

PRAYING PSALM 39

“Remove Your plague from me; I am consumed by the blow of Your hand” (Psalm 39).

This is a sequel to a penitential prayer in Psalm 38. It is the aftermath of David’s depression. It is an expression of his instability, his feelings of sorrow and fear, and his consciousness of his frailty.

This prayer was part of David’s healing process after his moral fall. 1. DAVID’S DECISION NOT TO TALK ABOUT WHAT WAS BOTHERING HIM (1-3). I will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue. I will restrain my mouth. I was mute. My heart was hot within me. 2. HIS DECISION TO TALK ABOUT WHAT WAS BOTHERING HIM (3-6). He asked the Lord to show him his end, i.e. the brevity of his time on earth. He described his life expectancy as a handbreadth and a vapor. He considered his life a moving shadow. And riches mean nothing. 3. DAVID’S DECISION TO DO HIS BEST AND COMMIT THE REST (7-11). He decided to delay no longer. He vowed to place his hope in the Lord and move past his sorrow. He asked God to forgive his transgressions. He asked God to remove the plague of his sin, acknowledging it had destroyed the beauty in his life. He acknowledged the brevity of his life. 4. DAVID’S PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM CHASTISEMENT (12-13). David believed he would die if God did not relieve his sorrow and restore his strength.

The psalm was placed here to give hope after a moral failure. There is reconstruction after destruction. First comes repentance, then comes restoration. This prayer was David’s first step to restoration. It is difficult to pray when you don’t feel deserving, but if you don’t pray, you won’t get better. When you don’t get better, you can’t move on. You must talk about your failure. Talk to the Lord about everything you are feeling and thinking. Move past confession and receive God’s forgiveness. Lay everything before the Lord, then be willing to receive what He has to give. Do your best; commit the rest. Trust God to relieve your sorrow. Ask God to help you be a better person because of what you have learned about yourself from your sin.