

Psalm 39: I Will Guard My Mouth
06-30-19 PM

Psalm 39 is a difficult Psalm to understand because it is not entirely clear what David is telling us. It is not clear why David kept silent (which is the theme of the Psalm), why that was the work of God (vs. 9) or what sin was present. Sometimes we must take other principles in the Scriptures and apply them to the text in order to make sense of it. In this Psalm we will proceed with the assumption from vs. 2 that David was silent when he should have spoken, and this caused God's wrath.

David begins with a vow: "*I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle while the wicked are in my presence.*" David declared that he kept silent before wicked men in a time when it was right to speak. The inference is that he feared MEN and not GOD. David goes on to say that he suffered before God for his silence.

This leads to David's plea: "*LORD, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days*". Why would David want to know the day of his death? David is pointing to the need for perspective. He had feared something trivial in compared to what his fear ought to have been. David needed to cause his fear of GOD to be greater.

Then David turned to his hope: "*And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You*". Even though he had sinned in some way, David saw his only hope as being God's mercy. David's final observation was that "*With reproofs You chasten a man for iniquity; You consume as a moth what is precious to him*". David saw God's hand in the suffering of men. We lack the supernatural insight to know exactly what God is working for us or others in events around us. We need to be careful when we suffer not to pre-suppose what is happening.

In all of this David's warning to us rings true: we must guard our mouth. *For he who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit* (1 Peter 3:10). We must guard our mouth because it is dangerous (James 3:1-7). Sometimes it is wise to hold our tongue even when we are in the right (Matthew 7:6).

But at the same time, this also means that sometimes it is necessary and right to speak out. "*Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 10:32). Jesus expects us to speak for him before men; this means we must be ready with an answer (1 Peter 3:15).

David's gift to us was showing us a heart that was quick to point to his own sins. Here he says he sinned by his silence. It is wise to hold our tongue, but sometimes we need to speak out.