

Hope for the Desperate

Psalm 39

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What do desperate people need to wait well?

Psalm 39:1-13

1 I said, "I will guard my ways,

that I may not sin with my tongue;

I will guard my mouth with a muzzle,

so long as the wicked are in my presence."

2 I was mute and silent;

I held my peace to no avail,

and my distress grew worse.

3 My heart became hot within me.

As I mused, the fire burned;

then I spoke with my tongue:

4 "O LORD, make me know my end

and what is the measure of my days;

let me know how fleeting I am!

5 Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths,

and my lifetime is as nothing before you.

Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! *Selah*

6 Surely a man goes about as a shadow!

Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;

man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!

7 "And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?

My hope is in you.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions.

Do not make me the scorn of the fool!

9 I am mute; I do not open my mouth,

for it is you who have done it.

10 Remove your stroke from me;

I am spent by the hostility of your hand.

11 When you discipline a man

with rebukes for sin,

you consume like a moth what is dear to him;

surely all mankind is a mere breath! *Selah*
12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD,
and give ear to my cry;
hold not your peace at my tears!
For I am a sojourner with you,
a guest, like all my fathers.
13 Look away from me, that I may smile again,
before I depart and am no more!"

I. Wisdom to know what to do with pain.

Psalm 39:1-6

1 I said, "I will guard my ways,
that I may not sin with my tongue;
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle,
so long as the wicked are in my presence."
2 I was mute and silent;
I held my peace to no avail,
and my distress grew worse.
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As I mused, the fire burned;
then I spoke with my tongue:
4 "O LORD, make me know my end
and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting I am!
5 Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is as nothing before you.
Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! *Selah*
6 Surely a man goes about as a shadow!
Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;
man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!

II. Perspective to know what to make of life.

Life on earth is a brief pilgrimage between two moments of nakedness. So, we would be wise to travel light. – John Stott

Psalm 39:7-11

7 "And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?

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Do not make me the scorn of the fool!
9 I am mute; I do not open my mouth,
for it is you who have done it.
10 Remove your stroke from me;
I am spent by the hostility of your hand.
11 When you discipline a man
with rebukes for sin,
you consume like a moth what is dear to him;
surely all mankind is a mere breath! *Selah*

III. Hope to know they can be free from sin.

Psalm 39:12-13

12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD,
and give ear to my cry;
hold not your peace at my tears!
For I am a sojourner with you,
a guest, like all my fathers.
13 Look away from me, that I may smile again,
before I depart and am no more!"

It is the most counterintuitive aspect of Christianity, that we are declared right with God not once we begin to get our act together but once we collapse into honest acknowledgment that we never will. – Dane Ortlund

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Everything desperate people need to wait well comes from God.