

## SIN AND MENTAL ILLNESS

### **TEXT: PSALM 38:1-22**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Last Tuesday, a man from Valley Stream, with a lengthy arrest record, went into a synagogue in Crown Heights, and started yelling, "I'm gonna kill you. I'm gonna kill the Jews." He then stabbed a 22-year-old Jewish man with a knife. The Jewish man was taken to the hospital and is recuperating from his wounds.
2. The police arrived and ordered the man to drop the knife and surrender. When the man refused to obey the police he was shot and killed.
3. His brother told a reporter, "I knew something was wrong...He was afraid and paranoid and ill. You could tell he was mental...He just needed to be back on his medication."
4. If you keep up with the news, you know horrible crimes like this are committed every day, and oftentimes the criminal's relatives say, "He had mental problems."
5. There was another article in the paper about a young woman who died when a fire broke out in her basement apartment in Manhattan. People dying in house fires is not unusual, but what caught my attention was the headline -- the dead woman was described as an "erotica writer." This is another way of saying she wrote dirty books.
6. The article went on to say she was taking psychotropic drugs to treat bipolar disorder. In other words, she had mental problems. People who write dirty books and people who read dirty books, and people who watch pornography have mental problems.
7. Psychiatrists report that many of their patients have severe mental problems because of their addiction to pornography. Patrick Trueman, the president of Morality in Media, referred to pornography as "a public health crisis," and said a new study by psychiatrists shows "the damaging psychological effects of pornography."
8. A pastor friend of mine told me he had a church member (a former porn addict) who could not keep filthy disgusting images out of his mind even after he repented and got saved.
9. Mental problems are often caused by sinful behaviour. For example, a person with a guilty conscience is often moody and depressed.
10. People with mental problems are often said to be anxious and fretful. Philippians 4:6 says, "Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every

- thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Worrying indicates a lack of faith in God.
11. The Bible says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).
  12. Nehemiah 8:10 says, "For the joy of the LORD is your strength." But sinners who are disobeying God do not have the joy of the Lord. Therefore, they are unhappy, worried, guilty, and depressed, etc.
  13. Sin can make you physically and mentally sick (cf. Psalm 38:3).
  14. Guilt and stress can cause a heart attack, as well as insomnia which can wear down the immune system and lead to a number of diseases.
  15. Sin leads to restlessness and sleeplessness. Restlessness and sleeplessness lead to irritability and depression.
  16. There are many Scriptures which teach that sin leads to mental distress. And there are many illustrations of people in the Bible who literally lost their mind -- King Saul and King Nebuchadnezzar are two notable examples.
  17. But there is another king we will look at this morning. Sin drove King David to despair, but thank God David repented (Psalm 38:18).

## **I. DAVID'S SIN**

1. Chapter 38 is a vivid picture of physical and mental anguish brought on by sin. Note: "because of my sin...mine iniquities...my foolishness" (38:3-5).
2. Psalm 38:2 says, "Thy hand presseth me sore." God put David down on his sick bed and David knew it.
3. David's most notable sin is recorded in II Samuel 11. King David was walking up on the roof of his house, and from the roof he saw a beautiful woman washing herself (II Sam. 11:2, 3).
4. David sent and inquired after the woman, and found out that her name was Bathsheba, and that she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite (II Samuel 11:3).
5. Next, David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to his house and they committed adultery (II Samuel 11:4).
6. When David found out Bathsheba was pregnant, he had her husband Uriah the Hittite killed on the battlefield.
7. In this terrible story we see how one sin leads to another.
  - "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife" (Exodus 20:17). David coveted the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
  - "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). David committed adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

- "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15). David stole the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
  - "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Ex. 20:16). David deceived Uriah the Hittite in an effort to make it look like he was the father of the child. He even tried getting him drunk.
  - "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13). David had Uriah the Hittite killed on the battlefield.
8. After Uriah the Hittite died, David sent and fetched Bathsheba to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son.
  9. And we read in II Samuel 11:27 -- "But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD."
  10. And David knew his sin displeased the LORD, for he wrote in Psalm 38:1, " O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure."
  11. King David was not thinking about God's wrath and hot displeasure when he started down the dangerous road of sin. Someone put it this way: "We don't think of the consequences of sin when we start playing with sin"(John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms*).
  12. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." That includes King David, and it includes you and me.
  13. In Psalm 38:2, 3 David wrote, "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." Sin brings disease and severe mental anguish.
  14. J. Vernon McGee said that when he was a young pastor, a doctor in his congregation told him that he had been taught in medical school that David had a venereal disease. The doctor told Pastor McGee that he did not agree with that, and J. Vernon McGee agreed with him.
  15. But J. Vernon McGee did believe that sin brings disease, and disease is followed by mental anguish. Sin affects us physically and psychologically.
  16. New York City has thousands of people with mental problems brought on by immorality.
  17. Many young women are depressed because they have lost their purity.
  18. Women suffer depression because they aborted their babies. In 1969, Norma McCorvey was 22 years old, divorced and pregnant for the third time. She wanted to abort her baby, but at that time abortion was illegal in Texas. She found two wicked lawyers who were seeking to

- overturn the Texas statute that outlawed abortion. They needed a desperate and believable plaintiff and thought Norma McCorvey was the perfect candidate. McCorvey and her attorneys lied and told the court that her pregnancy was the result of a gang rape.
19. Norma McCorvey became "Jane Roe" (Roe vs. Wade).
  20. The Dallas County District Attorney was Henry Wade.
  21. In 1973, the United States Supreme Court legalized abortion in America with their infamous Roe vs. Wade decision.
  22. Isn't it interesting that the same people that are upset that we are torturing terrorists who chop peoples' heads off, support abortion, a barbarous and cruel act of torture and murder.
  23. Years later, Norma McCorvey was walking through an empty playground on a summer day in Dallas, Texas. There were still swings, motionless merry-go-rounds. There was no one laughing or singing or playing. There were no children.
  24. Norma McCorvey wrote these words in her autobiography -- "A voice deep inside kept whispering: 'It's all your fault, Norma. You're the reason this playground – and playgrounds all across this country – are empty'" (*Won By Love*).
  25. We often think of the more than 56 million abortions since 1973, but we do not think much about the millions of guilty parents who now have to deal with the consequences of their sin.
  26. Studies provide irrefutable evidence that abortion affects women in a number of ways, from depression and relationship problems to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), drugs, alcohol, and suicide.
  27. Many men are guilty and depressed because they encouraged the woman to abort. Or they refused to get married. Or they were already married to some one else, etc. This guilt leads to depression and mental illness.
  28. Many men are lonely. They have slept around for years, and now they are all alone, and they realize their life is empty and shallow.
  29. Fifteen million Americans are infected every year with sexually-transmitted diseases. Often this leads to alcoholism, drug abuse, brain damage, insanity, and death.
  30. David said, "Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin" (Psalm 38:3).
  31. David's iniquities were a heavy burden -- "they are too heavy for me" (Ps. 38:4). The world tries to make sin look attractive, but in reality sin is very ugly.

## II. DAVID'S SUFFERING

1. Psalm 38 describes how David suffered both physically and mentally (38:5-8).
2. David said, "I am troubled" (38:6). Spurgeon said, "Nothing so pulls a man down...as a sense of sin and of divine wrath" (*Treasury of David*).
3. David's "loathsome disease" (38:7) not only caused him great physical pain and anguish, it also "caused him acute distress of mind" (John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms*).
4. David was "sore broken" (38:8). Spurgeon said this means he was "crushed as in a mill, pounded as in a mortar."
5. Spurgeon said it pictures a man whose soul has been crushed "under the wheels of divine wrath."
6. Crushed and smashed, David's pain and grief caused him to "roar" (38:8).
7. Young people (and older ones too) who engage in immorality could catch a "loathsome disease" (38:7). Illustration: friend's brother with herpes.
8. And they could suffer a complete mental breakdown and be put in a psychiatric ward -- "feeble and sore broken" (38:8).
9. The Center for Disease Control estimates that over 1,200,000 people in America are living with HIV infection, including 14% who are unaware of their infection. Over the past decade, the pace of new infections has increased.
10. When the HIV virus attacks someone's nervous system, it can damage their brain and cause short attention span, memory loss, mood swings, depression, irritability, poor judgment, and confusion.
11. To put it another way, most people infected with HIV are homosexuals, and their sin led to HIV and AIDS, and HIV and AIDS leads to dementia.

## III. DAVID'S SORROW

1. Sin nearly destroyed David. He was defeated and he was depressed (38:9-11), and he cried out, "Lord, all my desire is before thee" (38:9).

2. People who get entangled in sin lose all sense of the presence of God. That is why we read in Psalm 51 (another "Penitential Psalm") that David cried out to God, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).
3. David said, "My heart panteth" (38:10). He felt sharp beatings in his heart. Many people suffer strokes and have heart attacks brought on by sin and guilt and stress.
4. David said, "My strength faileth me" (38:10). What his diseased body and depressed mind, he was weak and he felt ready to die.
5. David said, "As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me" (38:10). David thought he would soon die. He felt like he was going to close his eyes and leave this world.
6. Sinners love to be around worldly companions, in parties, and bars and nightclubs, etc.
7. But eventually they realize they are all alone before God (38:11). Spurgeon referred to "the loneliness of a soul passing under the convincing power of the Holy Ghost" (*Treasury of David*).
8. David's friends forsook him and his foes tried to kill him (38:12).
9. Like the prodigal son who "came to himself" while eating in a hog pen, David realized his only hope was in the LORD (38:15).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Unconfessed sin and unforsaken sin cannot be forgiven or cleansed. If God were to forgive unconfessed sin, He would be encouraging sin, and God would never do that.
2. And God could not forgive and cover unforsaken sin because "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Psalm 145:17).
3. If God were to forgive and cover unforsaken sin, He would become a partner in the continued wrongdoing. Therefore, all sin must be confessed and forsaken before it can be either forgiven or cleansed.
4. Psalm 38 is a sad Psalm.
5. It contains solemn warnings on the consequences of sin, and it ends with David asking the Lord for help (38:22).
6. There is hope for the lost sinner and there is hope for the backslidden Christian (38:15).
7. David could expect the Lord to help him because he repented of his sin (38:18).