

PSALM 38: Severe Discipline.

This is a song of sorrow. The Psalmist was severely chastened by the Lord for personal sin, and grievously overwhelmed by his enemies. In his extreme plight he pleaded that the Lord in compassion would deliver him. His hope was in the Lord to whom he confessed his iniquity.

I. The LORD's Discipline: 1-12.

1-2: David pleaded that the Lord stop chastening him in his **wrath**. This **discipline** was apparently painful and harsh, as the figures of the arrows and the **hand** reflect.

3-8: David lamented his sufferings for the chastening of his sin. **Because of** his sin he had lost his **health** and his fitness. He had been made to **bear** his **guilt**, which had **overwhelmed** him. His illness was a festering, painful, debilitating one **brought** on by **sinful** foolishness. He was crushed in **body** and spirit.

9-12: David then described the effect of his suffering on others. First, his pitiable state lay **open before** the LORD. God knew that he sighed at the point of death. Second, his **friends** avoided him. Third, his enemies spoke evil of him and planned ways to deceive him and **ruin** him.

II. David suffered with hope: 13-22.

The second portion of the psalm expresses David's confidence that the Lord would have compassion on him and rescue him.

13-16: His hope was in the LORD alone. He waited **for** the LORD to **answer** his prayer and end their triumphant gloating.

17-20: David's need was great and his situation desperate. His **pain** was constant. Moreover, he confessed his sin, recognizing that **sin** was the cause of his suffering. But his **enemies** were **vigorous** and **numerous**, and thrived on **evil** and **slander**.

21-22: David's petition was urgent. He pleaded with the LORD to **help** him because He was his **God** and **Saviour**.

Hebrews 12:5-13 - *For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.*

PSALM 39: Life is short.

David acknowledged that God had made man's life brief. So he cast himself on the Lord as his only hope, praying that God would stop chastening him so he could enjoy his remaining days. He seems to have suffered a prolonged illness that brought him near death.

I. The shortness of life: 1-6.

1-3: David submitted to the knowledge that his life was brief. First, he resolved not to **sin** by his words. He kept **silent** in the presence of his enemies, but suppressing his feelings made his suffering worse.

4-6: Second, he sought relief from his frustration by submitting to the Lord's determination of his life. He prayed that the LORD would help him know the days of his life. All one's labours in which he **heaps up** his possessions are **vain**, for life is short.

Life is compared to breath, vapour, grass and flowers that wither. Some have compared life to candle light that burns away.

Psalm 144:4 – *Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.*

Life is 70% choices, 10% crisis and 20% chances.

There are, of course, great variations in life expectancy statistics worldwide, mostly caused by differences in public health, medical care, climate, diet, behaviour and economics. Life expectancy in the developing world is averagely 50.

1/3 of life is spent sleeping, ¼ of life is growing up and learning, that is approximately 58 years, the rest of life is everything else including work, leisure and solving life problems.

David has hope in the LORD: 7-13.

7: Realizing that his afflictions were due to his sins, David cast himself wholly on the LORD to make his brief sojourn in life enjoyable. He expressed his commitment to the Lord in the words **My hope is in You**.

8-11: David petitioned the Lord to stop chastening him. God rebukes people for **sin** and consumes **their wealth like a moth** eating a garment. Because the Psalmist was **overcome**, he prayed for God to **remove His plague**.

12-13: The Psalmist's final prayer in this Psalm was that God would hear his plea and treat him not as **a stranger** but with favour, by making his remaining days enjoyable.

The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it.