were gracious to us to forgive us of our sins. We all fall short every day and we do not serve you as we should in so many ways.

Lord we pray that you would be our help and source of strength. Help us to know what each of us can do to bring you glory Lord and to enjoy you. We pray as we read in your scripture that the love of Christ might control us because we have concluded this that one has died for all therefore all have died and he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him for their sake for him for their sake died and was raised.

All glory be to the Father Son and the Holy Spirit and we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.