

The Mute Man

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 39

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I. He answered him not a word (cf. Lk 23:6-12)

Psalm 39 was written while David was suffering under God's hand (10) and tempted to complain against the Lord. However, knowing that the Lord was in charge, David governed his tongue (9) and cried out to God for wisdom (4-6) and deliverance (7-13). In so doing, he is a type of Christ and a model for us.

II. The Mute Man

A. Introduction: To Jeduthun (cf. Pss 62, 77; 1 Chr 16:37-42; 25:1-3)

Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals. And the number of the skilled men performing their service was: Of the sons of ... Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jesbaiab, Shimei, Hashabiab, and Mattithiab, six, under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the LORD.

B. Vow & Inner Turmoil (1-3)

The prosperity of the wicked was a reality that deeply troubled David. David loved the Lord and loved justice and wrestled profoundly with what we might call "the problem of evil." Why do the wicked prosper? Why do the righteous suffer?

C. Prayer for Wisdom (3c-6 cf. Ps 90:12)

David prays that God would teach him how frail his life is. Moses prayed similarly in Psalm 90:12, *Lord, teach us to so number our days that we may present to you a heart of _____.*

D. Prayer for Salvation (7-11)

Second, David prays for salvation. While the wicked seem to be prospering, David himself is suffering. So he prays for deliverance from his sin (8a), from the wicked (8b), and from the suffering which he is experiencing at the Lord's hands (10-11).

E. Prayer for Mercy (12-13)

III. Application

A. When suffering, guard your tongue lest you sin (cf. Ps 17:27-28; Eph 4:20-32).

Our culture has embraced a view of “victimology” that is radically unbiblical and personally destructive. The idea is that if you are suffering, then you have the right to say whatever you want to say. No one can question you. Psalm 39 gives the lie to that.

So consider some ways that we can be tempted to sin with our tongue when suffering. *“He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive”* (Pr 17:27-28).

1. We can be tempted to *complain* _____ *God* (Job 2:9). While it is fitting to complain *to God*, we must beware that we never complain _____ *God*.
2. We can be tempted to *question the* _____ *of righteousness*. *“What’s the point? Why not just practice wickedness? We have lived faithfully and the Lord has caused us to suffer.”* This was David’s temptation in Psalm 73.
3. Finally, when suffering we can be tempted to *speak maliciously to* _____. Psalm 64:3 speaks of the wicked *“who sharpen their tongues like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows.”*
 - a. Suffering can lead us to use our words like *swords* to wound others. *“There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health”* (Pr 12:18).
 - b. Suffering can stir up bitterness and resentment in our hearts such that we *aim bitter words like arrows*. We can be tempted to bring up issues that we had long since forgiven or determined to overlook.

B. When suffering, pray for wisdom (cf. Job, Ecclesiastes; Heb 11:13-16).

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

C. When suffering, wait on the Lord and cry out to Him for deliverance (Job 7:6-21).

IV. Conclusion (cf. Is 53:4-7)