

The Desires and Groans of a Living Soul

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Let's begin this morning by going to our text and I'll read our text this morning. Our text is found in Psalm 38:9-10. These are the words of David, the Psalm says, "A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance." May the Lord bring these things to our remembrance this day. Psalm 38:9-10,

9 Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.
10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes,
it also is gone from me.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, how gracious and how faithful and how holy and how good thou art. How great thou art, O God. I thank thee, Lord, for thy sovereignty that reigns over this earth, that reigns in the heavens. I thank thee, Lord, for thy sovereignty that reigns over this day, this day, Lord, that thou hast made. I pray for those, Lord, who are sick and not feeling well this day that thy healing would come powerfully upon them that they may know thy presence and that they may feel thy presence with them in thy healing power. O Lord, for those that you have brought here to this place, we pray, Lord, knowing where two or three are gathered in your name that you will be in the midst of them and, Lord, may that presence be known and felt this day in our souls as we endeavor this morning to look at thy servant of old which you revealed to David, Lord, may you reveal it to us this day. May we be found in that number, Lord, that you are pleased to communicate this eternal vital union to us and may you, Lord, grow us up in thee this day and this hour for the praise and glory of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

I don't think it's right to say that in this life that the child of God will not have any complaints nor do I think it's right to say that in this life the child of God will only have complaints. I think one of the things that I love about the Psalms is they're so experiential. It's a manual of Christian experience. Sometimes I find my soul closely knit with David's as the Lord takes him through the ebbs and flows in his soul. Many times in this life we're told by those that we come in contact with that life is easy and there are no difficulties in this life. David wrote about them. He wrote about them in Psalm 55:19 when he said, "God shall hear, and afflict them." These were the enemies that were around him telling him those things. He said, "even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because

they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." That is a very deep experiential thought this morning. Do you come in contact with people like that every day in your life that have no changes? What are changes? What are the things that go forth in your life and do you find going from one day to the next that you're just not the same every day? That there are times in this life that you absolutely abhor in yourself? You abhor what you've become. You abhor what the Lord has revealed to you, the way that you are wanting.

I want to talk about that today in light of this passage, in light of what the Lord brought David to see in this passage, and I hope this morning as I prayed this morning, that as the Lord brings us to see that the child of God in this life is subject to darkness. We are subject to carnality. We are subject to hardness. We are subject to deadness. We are subject to lukewarmness. We stand in need of our Lord to enliven us; to bring us back into the fold; to shine the light in our soul; to reveal as the Holy Spirit does and convicts us of sin; to show us the way that we are walking in a wrong way; that we are walking in darkness. What happens when the Lord brings that about in our lives? Are there changes? Are there ebbs and flows in your life? Those are the exercised children I want to talk to today because I have a feeling that those are the only ones that will be able to understand.

Have you been exercised in this way where one day, one day you feel the Lord's presence so mightily that you could see the truth and you could be embraced in the truth and you could feel the Lord's arms around you, so to speak, and then in a matter of hours, you could feel such deadness, such alienation from the Lord? And yes, we talk a lot about our old nature in war against our new nature and that is what the problem is in this life, but I want to explore what David went through. If you look at this Psalm, I want to back up to the beginning and as I've already hinted on, David said, "to bring to remembrance." Why would he want to remember what we're about to read?

Verse 1 begins this way, "O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure." What is it that David is being revealed here? What is it he's being shown here? And if we don't know the answer, we'll go on a little bit.

"For thine arrows stick fast in me." That's the afflictions we talked about last time that the Lord brings to his children. That's the convictions of the Holy Ghost that he brings to his children to show them the way that they're going, that it's not pleasing to the Lord. Those are the arrows that stick fast in us.

"For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore." Though the Lord causes grief, he is faithful to bring us to the end of ourselves. And in verse 3, David says,

"There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones," why, "because of my sin." Sometimes I think what we think of that three letter word "sin," we look at it very flippantly. We could stand and we could read what Paul said and that he was the chiefest of sinners and, "Yup, that's me, the chiefest of sinners." But what you see this morning if the Holy Spirit is pleased, if he takes you to the depths of this Psalm to show you what David is experiencing in his soul, he is seeing the

wickedness, the horrificness of sin. He is seeing the effects of sin, what sin does, and not sin as an animal, an abstract animal, what it is, a plague, a disease. And when the Lord reveals that sin, how much you love yourself, how much you want to just say, "Why do I keep having these thoughts? And why do I keep walking in this way?" And that's where David is here. He says there is no rest in my bones because of my sin.

"For mine iniquities are gone over mine head." David has been being revealed those secret sins. He is being revealed the sinner that he is, and as I said a couple minutes ago, it's not a flippant thing. It's not something that's just an abstract idea that you're a sinner. It is a soul-felt exercise and that's what you see here.

"For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me, Lord." Have you ever been brought there? That the weight of your sin was so bad that you were brought to cry out to the Lord? Because those people that we talked about at the beginning that have no changes, they can have carnal sorrow, they can be very sorrowful over things that they commit in this life, but they will never, ever be brought to this place where David is; where there is a conviction of that sin against a holy and just Lord and they will not be brought to cry out to the Lord. That's what the question and the examining question of the hour is, have you experienced this as David has? And it may come in many different ways. I mean, we're all subject to our own carnality. I don't know what's going on in David's soul here. I don't know. All I know is that three letter word, sin, and for each one of us in here, we know, I hope by now the Lord has revealed what sins those are in our lives that we struggle with daily. What are those things? David says, "It's too heavy a burden for me."

"My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness." Do you see, can you feel, do you have any discernment that David hates where he's at? He hates that. He hates the fact that he's this way. They stink, they're corrupt because of my foolishness. When the Holy Spirit comes to the child of God and convicts him of sin, there is ownership of the sin. It's not pushing it off on your brother. It's not looking at circumstances in life and going, "That's why I am the way I am. This person treated me that way. This person said this. I wouldn't have been provoked if that person wasn't there." But dear ones, if there wasn't something in you, if that fallen nature wasn't there, you wouldn't be provoked. If that sin of unbelief and that sin of hardness, if that sin of bitterness wasn't there, you wouldn't be provoked and that's what the Lord reveals to us, the absolute horrificness of sin.

That's what it does. It robs us of communion with the Lord and that's what David is saying. Listen, have you ever been brought to describe yourself this way, that the Lord has wounded your soul by telling you, "Thou art the man. Thou art the woman. Thou art the one who has committed this sin"? And if he has, it causes this loathsomeness in your soul to say, "My wounds stink. My wounds. This are self-inflicted wounds. This is my nature that's this way. 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." When the Lord reveals sin as he did to Paul that he

was the chiefest of sinners, it's a revelation that sin is throughout all of your members; that it's a disease that spreads. Let me follow that up: it spreads into every facet of your life. It's in your relationships. It's in your work life. It's in your school life. It's in whatever vocation you're called. It's in whatever you're called to do. That's what sin does and that's how needful it is to have the Savior come. For the child of God, he must have the Savior. What do we want to be saved from? That's the question. Have you ever been brought to this to say, "I'm troubled; I'm bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long; 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." All of that took place before we got to our text. What do you see here? Has David been exercising being emptied? Has he been exercised in being shown the weight of his sin? Is he under the weight of his sin? Yes, he is and for you and I today, where we stand in union with him if we be God's children, this is how the Lord works in our life to bring that pressure and that burden of sin so mighty upon you that you call out to the Lord. That's what David does in 9 and 10, he calls out to the Lord,

"Lord, all my desire is before thee." That's the first part. "Lord, all my desire is before thee." We have to talk about what "all our desire" is. We can't lie. We can lie to ourselves but this verses here when he says, "Lord, all my desire is before thee, my groaning is not hid from thee," what does that tell us? One of the things that shows that you are a regenerated child of God, that you have been born again, is that the Lord has revealed to you that he is watching over you; that he sees everything. The child of God that is born from above knows that his Lord is sovereign and he sovereignly sees into his soul and that there is nowhere the child of God can run that his Lord is not there. That is a strong mark that you have been born again, that you have that sense and that fear of God knowing that the Lord holds you in his hand each and every day of your life.

That's what David says here, "my desires are before thee." My desires are and that's what I want to talk about first today, what are your desires? What as you come into this place today and I'm not talking about your carnal desires. We all have them. What does your soul desire today? Does your soul desire and so I say, okay, what is it in the word of God that the Lord reveals that we desire after if we are born again children of God? If the Lord's presence is there? What is it we desire? And the first thing, I think, we desire of is his favor. We have to know. We have to know the Lord's manifested favor in our life. We have to know that we're one of the number. We have to know, we have to be convinced that the Lord is not going to destroy us because of this sin. We must know and experience his favor in our soul.

David said it this way in Psalm 5:12, he said, "For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield." David wrote that. "Lord, your favor compasses me like a shield." That's what the child of God as we are sheep under this shepherd, we have to feel the favor of that shepherd. We have to feel the love of that shepherd. We have to know that shepherd is our shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. It has to be a personal relationship with the Lord, and the Lord says to us like David said here, "His favor compasses me. It engulfs me as with a shield." You see, when life gets

hard and life gets difficult and that weight of sin comes, we have to be revealed that his favor is like a shield to us because that favor means we're not going to sink to hell. That hope that's the anchor of our soul is the hope of Christ in us, the hope of glory. The faith leads us to see that Christ has done all this for us. His favor. He has favored us in the covenant that he made with the Father and Son before everything, and the Holy Ghost, before everything was ever made.

Are we favored that way and is that today as we sit here and as the Holy Spirit plows us, is that a desire of your soul? Do you desire to know his favor or are you indifferent to it? Has this world so beaten you down and taken you in and put its arms around you that it is as a shield to you? Did it protect you, it put up the wall? Everything that you are in this life, the name, the riches, everything that you have, is that your shield? Is that what you go to bed at night and you lay your head down and you say, "I am at ease. I feel good about this. I feel good about where I'm at. That's my shield"? For the child of God, he can't live there. He can't. That's sin and the Lord reveals that sin and it's a heavy burden of sin and he reveals to the child of God what those desires are and the first one is to know the favor, the manifested favor. It has to be manifested. That manifested word means it's experienced. You must experience the Lord has favored us. "You are my sheep. You are my sheep. I am your Shepherd." That relationship.

But what other desires does the child of God have? What about his manifested presence? We want his manifested favor, but what about his presence? That's why I'm saying is this morning as David comes and he says, "All my desire is before thee," are these like desires you have? Do you want the Lord's presence with you every day of your life? That's what you see here in David being exercised and seeing this burden upon him because of sin. He laid it out for us very deeply here. "My iniquities have gone over me. Lord, I've got to know your presence. I have to feel your presence. First I need to know that I'm in your number. I need to know your manifested favor. I need to know, Lord, your presence." "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, even to the end of the world." "Lord, I need to know that. I need to be brought to say, 'Lord, where can I go. You have the words of eternal life.' Lord, manifest your presence in me that I know that you're there with me; that I know, Lord, that as I'm walking in this life, you are the one carrying me, you are the one going before me. It's your voice that I hear, not the voice of the wicked one; not the voice of this world; not the voice of my own sin. I have to know, Lord. I have to know your presence. I have to know the favor that you have for me."

Something else we need to know is the reviving of the Lord in our soul. The Lord, as I told you, we have these ebbs and flows every day. I don't know about you, I can only speak from my soul experience that it's every day and sometimes the time in between the reviving is very long and it's very cold and it's very dark and it's very hurtful. I feel sometimes like I'm groping in the dark. I can't get any comfort. I can't get any peace. But I know that the Lord's presence is what I need. I know that I need him to breathe life into my soul at that very moment. I know that I need him to lead me out of myself.

Isaiah said it this way in Isaiah 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also

that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." That's what we need. Do you desire that? And the only way you're going to desire that is if you have felt the deadness; if you have felt the alienation because of sin. If you've been in the same place David is here to cry out to the Lord, "Lord, I need you. Lord, all my desire is before you." And for David to be given the faith of the Son of God to pray that, to cry out that, it removed all fear of David. "Lord, you know my desires." Are we ready today to stand up and say, "Lord, you know all my desires"? Are these desires his favor, his presence, his reviving, are those the things that you desire? And how about the application of his blood? How about the application of his love? Are these the things that you desire?

I can't get into the mind of anyone here. I wouldn't pretend to. I wouldn't even sit up here and try to. It's between you and the Lord. As you sit there today, what does that word "desire" mean to you? What are your desires? David says, he says, "All my desire is before you." All of them and he says, "All of them are for you, Lord." And what is it that David needs now in this hour? He needs the Lord's application of his blood. He needs to know that the love of the Lord covers the multitude of his sins because he said, "They come up over me. I need to see your finished work on the cross. I need to see the blood flowing down. I need to see that that blood is applied to my sin and has taken it away as far as the east is to the west. I need to see what you revealed to Zechariah that that fountain is open. And I need to see that you have brought me to that fountain and that you are bathing me in that fountain and your blood is cleansing me from all unrighteousness because I can't cleanse myself," which is what the rest of this Psalm says, the rest of our passage today. There is a dependency that we have upon the Lord. There is a need and a desire that we have for the Lord to perform. This the same person who said, "I cry out to the Lord who performeth all things for me." And that's what David is in dire need of now. "Oh Lord, my desire is before thee. All my desire is before thee."

Now we move to the next part, "and my groaning is not hid from thee." I guess that brings up the next question: do you groan? Does your soul groan for the Lord? Now let's talk about that a minute because why in the world would we groan? Groaning takes place when there is a painful sensation that's experienced in our soul. It has to be something painful, something painful is why we groan. We're groaning because something has been applied to us, the Holy Spirit has come and said, "Thou art the man. You have sinned against a holy and just Lord." More importantly, the Holy Spirit takes you to the cross and he shows you the agony and he shows you the one that was put on the cross and he shows you him bleeding and he shows you the crown of thorns upon his head and he shows you that he was left by all men, and he shows you that he was forsaken by his own Father, and he shows you that he did that for you. He did that for you and the sin that you continuously make and commit, this is who you're sinning against and that causes the child of God to groan, groan in the agony of his soul because what is it that causes this pain? And one of those things is backsliding. When we backslide from the Lord, when the Lord reveals that we have not walked in the path, we have not walked in the way, we have not walked in the truth, we have not walked in the life of Christ, that is a painful time for the child of God when the Holy Spirit reveals that to him. That's what I hope and

pray today. I'm asking the Lord to reveal to each one of us in here, has this taken place in your life? Have you experienced groaning because of sin and backsliding?

Hosea said it this way in Hosea 11:7, he said, "And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him." You say, "Oh, well, that was to Israel." But listen, that's experiential. Do you experience that that you don't exalt Christ? Do you exalt Christ in your backsliding? When you're going back and you're going back to the world and you're embracing the world, when you're falling back into those pet sins and those sins that we so easily cling to all the time in our unbelief? When we do that, are we exalting Christ? No, we're not. But, dear ones, we're going to see something at the end of this part here that is truly amazing. It's truly amazing. Don't tell me the Lord hasn't provided for his people. Yes, we do groan. We do groan. We've got to look and see what is that groaning. We groan under heavy burdens. That's what David is saying here. I hope you feel the heavy burden he's under. I hope those words resonate with you. I hope the Holy Spirit has taken those words and said, "All my sins have come over me," and you're sitting there and saying, "I know that. I know that thought. I know it. The Lord has revealed how wicked I am, that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. Nothing. I'm right there with David. I know what the Apostle Paul said. I know what it's like to be revealed that, that there is nothing in me that's good in my flesh."

Those heavy burdens, the Lord brings that burden of sin but in these groanings, there is a desire to be delivered from the burden and those groanings are authored by God. If you don't believe me, let's turn to Romans 8. You knew I was going there, all you ones that know the word of God, especially Romans 8 that speaks about groaning. Let's just start in 22, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also." Now, think about this. I hope the Holy Spirit opens our hearts and souls now to hear what the Spirit is saying. "Which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves." We groan within ourselves. You don't know it though. I don't know it but there is a groaning that is authored. Listen to this, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, that redemption of our body." Now we, as the Lord has revealed his truth to us, we understand that one day the Lord is going to bring forth this vile body that is going to return to dust, he is going to raise it a new body and it's going to be joined with our soul and those will inherit the kingdom of God.

Do you groan for that? Do you honestly groan for that day? You say, "Well, no." But I say the Holy Spirit and what's in your soul is so much greater than what you can comprehend. Let me tell you something: when you look at what we look at every day in this life, the political scene the way it is, the wickedness that's in this world, there is something in the child of God that groans to be delivered. It groans to be gone from this life. This isn't my world. This isn't my life. I desire to be with the Lord. I desire to be with the Lord's people where we are not burdened with sin and we're not burdened with all of this garbage around us where this world is continuously shoving down our throats that our Lord isn't real; that our Lord is not powerful; that our Lord doesn't matter. Everybody's special interest group in this life matters but the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't

matter but to the people of God he does. He does and the Lord is so powerful and that's why I want you to understand that these groanings, every living groan that comes out of your soul is from the power of God and if you don't believe me, let's read on.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Here it is, "Likewise," know this, "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." What is our infirmity? Our infirmity is we're living in this life with this warfare. This isn't heaven. We're not walking around in our new man every day that's reigning over the old man because, and the old man being put away. That would be heaven. That's not where we live in. We have infirmities in this life. We are afflicted people. We are a people that struggle. We are the ones that have ebbs and flows in this life. We do have changes but those who don't have changes fear not God.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." That might offend some of you in here but listen, we don't know what to pray for but the Holy Spirit does. The new nature in us does. We get polluted in our mind because of all these thoughts and all these enemies that we have which we'll talk about in a second, but listen to how pure God is. Listen to how powerful God is. Listen to how faithful God is.

"But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." That's not the Holy Spirit groaning, that's your groaning. That's what he authors in us. Groanings. That's the power of God to bring forth this groaning. Now, if you go back to your text and you look what David said, he said, "Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee." It's not hid because he's the author of it. It's not hid because he brings it forth from the child of God's soul, from the depth of his soul. And, dear ones, I ask this every time I'm up here, show me where you have a part in that. Show me where the creature is going to stand up and say, "Lord, I groan for you," because we don't. This is all of him. This is his work and he is faithful to bring it forth. If he wasn't, we wouldn't be reading it in his saint here, his saint who said, "All my groaning, and my groaning is not hid from thee."

But we're not going to stop there. We've got to move to verse 10. "My heart panteth." My heart panteth. Now, if you read that, you're right with me, I know you're thinking, just turn over to Psalm 42. Psalm 42 says, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Now, why would David write such a thing? Now, try to get this picture in your mind of this little deer. Try to get the picture in your mind of this deer who is being hunted, who is being hunted by the ones who are hunting him and he is running and he is running and he is running and he's trying to get away from all of those things that are coming to kill him. Whatever they are, he's panting and he's panting after water because he can't get to the water. He's sitting there and he's laboring and he's laboring and he's laboring because he's about to be killed. Do you not see the spiritualness in that? Do you not see the experiential living of the child of God? That's our life. Every day we are being pursued by Satan, we are being pursued by sin, we are being pursued by this world, we are being pursued by this old nature that lives within us

and it will kill us. It desires to kill us every day of our life but our soul pants, our soul pants after the living water which is Christ. That's what this metaphor is all about. Have you ever experienced that that you are the hunted? Every day of your life from the moment you take breath in the morning, you're the hunted. You're the hunted by these enemies.

"My heart panteth," David says. "It pants, Lord. It desires you." But look at the oppression it's under. Look at all the enemies that are hard fast against him. Look at verse 2, "My soul thirsteth for God." I thirst for your presence. What is it he thirsts for? His favor. "That's my desire. Your favor. Your reviving. Your presence in my life. Your application of your blood in your love to me, Lord. That's what my desires are. That's what I'm panting after." "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." The Lord's promise to his people because he is the filler, he is the righteousness, he is the power to hunger, he is the soul's power. That's what comes from this seed that's in us. That's what comes from this eternal vital union. That's what we have in him and we slight that every day of our lives because we live in the carnality of this world. And don't tell me once that's revealed to you, don't tell me that your soul doesn't desire to be delivered from that. Mine does. Desires not to live after this world every day, not to fall prey to all these enemies that are coming after me every day. And there are days I feel like this hart, that I can't get to the water; that I'm not going to make it to the water. I'm not. I'm going to be overtaken and I'm going to be slain. But it hasn't happened and it only hasn't happened because of the Lord's favor, and only hasn't happened because I'm in the palm of his hand and no man and no world and no Satan and no sin is going to pluck me out of that because that's where I'm safe and secure. That's where my Lord has me. David says, "My heart panteth." I hope our heart pants after the Lord that way.

But that's not all he says, he says, "my strength faileth me." Well, David, what are you being revealed? Well, he's revealing that all of his strength and all of his power, what the Lord bears upon his children, what he has designed for each one of his children, we cannot bear underneath it. Our strength is insufficient. We cannot bear what the Lord has brought into our lives to strip us of our strength, to strip us of our carnal, listen, depend on it, we will do all we can to bear under the burdens of this life. We won't give up. We won't. We have to be brought to the end of ourselves. We have to be stripped of our strength.

Now, turn over to Psalm 107 real quick and let me read you something. In Psalm 107, we'll begin in verse 12, "Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help." Do you know what that is? He brought them to the end of themselves. "Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder." How beautiful that is. That's our breaker. But look at 15, it's almost like a lamenting, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Oh, that we would praise the Lord every day of our lives for his deliverance from those enemies that come after us every day. We have to be shown that we can't fight sin and Satan and the world and the flesh in our own strength.

In Psalm 89, it's written that help is laid on the one that is mighty. Help is laid on the one that is mighty. Do you know why? That's not you, by the way, and that's not me. We're not the mighty. We have to have one that is mightier than the strongman which is Satan. We need the stronger one. We need the one that where all power is to cast out that one that plagues our soul each day; to cast out that world that is so close to us; that Ecclesiastes tells us is put so close to us; that sin that lives in our very members. We need one that is mighty and that passage says that help is laid on the one that is mighty. He's the Deliverer. He is the one who delivers his people because in his power, in the day of his power, we are delivered. It should say in the days of his power because he delivers us over and over again.

Now, let's turn to that very familiar passage over in 2 Corinthians 12. Let's just back up to 7, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The Lord said to Paul, "Yes, I brought that messenger of Satan. Yes, that thorn in your flesh is there. Yes, it's powerful and, yes, you have sought me three times," which is perfection. He kept crying over and over, "Lord, deliver me. Lord, deliver me." And the Lord said, "This is the purpose of it. For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly," listen to what Paul says then, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." That the power of Christ may rest upon me. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Has the Lord revealed that to you? That in your weakness the Lord's strength is shown? But see what comes first is the revelation of your weakness.

Then finally, finally at the end of this verse it says, as for me, "the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me." It also is gone from me. What does that mean? His own light has been stripped from him. He has to walk by the light of another. "My own light, my own strength, my own intellect, my own knowledge, it's all gone from me, Lord. I've been stripped of it."

Let me take you to Job real quick, Job 29. Look at Job 29. You know, I've been teaching the children Job and I'll tell you, we've been hearing from these friends a lot; we've been hearing from their religious ideas; we've been hearing from their righteousness and all the burdens they've put upon Job and all the desire they have for Job to save himself, and all they have for Job to come away from sin and just put it away like it's nothing. And look at Job 29, what he says here at the beginning in verse 2, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me." This is after all of the browbeating he's had, all of the other things taken away from him, he is brought to the end of his own life just as David is here. He is brought to the end of himself and he says, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me." But how did God preserve him? "When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light," by his light, "I walked through darkness." It is a scary thing to walk in our own light. It is a scary thing to be left

to ourselves to explore what our intellectual light is; what our finding our own way is. Job now at the end of all these friends is brought to see that, "Do you know what? Me in justifying myself was not the light that I should be walking in. Oh Lord, I long for that day when I walk by your light."

I pray that he works that in our souls, the desire to walk in the light of Christ and not in the light, like David says here, "as for me and as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me." It is far better and I shudder to say these words because I don't want you to believe me. I want the Holy Spirit to explain this to you and to write it on your soul that it's true because you aren't going to believe me anyway when I tell you: it is far better to have perplexities and hardship in this life than to be resting on our lees and to be in our carnal self and to be living in this life with no changes. It is a far greater thing and it is a blessing that the child of God has that he has this warfare and that he has these ebbs and flows because without the downwardness being taken down in the valley, there would be no upward swing where he takes us to the height of heaven to see the application of his word, to see what he has done for us in his finished work.

Last place we'll go is over here in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, "For our light affliction," and let me tell you, dear ones, there are times in this life you don't believe they are light, they are very heavy, but in proportion to our Lord, they are light; in proportion to the glory that the Lord has for his people, they are light. "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Oh Lord, give us the sight to see the eternal today. Give us the sight to see what you have done.

Our text one more time, Psalm 38:9-10, "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." The last thing I want to do this morning is I want to read you a hymn. I have read this one probably, I've worn this one out. I read this one a lot. It's one of my favorites but I've never shared it from up here and it's called "The Stony Heart."

"Oh, for a glance of heavenly day,
To take this stubborn stone away,
And thaw, with beams of love divine,
This heart, this frozen heart, of mine.

"The rocks can rend; the earth can quake;
The seas can roar; the mountains shake;
Of feeling, all things show some sign,
But this unfeeling heart of mine.

"To hear the sorrows thou hast felt,
O Lord, the adamant would melt;

But I can read each moving line,
And nothing moves this heart of mine.

"Thy judgments, too, unmoved I hear,
Amazing thought which devil's fear;
Goodness and wrath in vain combine
To stir this stupid heart of mine.

"But something yet can do the deed;
And, that dear something much I need,
Thy Spirit can from dross refine,
And move and melt this heart of mine."

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious Lord, may you add thy power. May you bring thy children to thy table. May you let the crumbs fall from this table and examine us this day. May the desires of our heart be of thee, Lord. May they be all of thee. May they be for thee. Make you show us, Lord, that you have emptied us and bring us to thee, Lord, that we may be filled with thee and thee alone, for the glory of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.