

Psalm 39 Sermon

Vintage Church

June 7th

Psalm 39 *Christian Standard Bible*

1 I said, "I will guard my ways so that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle as long as the wicked are in my presence."

2 I was speechless and quiet; I kept silent, even from [speaking] good, and my pain intensified.

3 My heart grew hot within me; as I mused, a fire burned. I spoke with my tongue:

4 "Lord, reveal to me the end of my life and the number of my days. Let me know how transitory I am.

5 You, indeed, have made my days short in length, and my life span as nothing in Your sight. Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor. Selah

6 Certainly, man walks about like a mere shadow. Indeed, they frantically rush around in vain, gathering possessions without knowing who will get them.

7 "Now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions; do not make me the taunt of fools.

9 I am speechless; I do not open my mouth because of what You have done.

10 Remove Your torment from me; I fade away because of the force of Your hand.

11 You discipline a man with punishment for sin, consuming like a moth what is precious to him; every man is a mere vapor. Selah

12 "Hear my prayer, Lord, and listen to my cry for help; do not be silent at my tears. For I am a foreigner residing with You, a sojourner like all my fathers.

13 Turn Your angry gaze from me so that I may be cheered up before I die and am gone."

Main Point of the Text

David's vow of silence intensifies his suffering but in crying out to the Lord he sees both the vapor of his own existence and the vastness of God's goodness to him.

Main Point of the Message

Self-reliance leads us further into the consequences of our sin, but repentance will lead us to reliance on God.

Silliness of Self-Reliance (1-3)

- Two versions, same folly
 - Rugged Individualism
 - All alone in the world
 - The Therapeutic Self
 - All alone in your own head

God Does not Need Others to be Who He is (4-6)

- Looking to the God who Cares
 - 1 Peter 5:6-7;10-11 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exult you at the proper time, casting all your cares on him, because he cares for you ... The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. To him be dominion forever. Amen.”
 - God is Love without having to love another. God is good without having to do good deeds. God does not become anything other than who He eternally is.
- A Little Theology of the Reliability of God
 - “The immutability of God appears in its most perfect beauty when viewed against the mutability of men. In God no change is possible; in men change is impossible to escape. Neither the man is fixed nor his world, but he and it are in constant flux. Each man appears for a little while to laugh and weep, to work and play, and then to go make room for those who shall follow him in the never-ending cycle” -A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 50.
- David sees the number of his days and in doing so implies the **infinity** of God.
 - Ps. 39:4 “Lord, make me aware of my end and the number of my days so that I will know how short-lived I am”
- David sees the vaporous nature of his life and in doing so implies the **immutability** of God.
 - Ps. 39:5 “In fact, you have made my days just inches long, and my life span is as nothing to you. Yes, every human stands as only a vapor.”
- David sees the vanity of his possessions and in doing so implies that **creation** belongs *to*, because it is *from*, God Himself.
 - Created contingency and dependency
 - "We are born helpless. As soon as we are fully conscious, we discover loneliness. We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually; we need them if we are to know anything, even ourselves." — C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

Repentance is an Act of Reliance on God (7-12)

- David's **first act of silence** was in self-reliance and self-preservation
 - Did not want to sin with his words while he was in the presence of the wicked.
 - Did not even speak good.
 - Presumably did not even speak praise or prayers to the LORD.
- David's **second act of silence** is a prayerful awe because of what he knows the LORD has done.
 - Reminder that God *does* because of *who* He *is* which makes Him reliable to turn to in repentance
- David's cries for help include themes of the finite nature of our life here on Earth, the vanity and vapor of our possessions, and all manner of things that moths and rust will devour.
 - David turning away from these things to give him hope or a sense of peace should lead us to consider what things, people even, we are placing our hope in.
 - “Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ, and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.” C. S. Lewis *Mere Christianity*

Conclusion (13)

- David concludes with a lament for the Lord to hear his prayers, to turn his gaze from him, and a petition to be cheered before he dies.
 - There is an urgency here for David and there should be an urgency for us as well.
 - We need to get our focus right. We need to get our *worship* right.
- Ps. 40:9-10 “I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly; see, I do not keep my mouth closed – as you know, Lord. I did not hide your righteousness in my heart; I spoke about your faithfulness and salvation; I did not conceal your constant love and truth from the great assembly”