

SECRETS of the HEART



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SECRETS of the HEART

CLARENCE SEXTON

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL AND
BIBLE TEACHING SERIES**

SECRETS OF THE HEART

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Dedication

*T*his volume is dedicated to the faithful deacons of the Temple Baptist Church who have stood with me through the years in the Lord's work. Through their prayers and constant encouragement, they have been used of God to help me press on. These dear men have determined to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in one accord. Their faith has strengthened my faith. May the Lord enable me to be the pastor they deserve to have.

Clarence A. Sutton
Feb 5, 12

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CHAPTER ONE



“Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.”

Psalm 38:22

HELP ME



People all over the world recognize immediately a cry for help. This heart cry marks us as members of this dying human race. According to the National Emergency Number Association, an estimated 240 million calls are made to 9-1-1 in the United States each year—that is over 650,000 calls a day! We can only imagine how many people cry out to God each day. Crying out to God for the help we need identifies us as helpless sinners in need of the Saviour. Psalm 38 is given to us to stir our hearts. The Bible says in Psalm 38:1-22,

O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.

For mine iniquities have gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries;

because I follow the thing that good is. Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

David cried out to God, “*Help me.*” One of the easiest things to do is to talk about what is wrong with everyone else; however, in Psalm 38, David said, “Lord, help me. It’s not another man who is failing and living deceitfully; I am that man. Help me.”

Most of us have not been called to preach, but all of us who are Christians do quite a bit of preaching. Most of the preaching we do is about other people and their sin, but in Psalm 38 David recognized his own need.

The chapter heading given to Psalm 38 states that it is a psalm “*to bring to remembrance.*” As we read through this particular psalm, we think of our sins that are covered in the blood of Jesus, sins that are forgiven and forgotten; yet God says this is a psalm to bring to remembrance. Perhaps it is difficult to understand that God would deal with sin that is forgiven and forgotten, yet He led David to pen these words to remind us of what we have been and how much we need Him.

Have you ever cried out, “Lord, help me”? When I was a fourteen-year-old boy, someone explained to me the way of salvation. I cried, “Lord, help me. Save my lost soul.”

I remember as a boy growing up, my family had so many problems and such heartache; I tried to pray that God would somehow intervene and help us. Eventually I prayed, “Lord, help me to know what I am supposed to do with my life.” Dear friend, nothing is real until it is personal. God becomes real to us when we personally call out to Him and ask for His help.

As an adult in my own home I have prayed many times, “Lord, help me.” In rearing my children I often prayed, “Lord, help me.” In my marriage I have prayed, “Lord, help me.” While pastoring

churches and dealing with the burdens that people carry, I have prayed countless times, “Lord, help me.”

As parents we pray for our children. All of us pray for friends and family members. We pray for the needs of the church. We pray for financial needs, work-related needs, and many other needs. Just like we call out to God for all these things, David said to God, “Help me.”

DAVID'S CONDITION

This psalm of remembrance, with David crying out to God for help, calls to remembrance David's condition. In the opening



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verses, David admitted in Psalm 38:1-2 that he knew what he had done was against God. He said, “*O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.*”

The psalmist was saying, “Not only do His arrows hit me, they stick. He has dealt with me. I know I have done wrong. I have sinned against God. What I have done has placed me in opposition to God. Lord, as You deal with me, please do not rebuke me in Thy wrath. Do not chasten me in Thy hot displeasure.”

David spoke to God as a child would to his father. “I know what I deserve, and I know I deserve to have unleashed on me horrendous chastening, but please have mercy on me.” David felt this way because sin had already done its awful work in his life.

Psalm 38:3 says, “*There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*” David admitted to God that his whole body had been affected by what he had done. He had no rest in any of his bones because of his sin.

The Bible continues in Psalm 38:4, “*For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*” David was no doubt thinking that when he sinned, he was still master of the situation. He could have anything he wanted. He was the king of Israel; he could do as he pleased. David tried to maintain control, but the waves of his terrible sin were rolling over him. He was going down. He said, “O God, see me! I am sinking because of my sin.”

Multitudes of people have thought, “I can control my situation. I can do as I please. I can take care of it. I know I can maintain some sort of composure and control.” Sin, however, has a way of getting stronger all the time until finally we say, “O God, it is like the ocean waves coming in. I’m taken over by it!”

No wonder David said, “*O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath.*” He goes on to say in verse five, “*My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.*” His sin had caused a rottenness to come over his life. He was no good for anyone to be around.

Psalm 38:6 says, “*I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.*” David had been a mighty man of valor and a man of war. He was a victor and a giant killer, but his sin brought him down.

Think of what some people could have been if sin had not taken its terrible toll on their lives. We often hear of a young lady or a young man who did things they should not have. They became involved in something they truly regretted, and it brought them down. David said, “*I am bowed down greatly.*” This is a picture of sin and how sin brings a man low.

Instead of rejoicing and being happy, David mourned *“all the day long.”* Every day was a sad day for him. Many people never have a happy day because of something inside of them that needs to be cared for.

David went on to say in verses seven through nine,

*For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease:
and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble
and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the
disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is
before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

How sad was David's condition! It is so easy for us to look at others and say, “See what sin has done to that man. What a horrible wreck he's become because of his sin.” That is not the emphasis of Psalm 38. It is rather, “Lord, help me. Look what sin has done to me!”

DAVID'S CONVICTION

The Spirit of God took hold of David. In Psalm 38:9 he said, *“Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.”* David stated that not only did he realize he could not hide his sin from God—he could not kill Uriah the Hittite and hide it from God—his groanings, what his sin had done to him, could not be hidden from God. He was coming clean. God had convicted him!

Psalm 38:10 says, *“My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.”* David became a man out of breath with no strength left.

The Bible continues in verse eleven, *“My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar*

off.” The people David thought he could trust were gone. God has a way of removing the crutches so there is nothing left but to either fall on our face or turn to Him. Most of the time, it is in that order—we fall on our face, and then we turn to Him.

The Word of God says, *“They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. But I, as a deaf man, heard not.”* David became as a deaf man.

Have you ever known anyone who had been so affected by sin that he could hear nothing but that constant reminder of his sin? This terrible thing had taken hold of David's life until he had become like a deaf man.

So many wonderful, beautiful things happen around us that God is doing, but those who have unconfessed sin in their lives do not see or hear those beautiful things. Most of the time, when we see only evil, it is not because there is no good to see; it is because our hearts are so filled with evil. The Word of God says that the backslider becomes full of his own ways. David said, “I am like a deaf man. It all passes over me.”

Psalm 38:13-14 continues, *“And I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.”* David could not hear or speak.

David had no reproving left in him. He said, “Lord, I am under such conviction about my own sin and my own need that there is nothing left inside of me to attempt to correct anyone else.”



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There may have been a day when he could have said, "That man is wrong and needs to get straightened out," but now he is so convicted about his own sin that he cannot open his mouth to point out anything wrong in anyone else's life.

Psalm 38 is a psalm of remembrance. God wants us to remember what we are. He wants us to see how lost, how separated, how hell-bound, how without merit we are without Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul said, "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*" David said, "I have come to the place where there is no reproof left in my mouth."

DAVID'S CONFESSION

David agreed with God's estimation of his sinfulness. He said in verses fifteen through eighteen,

For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

He was saying, "Lord, I have seen my condition. Not only have I seen my condition, I am so convicted that I cannot open my mouth to say what is wrong with anyone else because there is so much wrong with me." Then David confessed to God. Confession means to agree with God. David agreed with God that he was a sinner.

How many of us have anger toward someone? Perhaps we have unforgiveness or bitterness toward another person. Whenever we see or think of them, we compare ourselves to them and say,

"I may be bad, but they're worse." God wants us personally to come to the place where we see that we have the greatest need of all. "Lord, I need help. Help me." Like David, who could go no further, have you reached that point?

The concluding part of Psalm 38 says,

But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is. Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

"*Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.*" David did not say "my Saviour" but "*my salvation.*" We may say He is the Saviour, but can we say He is our salvation? We need to know that we have repented of our sin and trusted Him, having experienced His salvation. David said, "Lord, make haste to help me." God is not unwilling to come to our aid.

The Lord Jesus is the only way to heaven. There is no other way. Jesus Christ, who is co-equal, co-existent, eternally existent with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6).

We must see our sin and trust Christ alone for salvation. God is not unwilling to help us. He wants to save us and then to help us as Christians. The problem is not God's unwillingness to help us; the problem is our unwillingness to trust Him.



David was a victor and a giant killer, but his sin brought him down.

How close is God to our aid? Is He as far away as some distant planet? Is He anywhere to be found in our solar system? Is He in some land on another continent? Where is God? Where can He be found? How near is He to helping us? He is only two words away—“*Help me.*”

I have a very dear friend who is now in heaven who suffered greatly from asthma attacks. Sometimes I was with him when he would have an asthma attack. He and I traveled together. He was a businessman, and he traveled with me to meetings from time to time because he loved to hear preaching.



God wants us to remember how hell-bound, how without merit we are without Jesus Christ.

At times his asthma attacks would be so severe that he could not breathe. His wife would drive him to the hospital and he would be down in the floor of the car with his face in the seat trying to get a breath of air. They would rush to the emergency room where he would receive medical care to relieve the problem, and he would be able to breathe again.

One night, late in the night, he started having another asthma attack. He and his wife got into the automobile. His wife was driving, rushing to the hospital. He was down in the floor with his head on the seat and his knees were on the floorboard. Because they were speeding, a traffic officer stopped them on the way to the hospital. My friend could not even breathe enough to vocalize. His wife, in a nervous stupor, had the officer check her license while she was attempting to say, “My husband is dying! Please let us go!” Even she did not realize at the time how serious the situation was. Finally, the police officer helped them to get to the hospital emergency room. When they arrived at the hospital, an attendant ran out to the car to take her husband inside for treatment. She went to the waiting room like she had

done on other occasions and waited for him to get the medication he needed so that they could go home. While she was waiting, a nurse came out and told her, “He is dead.” About 2:30 in the morning, Marc’s sister called me. She said, “I have some unbelievable news. Marc died tonight. He smothered to death on the way to the hospital. As far as we know, he may have only been seconds from receiving the help he needed to live.”



The problem is not God’s unwillingness to help us; the problem is our unwillingness to trust Him.

Remember God’s Word says, “*Make haste to help me.*” Someday so many people are going to be seconds from saying, “God, I see my condition. I am convicted. I confess my sins. Help me.” If you wait, you may be too late. Cry out now, “Lord, help me!”