

PSALM 39 – Prayer for Wisdom and Forgiveness!

4/2/22 – Sat. Morn. Prayer - P. Twente, 714 425-9221; ptwente@gmail.com www.ptwente.com

(Psa 39:1, 3) *I said, "I will guard my ways, **Lest I sin with my tongue**; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me." [3] My heart was hot within me; While I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my **tongue**:*

O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES Festival Choir/Hosanna Church (1:24)

Charles Wesley (1739) One of 6,000 hymns, written to commemorate the first anniversary of his conversion. He had been ill in bed for some time, and the fear of death had often come into his mind. On Sunday, May 21, 1738, his brother and some friends came in and sang a hymn. After they went out he prayed alone for some time. In his journal we read: "I was composing myself to sleep in quietness and peace when I heard one come in and say, In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities. The words struck me to the heart. I lay musing and trembling. With a strange palpitation of heart, I said, yet feared to say, I believe, I believe!" These memories he has woven into that wonderful third verse of the hymn: **Jesus! the name that charms our fears, That bids our sorrows cease; 'Tis music in the sinner's ears, 'Tis life, and health, and peace.** He and his brother, John Wesley, admitted that they made more converts through their hymns than through their preaching.

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise, the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace!

2 My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim, to spread thro' all the earth abroad the honors of Your name.

3 Jesus! the name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease, 'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.

Psalm 37 is a reminder of the brevity of life. The Psalmist makes known in a very interesting way of how brief, life is! With that realization, he woke up to the fact that life ought to be handled, and handling our time is the most valuable that we own and have control of, in life. The most finite thing that you and I possess in life, is life itself, is time! It's fleeting! It goes! We don't get it back! Anything else can likely be resurrected, but every bit of time that goes by, that's something now that is behind us. We don't get that time back! This is what this Psalm is about. His prayer is essentially LORD, make my life count! Only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ, will last!

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun, whose name signifies praising or celebrating! (1Ch 25:3, 6) Of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the LORD. [6] All these were under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the authority of the king

PSALM 39 - What Is the Measure of My Days?

Psa 39:1 A Psalm of David. I said, "I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me."

- The Bible says concerning the tongue that it is one of the hardest things to tame. We can sin so easily with our tongue. Using it to hurt, using it to cut. We need to guard our tongue. David said, **"I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue."** That I do not use my tongue for evil. To cut someone down. **"I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me."**

Psa 39:2 I was mute with silence, I held my peace even from good; And my sorrow was stirred up.

- David was watching this situation and he was just keeping quiet. Not wanting to get his tongue involved in the thing but he describes what so often happens when you try to keep quiet. **(Jas 3:7-8) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. [8] But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.**

Psa 39:3 My heart was hot within me; While I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue:

- I wasn't saying anything but man, inside, while I was thinking on this, the fire was just really burning

hot within me.

Psa 39:4 "LORD, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am.

- Lord, help me to see things in the right perspective. Help me, Lord, to always keep the eternal perspective in view! The judging of a situation according to the eternal perspective. What are the eternal consequences of this? Is there any eternal value or is it only for now? Lord, keep me with the proper perspective. Help me to know my end.
- *That I may know how frail I am.* There is, interestingly enough, sort of a feeling of immortality by man. None of us are really expecting to die within the next week or within the next month or within the next year. We each sort of have a sense of immortality. Like, yes, I know that death is coming but it's down the road yet a ways. We don't really realize how frail we actually are. Thus, we go on thinking, One day I'll take care of that. One day I'll get right with God. One day I'll really think about serving the Lord. But Lord, "help me to know my end, the measure of my days." How long I have. Help me to realize how frail I really am.

Psa 39:5 Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah

- God says, Okay, you're going to live that long. There is the limitation to my days.
- *Every man at his best state is but vapor.* Now here you are at your best state. Now I've passed that a long time ago. But even at that, it was nothing. Man at his best state. As Shakespeare said, Man, poor man, so ignorant in that which he knows best. At your best state, it's an emptiness!

Psa 39:6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow; Surely they busy themselves in vain; He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them.

- You can see them every time they have the Oscars. The TV playing in the limousines as they pull up and all of these smiling people in there. The vain show. I think of what vanity. Every man walks in a vain show.
- *Surely they busy themselves in vain; He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them.* Because you're going to leave them.

Psa 39:7 "And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.

Psa 39:8 Deliver me from all my transgressions; Do not make me the reproach of the foolish.

Psa 39:9 I was mute, I did not open my mouth, Because it was You who did it.

- I'm aware, God, that You were the One involved and thus I didn't say anything about it.

Psa 39:10 Remove Your plague from me; I am consumed by the blow of Your hand.

Psa 39:11 When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity, You make his beauty melt away like a moth; Surely every man is vapor. Selah

- The emptiness of a life of sin. (***Heb 12:5-8***) *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "MY SON, DO NOT DESPISE THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD, NOR BE DISCOURAGED WHEN YOU ARE REBUKED BY HIM; [6] FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE CHASTENS, AND SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." [7] If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? [8] But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.*

Psa 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD, And give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears; For I am a stranger with You, A sojourner, as all my fathers were.

- The psalmist sees that his life is just, so short. I'm passing through. I'm just a sojourner here, as my fathers. They passed through. Lord, hear my prayer. Be touched. Be moved by my tears. It's an interesting thing but tears have a way of touching a person's heart. Whenever I see a person crying, I'm moved, I'm touched. God is also touched by the tears.

Psa 39:13 Remove Your gaze from me, that I may regain strength, Before I go away and am no more." of iniquity have fallen; They have been cast down and are not able to rise.

- Lord, I don't want to go out sick. Let me at least recover and before I get to that place where You take me.

SUMMARY

- How much time can we fritter away in my life and still, in the end, hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant?"
- LORD, make my life count! Only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ, will last!

HEAR MY CRY, OH LORD Maranatha (3:41)

Psa 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD, And give ear to my cry;

*Hear my cry, Oh Lord, Attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth, Will I cry unto Thee.
When my heart is overwhelmed, Please lead me to the Rock, That is higher than I... That is higher than I...
For Thou hast been, A shelter unto me. And a strong tower, From the enemy.
When my heart is overwhelmed, Lead me to the Rock, That is higher than I... That is higher than I...*

*Hear my cry, Oh Lord, Attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth, Will I cry unto Thee.
When my heart is overwhelmed, Please lead me to the Rock, That is higher than I... That is higher than I...
When my heart is overwhelmed, Please lead me to the Rock, That is higher than I... That is higher than I...*

**PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH/PERSECUTED CHURCH; SCHOOLS; POLICE OFFICERS/MILITARY;
ISRAEL:**

FOR OUR NATION'S LEADERS: PRAY FOR CALIFORNIA: PRAY FOR WORLD LEADERS: -

Pray for World Leaders, especially their salvation, including: Xi Jinping – China; Narendra Modi- India; Joe Biden – USA; Joko Widodo - Indonesia; Jair Bolsonaro - Brazil; Arif Alvi - Pakistan; Muhammadu Buhari - Nigeria; Hasina Wazed - Bangladesh; Vladimir Putin- Russia; Lopez Obrador – Mexico; Naftali Bennett – Israel; Olaf Scholtz – Germany; Boris Johnson – U.K.; Kim Jong-un – North Korea; Yoon Suk Yeol– South Korea.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1836-1843)

HIS CHRISTIAN WALK

M'Cheyne was enabled to walk in a continual awareness of these truths - "I think I can say, I have never risen a morning without thinking how I could bring more souls to Christ." In his diary we find records like this:-- "As I was walking in the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power, that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell."

But there is another feature of M'Cheyne's life which is perhaps even more prominent than his constant longings for the salvation of souls. "Above all things, cultivate your own spirit," he wrote to a fellow-minister. "Your own soul is your first and greatest care. Seek advance of personal holiness.

It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear, and your heart full of God's Spirit, is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin."

"Get your texts from God - your thoughts, your words, from God."

From his diary we gather his own private observations:

- "I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment"

- "The morning hours, from six to eight, are the most uninterrupted - After tea is my best hour, and that should be solemnly dedicated to God, if possible."

Bonar writes, "the real secret of his soul's prosperity lay in daily enlargement of his heart in fellowship with his God. Meditation and prayer were the very sinews of his work." Even when pressed by duties, "he kept by his rule, 'that he must first see the face of God before he could undertake any duty.'" It was M'Cheyne's constant aim to avoid any hurry which prevents "the calm working of the Spirit on the heart. The dew comes down when all nature is at rest - when every leaf is still. A calm hour with God is worth a whole lifetime with man?"

A MINISTERS DUTY

M'Cheyne was ever concerned to deepen his ministry by continual study. "Few", says Bonar ; have maintained such an "undecaying esteem for the advantages of study." Though always conscious that souls were perishing every day, he never fell into the error of thinking that a minister's main work consists of outward activity. "The great fault I find with this generation is, they cry that ministers should be more in public ; they think that it is an easy thing to interpret the word of God, and to preach.

But a minister's duty is not so much public as private." Two thick notebooks show that he was constantly storing his mind by reading the Puritans, and Reformers. This emphasis on personal growth he never lost. "Oh," he declared to a friend, "we preachers need to know God in another way than heretofore, in order to speak aright of sin and of salvation. The work of God would flourish by us, if it flourished more richly in us."

"The want of ministerial success," says Robinson, "is a tremendous circumstance, never to be contemplated without horror." Never to rest without success was M'Cheyne's unvarying aim ; though from his earliest days at St. Peter's his preaching was attended with saving power and produced deep convictions and distress in the hearts of many, he and his people ever prayed for further manifestations of God's glory.

MISSION TO THE JEWS (1839)

But towards the end of 1838 the course of his ministry was interrupted by symptoms which alarmed his friends. He was attacked by violent palpitation of heart - the effect of unremitting labour. It soon increased, so that his medical advisers insisted on a total cessation of work. Accordingly, M'Cheyne with deep regret returned to his parents' home in Edinburgh, to rest until he could resume his ministry. This separation from his people occasioned some of his richest letters. "Ah!" he writes, "there is nothing like a calm look into the eternal world to teach us the emptiness of human praise, the sinfulness of self-seeking, the preciousness of Christ."

From the ten lengthy Pastoral Letters which he sent to his flock, we can quote but a paragraph of one :-

"Consider what fruit there is of believing in you. Have you really and fully uptaken Christ as the Gospel lays Him down ? - John 5:12. Do you cleave to Him as a sinner ? - 1 Timothy 1:15. Do you feel the glory of His person ? - Revelation 1:17 ; His finished work ? - Hebrews 9:26 ; His offices ? - 1 Corinthians 1:30. Does He shine like the sun into your soul ? - Malachi 4:2. Is your heart ravished with His beauty ? - Song of Solomon 5:16. Again, what fruit is there in you of crying after holiness ? Is this the one thing that you do ? - Philippians 3:13. Do you spend your life in cries for deliverance from this body of sin and death ? - Romans 7:24. Ah! I fear there is little of this. I fear you do not know "the exceeding greatness of His power" to usward who believe. I fear many of you are strangers to the visits of the Comforter."

Prolonged illness prevented M'Cheyne's speedy restoration to his people, and in the spring of 1839 it was proposed in Edinburgh that he should accompany a party of ministers who were to visit Palestine to make personal enquiries into the state of Israel. The voyage and climate it was thought would prove beneficial to him. His acceptance, and their subsequent travels to Jerusalem and Galilee we cannot pause to describe. M'Cheyne had a particular missionary interest in the Jews. Consequently, after the 1838 General Assembly decided to appoint a committee to examine the state of the Jews and what could be done, M'Cheyne was appointed as one of its members. Dr Alexander Black (Professor of Divinity in Aberdeen), Dr Alexander Keith (minister of St Cyrus) and Andrew Bonar were M'Cheyne's companions. On March 27th, 1839, they sailed for London. During the course of their six month journey their letters home were published in the national and foreign press. The account of their journey, written by Bonar and M'Cheyne, was a best seller.

Even when far from them, the spiritual prosperity of his people in Dundee was uppermost in his heart. After surveying the barren spot in Galilee where Capernaum once stood, he wrote to them, "If you tread the glorious Gospel of the grace of God under your feet, your souls will perish ; and I fear Dundee will one day be a howling wilderness like Capernaum." "Ah! would my flock from thee might learn, How days of grace will flee ; How all an offered Christ who spurn, shall mourn at last, like thee."

Not long after the party had begun to return homewards through Asia Minor, M'Cheyne was taken dangerously ill. Towards the end of July 1839 as he lay apparently dying near Smyrna, he believed it was not to his native Scotland but to his eternal home that he was going. "My most earnest prayer was for my dear flock." "The cry of his servant in Asia was not forgotten," writes Bonar ; "the eye of the Lord turned toward his people. Their pastor was at the gate of death, in utter helplessness. But the Lord had done this on very purpose ; for He meant to show that He needed not the help of any."

Whilst on their journey, revival broke out in St Peter's under the ministry of William Chalmers Burns. This revival was to continue through the remaining years of M'Cheyne's life.

REVIVAL (1839)

W. C. Burns - a young man of twenty-four - was supplying M'Cheyne's place at Dundee in his absence. It was under his preaching on 23rd of July that the great Revival at Kilsyth took place. "All Scotland heard the glad news that the sky was no longer brass. The Spirit in mighty power began to work from that day forward in many places of the land."

As soon as Burns resumed his ministry in Dundee early in August, the same effects occurred. The truth pierced hearts in an overwhelming manner - "tears were streaming from the eyes of many, and some fell on the ground groaning, and weeping, and crying for mercy." Services were held every night for many weeks - often lasting till late hours. The whole town was moved. The fear of God fell upon the ungodly. Anxious multitudes filled the churches. When M'Cheyne, restored to health, returned to St. Peter's in November of that year, he viewed an unforgettable scene. A deep concern and impression of eternal realities possessed the vast congregation. In worship " the people felt that they were praising a present God." Such a sight as this was not uncommon throughout the remainder of his ministry. The grief at sin which filled the hearts of many could only be expressed by tears ; the distress expressed by one awakened sinner to M'Cheyne represented the feeling of scores - "I think," he said, "hell would be some relief from an angry God." Such was the anxiety which now prevailed to hear the Gospel that even when M'Cheyne was preaching in the open air in the meadows at Dundee, and heavy rain began to fall, the dense crowd stood till the

last. *The Word* was listened to on these occasions with "an awful and breathless stillness."

It was M'Cheyne's custom never to accept mere professions of faith as signs of conversion. "It is holy-making Gospel," he declared. "Without holy fruit all evidences are vain. Dear friends, you have awakenings, enlightenings, experiences, a full heart in prayer, and many due signs ; but if you want holiness, you will never see the Lord. A real desire after complete holiness is the truest mark of being born again. Jesus is a holy Saviour. He first covers the soul with His white raiment, then makes the soul glorious within - restores the lost image of God, and fills the soul with pure, heavenly holiness. Unregenerate men among you cannot bear this."

FINAL YEARS

As his ministry drew towards its solemn close, he became increasingly conscious of the brevity of time. "I do not expect to live long! Changes are coming ; every eye before me shall soon be dim in death. Another pastor shall feed this flock ; another singer lead the psalm ; another flock shall fill this fold! There is no believing, no repenting, no conversion in the grave - no minister will speak to you there. This is the time of conversion. Oh! My friends, you will have no ordinances in hell - there will be no preaching in hell! Oh, that you would use this little time! Every moment of it is worth a world."

In his last year at St. Peter's we find him preaching with terrible clearness on the eternal punishment of the unconverted - four sermons were devoted to this subject.

He never dreaded the reproach a dying woman addressed to John Newton - "you often spoke to me of Christ ; but oh you did not tell me enough about my danger."

"Brethren," M'Cheyne warned his fellow ministers, our people will not thank us in eternity for speaking smooth things, and crying Peace, peace, when there is no peace. No, they may praise us now, but they will curse our flattery in eternity."

At his last communion service in January 1843 he preached on "Paul a Pattern" (! Timothy 1:16).

In February he was away in the north west of Scotland, and preached twenty-seven times, in twenty-four different places often travelling through heavy snow.

On his return to Dundee he confessed he felt "very tired."

March 12th proved to be his last Sabbath in the pulpit of St. Peter's, his final sermon was from Romans 9:22 and 23.

"What if God, willing to show his wrath!" "It was observed," writes Bonar, "both then and on other occasions, he spoke with peculiar strength upon the sovereignty of God." The following Tuesday he felt ill but took a wedding service, and afterwards spoke to a group of children, who informally gathered round him, on "The Good Shepherd." It was his last public appearance ; that evening he succumbed to a fever which was prevalent in the parish at the time. After lying helplessly for a week with burning fever, a delirium overtook him on Tuesday 21st. His utterances now showed the thoughts which were uppermost in his mind. As if addressing his people, he cried "You must be awakened in time, or you will be awakened in everlasting torment, to your eternal confusion." Then he prayed, "This parish, Lord, this people, this whole place!"

MARCH 25TH 1843

Robert Murray M'Cheyne died on Saturday, March 25th, 1843.

"Live for eternity. A few days more and our journey is done."

The truth, he had so often preached was accomplished. His desire was fulfilled - "Oh to be like Jesus, and with Him to all eternity!"

After two weeks illness and despite the Church being full every night of people praying, he died on 25 March.

Andrew Bonar's diary for 25 March records:

'This afternoon about 5 o'clock a message has just come to tell me of Robert M'Cheyne's death. Never, never in all my life have I felt anything like this. It is a blow to myself, to his people, to the Church of Christ in Scotland! Life has lost half its joys, were it not for the hope of saving souls. There was no friend whom I loved like him'.

Bonar went straight to St Peter's and prayed and spoke to an assembly bathed in tears, many sobbing aloud for grief. William Lamb, one of the Elders often found his eyes resting on the pulpit thinking, 'It is empty tonight'.

Over six thousand people attended the funeral and immediately after M'Cheyne's death, Andrew Bonar, a close friend and colleague, wrote The Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne.. We have finished our outlines of the life of one who declared he was "just a common man." But our impression must surely be that such a ministry is very uncommon in our times.

So ends the story of M'Cheyne's brief life.

CONCLUSION

It is then no small question for ministers to ask - "Where lies the difference between his ministry and ours?" No other questions are so vital as this, the answer is far from the minds of many.

First, M'Cheyne was different in doctrine. His preaching was clearly and definitely in line with the faith of the Reformers and Puritans. That glorious Puritan document, in which every doctrine is given its true Scriptural proportion - The Westminster Confession of Faith - was his constant text book. "Oh for the grace of the Westminster divines," he writes, "to be poured out upon this generation of lesser men." Ruin by the fall, Righteousness by Christ, and Regeneration by the Spirit was the substance of his preaching.

Sin has so ruined man's mind and heart that he has no will to be saved. "You will only have yourselves to blame if ye

awake in hell. If you die, it is because you will die; and if you will die, then you must die." Like all who apprehend this to be the true condition of men by nature, M'Cheyne clearly saw that without God's electing love and without the Divine power He exercises in conversion no soul would ever be saved. Unless He makes them willing in the day of His power they will never come.

After declaring the text 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed,' he says "Every thinking man must know and feel that none will ever come to Christ but those who were given Him by the Father from all eternity." "The only power that can bring a child of Satan and make him a child of God, is God Himself. Ah! dear friends, the power is not in creatures. It is not in the power of man - it is not in the power given to ministers; God alone can do it! Ah! my friends, this is a humbling doctrine. There is no difference between us and the children of wrath ; some of us were more wicked than they, yet God set his love on us. If there are any here that think that they have been chosen because they were better than others, you are grossly mistaken." In conversion therefore the Divine work of regeneration must precede faith. The Spirit convicts the sinner that Christ alone is able to save him.

The constant aim of M'Cheyne's preaching to the awakened and converted was to bring them to see the vastness, completeness and freeness of the salvation brought by Christ. "Remember Jesus for us is all our righteousness before a holy God, and Jesus in us is all our strength in an ungodly world! He justifies sinners who have no righteousness, sanctifies souls that have no holiness. Let Jesus bear your whole weight. Remember, He loves to be the only support of your soul. There is nothing that you can possibly need but you will find it in Him." The most prominent cause of the absence of such ministries as M'Cheyne's to-day lies in the absence of his doctrine, for it is only the truth of God which the Spirit will honour and bless.

Secondly, M'Cheyne was different in his life. I do not mean he was exempt from the conflict with indwelling sin known by the Apostle Paul (Romans 7) and by every Christian. On the contrary it was (as we see in his diary) the constant awareness of the "abyss of corruption" in his heart, that brought him into such continual dependence on Christ. "Our wicked heart taints all we say and do ; hence the need of continual atonement in the blood of Jesus. We must have daily, hourly pardons." But he was different in that he ever lived as one on the brink of eternity, as one who longed for a "full conformity to God," and prized communion with Him as his chief joy. He was ever reminding himself - "If I could follow the Lord more fully myself, my ministry would be used to make a deeper impression than it has yet done."

Are we not rebuked by this minister who was given hundreds of souls as his reward? Have we not failed to estimate aright the value of near access to God? Is such a ministry needed in our times? The same Jesus reigns; the same Spirit is able; and the same source of grace is open to us.

"Oh! brethren, be wise. 'Why stand ye all the day idle?' In a little moment it will be all over. A little while and the day of grace will be over - preaching, praying will be done. A little while, and we shall stand before the great white throne - a little while, and the wicked shall not be; we shall see them going away into everlasting punishment. A little while, and the work of eternity shall be begun. We shall be like Him - we shall see Him day and night in His temple - we shall sing the new song, without sin and without weariness, for ever and ever."