

PSALM 39

HOW TO FIND MEANING WHEN LIFE IS CONFUSING

Introduction:

This is not a prayer for everyone—at least not a prayer for every day.

This is a prayer for the day in which your heart has more questions than it has answers.

This is a prayer for the time in which you feel that you must say something and you do not know what to say.

Though we know this to be a psalm of David, there is no hint about the specific circumstances of his life. Was he ravaged by disease? Was he beginning to feel the limitations that age brings? Was he suffering from a guilty conscience? Or was it just a thoughtful and confusing time in his life? While we cannot be certain, we do know that he was not certain either. He was a troubled man—he had troubles without, but more seriously, he had troubles within. As he usually did, when he was confused and troubled, he turned to God.

We need to learn from the Psalmist. You may find yourself in similar circumstances before another week passes. We can learn how to find meaning in the midst of our confusion.

I. YOU TAKE YOUR CONFUSION TO THE GIVER OF LIFE.

1. Silence has limited value (v. 1-4)

Silence about your confusion will prevent the giving of hurtful testimony about the Lord to the wicked world.

Silence will not solve the problem of the confusion in the heart. Such confusion tends to multiply when it remains unexpressed.

2. Prayer lays the confusion out before the giver of life. (v.5)

The psalmist did the wise thing—he took his confusion to Yahweh, the Lord of the covenant. Honest, earnest, searching prayer is the place to begin.

II. YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THE BREVIDITY AND FUTILITY OF LIFE APART FROM GOD.

1. Make an honest appraisal of the brevity of your life (v. 4-5)

2. Make an honest appraisal of the futility of your life (v. 6)

This appraisal comes when you put your temporal life in the light of the Eternal One. Given the brevity and futility of life, there is no meaning for life apart from God.

We will not find our significance in attempting to be what we are not---we are not God. We are a frail creation of a good and purposeful God.

III. YOU CONFESS THE SINFULNESS OF YOUR LIFE.

1. You confess your need of salvation from sin (v. 7-8)

The psalmist asks for complete salvation—of mind, body, and soul. He wants all of the impact of sin to be removed from his life.

2. You confess that you have deserved divine chastisement (v. 9-11)

God's chastisement comes to us through the circumstances that He allows us to encounter. The psalmist was ready to acknowledge that he deserved every blow that he had received, but he believed that it was time for an end to the chastisement.

IV. YOU CLAIM THE LORD AS YOUR SANCTUARY. (v. 12-13)

The law of the desert is in the background of this passage. It is really a bold claim that the psalmist lays on the Lord. The law of the desert was that you never turned a stranger away. You took the stranger into your tent, and treated him as an honored guest. You fed him, clothed him, sheltered him, and protected him. You did not leave him exposed to the dangers of the wild.

The psalmist throws himself before the doorway of the Lord's presence with tears and earnest appeal. All he wants is a place under the tent of the Lord. He wants sanctuary with the Lord.

If he can have sanctuary with the Lord, then his "strength" or joy will be restored. The thing that has created his deepest confusion is that in his sin he has been cut off from the presence of the Lord.

Life will never make sense, nor will your confusion end, until you find yourself enjoying the communion found only under the Lord's tent.