



Psalm 38: Lord, Save Me

Whatever his ailment may have been, it is clear that the psalmist understood his suffering to be the just consequence of some wrong doing on his part. It was, he believed, God's righteous judgment on him.

To be sure, we bring a lot of things on ourselves. Choices today very often have consequences tomorrow. A little life experience will convince you of that. Perhaps this illness was the result of such a choice on the psalmist part; perhaps not. There is not, however, a direct link between suffering and sin. The "rain falls on the just and the unjust." In fact, sometimes the unjust seem to flourish while the just barely tread water. It doesn't always make sense.

There is no complaining, however, on the psalmist's part; no lament before God that what he was enduring was not "fair." Rather, there is here confession and a heartfelt plea for God's healing and protective grace. *It is for you, O LORD, that I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer. For I pray, 'Only do not let them rejoice over me, those who boast against me when my foot slips.' For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever with me. I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin. . . . Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me; make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation.*

Confession comes hard for us sometimes. It is painful to admit the error of our ways—painful to our pride—but what is most painful, I think, is that confession also includes a commitment to change. There are times when we want to be healed, but do not want to take the medicine that will make us well. "Forgive me, O God, and make me better, but don't change me." Jesus once asked a man who had dragged himself to a pool with putative healing powers day after day for decades, but who had never made the plunge in to the waters: "Do you wish to be healed?" The answer, you would think, would be self-evident, but his actions showed that he may have loved his illness more than the cure.