

I. Review

I want to invite you to turn to Psalms chapter 38. As we have come through the last two or three chapters in the book of Psalms, we have seen the incredible relationship that God had with the nation of Israel. By now, you should understand the reason for God creating the nation of Israel, and how God's plan for them was for them to be the nation that would rule the world someday. Of course, that is going to happen prophetically when the Lord comes back. What we have seen is God's preserving hand of His people. We have talked about their walk; "*the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.*" We talked about how the hand of God has been in their life, leading and guiding them through all that they do. Yet, at the same time, we have seen God's hand of chastisement on them. All this doctrinally will be the nation of Israel. Historically, we know it to be David. But inspirationally, and we have covered all of these applications, it is a picture of your life and my life as we have our relationship with the Lord Jesus, or do not have one.

➤ The Compounding Effect of Unconfessed Sin

We all know that from our past studies, from 606 BC to today and even beyond today, Israel is completely out of fellowship with God. I would say that if you look back in the four or five thousand years of history of Israel, they are probably farther away from God today than they ever have been in the history of their existence. One of the things that goes unnoticed with Israel getting out of fellowship with God, and I think many guys who preach on this and look at this or try to make the parallels do not see this, but the thing that stands out is why Israel is so far from God today, farther than ever in their lives, is because of the compounding effect of unconfessed sin in our lives. We saw it in Acts chapters 1 through 7, where God gave them their final chance, and He sends Peter preaching to them over and over again. The message is always the same: God sent you His Son. He is your Messiah, and you have totally rejected Him. They never got right. They never turned the corner when it came to seeing God's Son for what He is to them.

It brings up a great lesson for all of us. You have heard me say this many, many times: **sin will never leave a man better than it finds him.** In Psalms 38, you have what happens to a person, any person, when they walk away from God. Doctrinally, we see the nation of Israel.

Historically, David is writing about himself. Inspirationally, it is a picture for every child of God who has walked away from God. Now, let me preface my message by saying this, and you will understand this as we go through it: I want to preach to you today about a child of God that gets so far from God that they cannot get back. If they do get back, it is very rare. But I want you to understand, and you people have a tendency, and rightly so, that you take my messages to heart. I hope you do. But I also know that sometimes when I preach a message like this, you apply it to yourselves when I am not talking to you. I do not think, and I may be wrong, but the Bible says that a pastor should know the state of his flock. I know my people pretty well. I do not think there is anybody in my church at this point in time that is what I am going to preach about today.

Now, I may be wrong. You may be, I don't know. I don't think so. I am giving everybody the benefit of the doubt. But I have been wrong before.

I am telling you this: I want you to listen to this message because it could happen to you. In this chapter, through David's own life, we see the chastisement of God on his life and the terrible ordeal that his sin has put him into. In these, you'll find the key. As you look around you, you will begin to better understand why some of God's people, maybe not you, but some of God's people get into the absolute messes that they get into. I will say it again: when I am preaching this, I know sometimes people come up and they say, "You know, who told you about what I did because you preached on it this morning?" Nobody told me. The Holy Spirit of God has a way of convicting people's hearts about things. So I just want you to know I do not have anybody on my mind today, but I want you to see and understand through David's life where you can wind up if you are not careful.

II. Psalms 38: A Psalm of David

So let us read Psalms 38. We are going to read the whole chapter.

Psalms 38:1-22

- 1. O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*
- 2. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.*
- 3. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*
- 4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*
- 5. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.*
- 6. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.*
- 7. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.*
- 8. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*
- 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.*
- 11. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.*
- 12. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceit all the day long.*
- 13. But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*
- 14. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.*

15. *For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.*
16. *For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.*
17. *For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.*
18. *For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*
19. *But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.*
20. *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.*
21. *Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.*
22. *Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.*

➤ David's Distress and God's Chastisement

In this psalm, we have a picture of a person who is in deep distress. Historically, we know that it is David. In this Psalm, we get to see how terrible God's hand of chastisement was on him because of two things that he tells us if you read down through here. In verse 4, he says it is because of his iniquities. Then in verse 5, he says that it is because of his foolishness. David will be a great picture of how we too can walk away from God through our own foolishness, the foolishness of our iniquity.

The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart. The Bible says that he did what was right all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. And then look where he is at. He committed two of the apex sins in the Old Testament that there was no sacrifice for: adultery and murder. The only sacrifice is you giving up your own life and dying. Yet God gave him His mercies, called the sure mercies of David in the Bible. God did not bring him into account and make him forfeit with his life. Yet at the end of his life, in the book of Acts, God says that he was *a man after mine own heart*. My point is this: if any man or a woman today in this room, who is a man or a woman after God's own heart like David, look where David is at here. It can happen to you. It can happen to me. But I want to show you this morning how a man or a woman who is saved can get so far from God that they cannot get back.

Here in Psalms 38, we see David at the first part laying out the tremendous pressure that he is under. But then we see in the second half of this chapter that he is coming back to God. In verse 18, he says, *"I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin."* And he gets right with God. I want you to see two things here that you have to understand, that if you ever find yourself where David is at, what you have to do. **Notice verse 2, he says, "thine arrows stick fast in me." That is the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God.** Chapter 38 shows us through David's life that there is always a way back. **But I want to tell you right now, there is always a way back, but the longer you go, the farther you get, the deeper you get, the less chance you have of getting back.**

➤ Iniquity and Foolishness

The first problem that he talked about in verse 4 was his iniquity. **Iniquity will be the transgression of God's Word to commit sin.** When we don't deal with our sin, it builds up. It compounds. One sin will build on top of another sin until you are completely swallowed up. If you ever get back, it must start with you dealing with your iniquity.

Then the second thing, found in verse 5, is your foolishness. Now this is something different.

You have to understand how absolutely foolish it is for you and me, a saved, born-again, Spirit-filled child of God, to actually think that you can get around God with your sin and your iniquity, that you can forsake God and the principles of God and you will be okay.

That you can do what you want to do, go where you want to go, and will not be held accountable for it by God. This is not about you just doing your own thing. It is about you rejecting. Your rejecting starts with you rejecting the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God.

Those two things will get into your life, and they will mess you up. They will put you into the mess that David is in. These are the two things you must deal with if you are ever going to get back: your sin and your being fooled by your sin. When you don't, then you will begin to see, as in the life of David, the compounding effect of unconfessed sin in your life.

➤ The Condition of a Backslidden Child of God

Now there are some things that I want you to understand today. I know this is about David. Let's put him on the side for a minute. I know it is about Israel. Let's put them on the other side. Let's look at each of ourselves. What we have in Psalms 38 is not, and I want you to understand this, we are not talking here in Psalms 38 about your daily struggles and my daily struggles. We all sin, we all fall, but you get back up. You follow 1 John chapter 1 verse 9. You sin, you confess it, you get right with God, and you keep on moving. This Psalm is not talking about what most of you, if not all of you, struggle with in life. I want you to understand that because you will tend to beat yourself up with this when you are not there yet. Now I say that, hopefully you are not there yet. I do not think you are, but what do I know? I have been wrong before.

No, what we are talking about here will be a child of God who totally leaves the Word of God and embraces the world and all of its filth. One who gets into sin so deeply that most likely they are never going to get back. **In Psalms 38, you are looking at the condition of a backslidden child of God who has been snared, 2 Timothy 2:20, and now has become a vessel of dishonor.** This man or woman, when you read the passage here, have no rest. They are weak. They can be sick and will be completely out of touch with God and His Word. The weight of their sin is unbearable, and it leads to all kinds of other problems. It leads to what the world calls mental health issues. It leads to what the world calls anxiety. It can lead to a physical sickness. It will most certainly lead to depression. It will certainly drive that person many times deeper into sin and ultimately will destroy them.

Over my many years, I have seen it wreck and destroy people who got caught up in the foolishness of their iniquity. David is the exception to the rule, but most generally when you get to this point in your life, you will not take responsibility for your condition. Instead, you are

going to blame somebody else for it. You are going to blame the church. You are going to blame the pastor. You are going to blame some Christian, but you will never take the responsibility or be accountable for your failure. We see David doing that, but that in my 50 plus years, doesn't happen very often.

III. Leprosy is a Picture of the Sin that Comes into our Lives

Now to really understand sin in our lives, and if you don't get anything out of this message today when you leave, I want you to understand the sin that comes into our lives. But for this, we have to go back to the Old Testament and back to the book of Leviticus. This book will be our next book that we look at in our book of the month club. I told you that Leviticus, even though it is an Old Testament book, just wait until we get into it. It is an incredible book because it deals with the priesthood that is found in the Old Testament, Aaron's sons. But those priests picture and foreshadow you and I as a priest under the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek. It will be a picture of the believer. When we get to it, I will break it all down for you just like when we get everything else on Thursday night. But today in Leviticus chapter 13 and 14, we have two chapters where he is directing and telling the priest about staying clean before God. In chapter 13 and 14, he brings up the disease of leprosy.

Now I don't know if you know this or not, but in your Bible, leprosy will be a picture of the sin that comes into our lives. Leprosy, like sin in our lives, starts and comes from prolonged uncleanness of our flesh. It is the compounding of unconfessed sin in our lives through a long period of unclean living. Once you have it, the leprosy, sin, will eat away at your flesh till it completely consumes your body and you are dead. It builds a stronghold of disease in your life. It will mark a man, and everybody will see it for what it is. It will leave scars on a person. The only way to get clean is through the priest. No medicine can fix it. No doctor can fix it. It must be done and dealt with through the priest and the Word of God if there is any cure to get back.

Now, having understood that, when you lay leprosy out in the book of Leviticus chapters 13 and 14, as to it representing sin in your lives, you will notice in Psalms 38 verses 3 through 8 that David too is filled with a loathsome disease. It doesn't say what he had, but we get the point. But in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14, you are going to find three stages of leprosy. Three stages of leprosy that represent the compounding effect of unconfessed sin in your life and my life that will wind you up where David is at.

Three Stages of Leprosy that Represent the Compounding Effect of Unconfessed Sin in your Life

1. Leprosy of the Flesh (Leviticus 13:38-46)

Here you have the leprosy of the skin, the body, your flesh. You know, that is where sin will always start. It will always start in your flesh. It says in that passage that it starts with white spots. In time, if you do not get to the priest, 1 John chapter 1 verse 9, that spot and that plague in your flesh now affects your head. This is where the average child of God, and I have seen them here, this is where you now begin to forsake the principles of the Word of God. In your mind,

you now rationalize your being out of fellowship. You may still go to church, but the disease of leprosy, your sin in your flesh, has now been eating away at your flesh and it now affects your mind and the way you think. You are on your way out.

This is a very clear pattern. I have had people over the years that a year before they ever had struggles and left the church mad about something, blaming on something or somebody, I saw this pattern begin to develop in their life. I saw things change, the way they looked at things, the friendliness, the closeness. There have been times where some of you will understand what I am saying; we have had conversations worried about that person, remember? And I told you that a year from now, six months from now, I am afraid they will not be with us any longer. And I was right. You see, you begin to see the spots. And they are on their way out because the pattern becomes very clear. Now, I want you to see this progression and you better learn this. You may not be here today, but there was a time when David wasn't either. It starts in your flesh.

2. Leprosy of the Garments (Leviticus 13:47-59)

Now it gets into your garments. Now it is not just affecting your mind. It is a complete change of your lifestyle. You know, basically in life, we all go through cultural things. I remember when I was just a kid, everybody wore skinny ties. Before that, in the 40s, they wore big fat ties. I tell people all the time if they keep those old clothes long enough, they will come back in style again. Clothes are what makes, as somebody said one time, clothes make a man. Clothing, what we wear, really makes a statement as to who we are. When you get dressed to come to church in the morning, you are either going to get dressed in whatever you wear to please the Lord or dressed to draw attention to yourself. It is just that simple. **Now your sin has moved from being an inward sin in your flesh. Now it is an outward sin in your garments.** You see this day talked about in the book of Jude where he says in verse 23:

Jude 1:23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire (Judgment Seat of Christ); hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

At this point, you are gone. You really cannot reason spiritual things to them. It was hard enough when it was just their flesh, but that compounding effect. Now they leave church, but more important, they will leave the Bible, and even more important, they will leave God.

They will always follow the same pattern. It will always be somebody else's fault. They will find something to be mad about. They will justify and rationalize their life situation. They will blame it on somebody else or something else. Now their sin is not just inward anymore. Now it is outward and everybody can see it. Now you will see on their Facebook some of the godless pictures they post of themselves. Now you will see them at the ball game with a beer in their hand or at the bars on Friday night drinking. You will see them at the boats gambling. You will find them meeting somebody online and moving in and shacking up with them to the glory of God. You see now what was inward, what started with your flesh, has now moved outward and it is in your garments and now you are spotted by the flesh.

3. Leprosy in the Home (Leviticus 14:33-57)

Now the third stage will be found in Leviticus chapter 14 verse 35. **You better get this. It started in your flesh, internal. It moved into your clothes, external. Now in verse 35, the leprosy spreads into your home.** Now your sin no longer just affects you, brother. Now it is not just your lifestyle, your clothes. In time, it will affect your whole family.

*Leviticus 14:35. And he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, ***It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house:****

You bet it, brother, and you brought it in. You! It started on your flesh. You did not confess it. It compounded into your garments, and now it is in your home. God's people who bring the leprosy, their sin, into their families, and now you are going to see generation after generation of kids raised without God. Hey, trust me. I have seen it many times. I have seen some of the most dysfunctional, some of the most godless, some of the most disastrous families you could ever imagine. I have seen them where mom and dad cared nothing about God, and then they brought it into their children. When I was back at the Baptist Temple years ago, I saw it there. I saw moms and dads who were phonies. They came to church every Sunday, but they were phonies. And they had kids, and they transferred that phoniness right into their kids. And then their kids grew up, and they had kids, and they passed on the sin of the first generation right into their kids, and I have seen it happen. Generation after generation of kids lost to the world because sin started in your flesh. You did not confess it. It got into your garment. You did not get it right. And now it is in your home. It is in your home. They fornicate. They drink themselves to death. They do drugs. They commit suicide. They hang themselves. They shoot themselves. They take an overdose of drugs.

You better listen to me. We look at David's life, and we see Psalms 38 and what he is going through, but you know what is missing here that you have to get someplace else? The death of four of his children. A man who was after God's own heart, a man who wrote most of the Psalms, probably Psalms 119, the man who was the great shepherd of Israel. Four funerals for four of his children because of his iniquity. **Now, you know number three in your Bible is the number of completion. By the time it gets to this stage, the flesh—one, garments—two, your house—three, you are done.**

➤ Families Ministering Together

I preach a lot on, and I will preach it till the Lord comes back, on families ministering together. I have seen too many kids, buried too many of them, seen too many of them out in the world. I don't want to lose one more child. I don't want to have to have another funeral. I don't want to comfort another mom and dad or grandma or grandpa because they lost a child because of their iniquity. And they all do the same thing. I have been to funerals where the kid killed himself, or he died some sinful way. And I was asked to do the funeral. And I told mom and dad, "Hey, I will be very loving and very careful, but if I am going to do this funeral, I have to be honest with the people about what put this kid where they were at." And I have been told, "You are not doing the funeral." But I will go to the funeral. And you know what I hear? I hear about a man or a woman

or whoever, where there was not one shred of evidence in their life that they ever trusted Christ as their own personal Savior. They never did one thing for God. But the guy you got to preach it will put out there exactly what you want to believe because you have to believe it. I remember one time, and I could not believe it. They said everything about this kid except that he was a missionary to the world, which he was not.

I try to get parents to understand: your life put that kid in the grave. And now, while that kid never changed anybody's life while they were alive, maybe by the grace of God, if you let me do it the biblical way, lay it out with all the compassion and love that I can, that while they may not have reached anybody in their life, maybe we can reach somebody else that is headed that way, through their death. But no; cannot do that. You kidding me? You tell them how great he was. You tell them how great she was. You tell them how they were saved because of some decision they made as a child. That is because you have to believe that because you brought it in your flesh, to your garment, and in your house.

Then 15, 20 years later, oh, they come to me, "Oh, Bob, oh, Pastor, I do not understand it, but it seems to me that there is a plague in my house." You bet there is. Now your whole house is infested. I have had people leave this church, and I am okay with it, because they did not like me preaching about families ministering together because they lost their kids. You know what every one of them does? They go to a church, and I will give you a list of two or three of them if you want. They will go to a church where the pastor has already lost his kids where you will never, never, never have to hear another message about families ministering together.

IV. Two Types of Leprosy (Sin)

Also, in Leviticus chapter 13 and 14, you will find that leprosy, a type of sin, comes in two formats. You need to understand this. You may not be there today, but there was a time when David wasn't either, and he was a man after God's own heart. His spirituality is better than all of us put together and look where he wound up. Don't kid me. Don't kid yourself. Don't be foolish in your iniquity. These two will show you the level of our sin and how it gets completely out of control.

1. Old Leprosy (Leviticus 13:9-11)

In chapter 13 verses 9 through 11, you have your first type of leprosy. This is called the old leprosy. Now, this will be a picture of what you and I all go through and struggle with, the daily confession of sin in our lives that we go through in life. This will be a leprosy, our sin of the issues that we face, and sometimes, yes, we fall, but you have enough Bible in you, you have enough 1 John chapter 1 verse 9 in you, that you get back up, you confess it before God, and you get it right. This is called the old leprosy, and that is because in Romans chapter 7, we find that these daily sins are the sins of the flesh, which he calls the old man. So, it is the old leprosy.

2. Running Sore Leprosy (Leviticus 13:12-15)

Now, the second kind of leprosy is what I am talking about today. It is a leprosy that started in your flesh, it got into your garments, and then got into your home, the third stage. In chapter 13 verses 12 through 15, you find the second kind of leprosy. It is a leprosy that remains an open, running sore. In time, it covers all of your skin, your flesh. It is a running sore, and it pictures your ongoing rebellion with your iniquity, your foolishness, and your sin against God and His Word. It is a compounding of your sin to now infect everybody that you come into contact with: your wife, your husband, your kids, your friends, other Christians, the work of God. It is a loathsome, running sore that infects everybody it touches.

Hopefully today, through this, you will learn for the last 20-some years that I have tried to teach you to get you to understand. The message today in Psalms 38 is simply the message that life is real, sin is real, and the Bible is real. **In this passage, David, yes, he is describing his own condition, but the Holy Spirit of God is describing the mess in which so many of God's people find themselves in.** If you get into this mess, God forbid you ever do, you only have one hope. And it is not in therapy, it is not in antidepressants, it is not in counseling with some unsaved pagan, it is not through psychology or psychiatry. This leprosy is a spiritual problem. You have got to get to the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the only one that can pronounce you clean. You get the counsel of God, my dear friend, not the counsel of man. But the longer you wait, the farther you get out. Your flesh, your garment, your house, through the foolishness of your iniquity, you will reach a point of no return. It is a point of no return not because God has shut the door on you, it is because you shut the door on God.

V. 7 Things God Takes Away when you have Running Leprosy

Now, I have got a few minutes left. Out of this passage, I want to show you seven things that God takes from you when you find yourself with a running leprosy. Running leprosy: running from God, running from the church, running from the truth, and running to the world, running to your foolishness, and running to your iniquity.

1. Your Flesh and Your Bones (Psalms 38:3)

In verse 3, the first thing, your flesh and your bones. The Bible is very clear that physical sickness can come into our lives because of unconfessed sin through a running sore. The Bible says that David had a loathsome disease. Now, an example of this today would be syphilis, AIDS, hepatitis, but more common, the addiction that God's people get into of alcoholism. An absolute alcoholic or drunk will die of alcohol poisoning, cirrhosis of the liver. So many things that it will affect that will destroy them. A smoker, it leads to lung cancer. A fornicator, it leads to VD and AIDS and herpes. You like to smoke meth? There go your teeth. Marijuana, there goes your brain cells. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, where he is talking about the Lord's Supper to the church at Corinth, you will find the real issue of coming to communion with a running sore. He says if you do not confess your sin, *"for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*

Now, having said that, this is where you've got to be careful with a message like this because you need to understand. John chapter 9 verse 3 tells us that some sickness we get were not caused by sin. In John chapter 9 verse 3, you had a guy there that was born blind, and they asked him, "Who did sin that this man was born blind? Him, his mother, his father?" They are trying to tag some sin in their lives to this guy being blind. And Jesus makes it very clear, "None of those people's sin." He was not made blind because of sin. He was made blind for the glory of God to be manifest through his blindness. So, you have got to see that. Because I know people, you are out there sick, or you get sick, first thing you think of, "Well, you know, this is me, you know, I got some loathsome disease." No, no, you have got to be smarter than the problem. Not all sicknesses are because of sin. If you have any questions about that or you are not sure, just come and see me. I will help you figure it out.

2. Your Head (Psalms 38:4)

Second thing, verse 4, his head. You will find when a man or a woman gets a running sore and they are saved, the first thing that goes is their mind. I think of two great examples. In Luke chapter 15, you have the prodigal son. Now, there is a guy who pictures what I am talking about. He left his father's house. He went everywhere, spent his inheritance, living with all that stuff, and wasted his substance with riotous living. He is having the time of his life, and he winds up in a pig pen. He is about as low as you can get. You know what brought him back? The Bible says **when he came to himself**, "My father's servants are living better than I am." Over there in Mark chapter 5, verses 1 through 20, you have the story of the demon-possessed man. This guy was something else. He could break chains. They could not hold him with ropes or chains. He liked to hang out in graveyards. He ran around naked, and he met Jesus, the Priest, and Jesus cast the devil out and healed him. The Bible says over there in Mark 5:15, that after that, when he was sitting **in his right mind**.

Years ago, there was a TV commercial that was built around young people getting a good, solid education. The slogan that they always used, and they built around that, was "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." Now, I understand that, and I agree, but first and foremost, you have got to understand, the mind can be the most terrible thing all by itself. If you have not figured this out yet, let me enlighten you. We will take our minds places we would never think of taking our bodies. And you want the model for it? It is in Ezekiel chapter 8, verses 1 through 18, one of the most powerful chapters in all of the Bible, where a man will take his mind through his imagination when his leprosy sets in. The images portrayed on the wall of a man's mind. Second Corinthians chapter 10, verse 4 and 5, talks about *casting down imaginations*, that these are the strongholds—strongholds in our lives through leprosy. It starts with our mind. That's why the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:16, "*But we have the mind of Christ*," and in Philippians 2:5, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*."

3. Your Loins (Psalms 38:7)

Third thing, verse 7, his loins. Now, through the foolishness of your iniquity, you find yourself where David is, then it will affect two things about you connected to your loins. **First of all, your walk**. You are now in Psalms chapter 1, verses 1 through 4, with your loins you are

standing in the way of sinners, with your loins you are walking in the counsel of the ungodly, and now you are sitting in the seat of the scornful. Your walk through life is now against everything that God stands for, that you once stood for. **Second thing, you have no strength.** In the Bible, the loins represent the strength of a man of God. Ephesians chapter 6, verse 14, says that we are to have our loins, that is our strength, *gird about with truth*, your ability to stand, your ability to walk with God. Now you have no strength. Over the years, you have lost all spiritual strength. It started in your flesh, it moved into your garments, now it is in your house. You stand for nothing, and you fall for everything. You now are open to every unclean influence, every unclean spirit that will infest your life and will destroy your family. What is the problem? It is in your house.

4. Your Heart (Psalms 38:8)

Fourth thing, verse 8, his heart. You see, when you hit this terrible stage, you have no heart now for the things of God, when you once did. I have known God's people that once had a heart for the things of God. You find them today; they have absolutely no heart for anything with God. There are just too many strongholds in their life. Where at one point in their life, they cared about the things of God, now they live in a cold, dark world, with no reality of God in their life, no steps ordered by God, no hand of God, but soon coming the hand of chastisement like David. Like Israel, there is a good example, Isaiah 8, 1 Peter 2, Romans 11, your heart has turned to stone. Like Israel, when you rejected the chief cornerstone, the rock of God, Christ, then your heart turned to stone, and now you deceive your own self through your foolishness and your iniquity, verse 4 and 5. Now that heart of stone, the Bible says, becomes your stumbling stone, and you trip over it the rest of your life and break your neck. Daniel chapter 2 calls it the smiting stone, and he will smite you with it. Where once you loved Christ, talked about Christ, witnessed for Christ, did things for Christ, now Isaiah chapter 8 verses 14 and 15 like Israel, He is called the rock of offense. The things of God now offend you, and all your life you stumble and wonder why you stumble.

5. Your Eyes (Psalms 38:10)

Fifth thing, verse 10, his eyes. Now when your leprosy gets to this stage, you can no longer see God in anything. And again, this is a picture of the nation of Israel, Matthew chapter 13 verse 14, when they rejected Christ and the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said you see, but you cannot perceive. You cannot perceive God's hand in anything anymore. You cannot see it in your own life, falling apart right before your eyes. You cannot see the world now swallowing up your family, your own children right before your eyes. They do drugs; they do booze. And you know, they begin a life of terrible choices. You know why? Because your life is a life of terrible choices, and your leprosy went from your flesh to your garments to your kids. And now they marry unsaved men and women, and you are okay with it. You think it is wonderful. Some of them, Romans chapter 1 verses 26 to 28, become homosexuals or lesbians right in front of your eyes. But you cannot understand; you have no perception. And much more important, you have no power or strength to stop it. So what do you do? You rationalize it. You justify it. You make excuses for them. You try to hide it. You blame it on somebody else. Hey, I have seen families that had a girl get pregnant, and because that family wanted to maintain that they were spiritual when they were not, shipped that girl off someplace, told everybody that she was going here or

there; she had the baby and gave it up, and brought her back, and then just lived a lie. What do you think that teaches that girl? I had a family one time that had some boys. These boys were the most ungodly guys you ever saw in your life. They had the morals of a billy goat. And mom and dad justified everything. It was always somebody else's fault. The one kid had more illegitimate children than you could count. And when his mother was confronted, you know what her answer was? "It is the girl's fault for not having protection, so they don't get pregnant." That is mother of the year stuff, man...in hell. I have seen them. They can never see the real issue. There is a plague in your house, and you brought it in through your flesh, through your garments, and now it is in your home.

6. Your Ears (Psalms 38:13)

Sixth thing, verse 13. His ears. Now, not only can you not perceive anything from God, but now you can't hear anything from Him. Again, like Israel, Matthew chapter 13, verses 14 and 15:

*Matthew 13:14-15. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, **By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand;** and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:*

*15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and **their ears are dull of hearing**, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

Your ears are dull of hearing. You have closed your eyes to the truth, and your heart has waxed gross against God. You know, in the book of Revelation, chapter 2 and 3, we know this, there are seven churches there which represent the seven periods of church history. We all know that...from Ephesus to Laodicea. And you will find in chapter 2 and 3, seven times he tells the churches, seven times, one for each church, he tells that church, you and me, "**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**" And now you get nothing out of God. Now you get nothing out of any sermon or the Bible. You just point the sermons at somebody else and say, "Boy, they really needed that." In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and we have studied this on Thursday nights, you are now like every deaf and blind man found in the gospels, which is a picture of the nation of Israel, but it is also a picture of our spiritual condition.

7. Your Mouth (Psalms 38:13)

Seventh, verse 13, his mouth. Now you not only look like the ungodly world, now you not only think like them, now you not only act like them, now your leprosy has affected your mouth and your speech, and you talk like them. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* God saved you to speak of His wondrous, glorious name to a lost world, to tell the world about God, His Son, Jesus Christ, to warn them of damnation and hell, to speak the wondrous words of life. And now you take those very names, God, Jesus Christ, hell, damn, and you use them as a cuss word. I have heard all my life, preachers take Exodus chapter 20 verse 7, and it says, "*Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.*" And they always want to liken that to cursing. Oh, okay, I will go with that, but I want to tell you something. If you are saved here this morning, have you taken the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in vain? That is the real question. When he takes your mouth now, your ability to witness goes out the window.

➤ The Example of Lot

You know the best example I can think about this? Genesis chapter 18 and 19. I have seen so many Christian moms and dads right here. I have seen so many grandmas and grandpas right here. Now your whole life has destroyed your family. They do not minister with you, do not want to minister to you. The greatest example I can think of is Lot down there in Sodom and Gomorrah. The Bible says, righteous Lot. He was a saved man, vexed with the conversation of the world. I will tell you, when you look at Genesis chapter 19, it is an eye-popping, eye-opening picture of so many of God's people. He's down in Sodom; that's queer city. Some angels show up and come into his house. Word gets around to all the men. There are three strangers in town, and they come down to Lot's house, beating on the door. "We hear there are some men in your house. Bring them out so we can know them." Do you really think they wanted them to come out and say, "Hi, good to meet you. Welcome to Sodom. Hey, good to have you here. Good to see you." No! That's not the knowing that they wanted. They wanted to know them sexually. Lot says, "What am I going to do? What am I going to do?" Oh, he says, "I will fix this." He goes out to the door, to all the homosexuals, opens the door and says, "Brethren." Brethren??? And then he says, "Do not this great evil. I'll tell you what. I've got some daughters in here that are virgins. I will bring them out. You can fornicate with them." You see, that is what a lot of parents do. They just change one sin for another sin. You know, "I cannot let these angels come out and you fornicate with them, but here is my daughter!" You know how many families I have seen over the years give their daughters to the world to fornicate?

Well, anyway, that really wasn't part of my sermon, but once I got into it, I am sorry, you just got the whole enchilada. But anyway, if you are up for Mexican food, here comes the peanut taco right now. What is a peanut taco? I do not know. Anyway, these three men that came down, they are angels. And they come down to Lot and they say, "We are going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. We are going to burn it to the ground." The Bible says that Lot had some daughters who were married to some sons-in-law, and when the reality finally set in, that judgment was going to fall, and his family was going to be wiped out—the family that he brought the disease of leprosy to—The Bible says he runs to them, runs to their homes, knocks on their doors and says, "Oh, I got a message from God. Three angels showed up. We have got to get your clothes packed. We have got to get out of here!" And finally, he comes to some kind of spiritual truth. But do you know what the Bible says? His sons and daughters, the ones that he brought the leprosy into the house to, the ones that he destroyed, the ones to whom he called the homosexuals "brethren." You know what they said? They said when they heard the message out of Lot's mouth from God, *but he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law*. You'd better get it, man. You'd better get it. "Oh, come on. We have got to get out of town. I got a message from God." They closed that little window and said, "Ha! Lot, you've got a message from God? You have got to be kidding me."

That is why you can't reach them. They may not say it to your face. They may smile and say, "Well, thank you, Mama. Thank you, Daddy. Can I borrow \$20?" They may not say it to your face. But there is the pattern. They saw the corruption in their mom and dad's lives, the iniquity and the foolishness of that iniquity. It started in their flesh. It went into their garments, and they

brought it right into the home, and now their children are infected. And you try to fix it. You try to do something. You finally get spiritual. Well, as the old saying goes, "Too little, too late." They just look at you like somebody that mocks God. Why? Because you put them and trained them to be right where they are at.

I do not want to lose another child to the world. Coming up, as soon as we get through this busyness, we are going to have a serious child training seminar class. I am already telling your kids, maybe they haven't said anything to you. I see them running around, doing all kinds of goofy stuff they should not be doing, and I will tell them, "You know what? Go ahead and enjoy what you are doing right now because when Pastor Bob lays it out for your mom and dad, your life is going to change."

Imagine a mom or a dad going to their child, and the child thinks, "How could they (Lot) ever have a message from God? Look at the shape that I am in. I am on drugs. I am an alcoholic. I am this or I am that. I am out in the world. I got nothing, and I learned it from mom and dad. They lied about everything. They hid everything. They never held me accountable because they never let God hold them accountable." No more on my watch. You want to see me afterwards; I will give you a list of three or four churches where you can go, and you will never hear a message like this again. Okay with me. And I am telling you, allowing your sin to get to the third stage will completely destroy you and your family. Again, sin never leaves a man better than it finds him.

VI. Summary

➤ The Third and Fourth Generation

I am going to leave you with this. You do with it what you want. I told you already in the Bible, the number three is the number of completion. When it hits three, it is done. When the thing hits the third part, it is completely over. So when your sin of leprosy hits the third stage—your flesh, your garment, your house—it is over. Everybody turn to Deuteronomy chapter 5. I will leave you with this, and I am done. I am going home to take a nap because I wore myself out this morning.

*Deuteronomy 5:9. Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them (other gods), nor serve them: for **I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation** of them that hate me,*

Now, do you see that? God visiting the iniquity of the third and the fourth generation. Why didn't he say God visiting the iniquity to the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth generation? I will tell you why. Because in your family, when your iniquity, when your leprosy hits that third stage, and the third generation of your family, it is over. God is not visiting your family anymore, not even to the point of their iniquity. You are done. Try as you will, beg, weep, cry, throw yourself prostrate on the ground, ask God to change it. He cannot change three generations of you infecting your family with leprosy.

➤ When it Gets to the Third Generation, you are Done

I knew a man one time, knew him very well. I do not understand all that I am about to say; why and how it happened. Try as I will, I just cannot get a handle on it. But him and his wife were the first generation. They had two kids. Second generation. I don't know what happened. I don't. By the time those two kids were in their 40s and their 50s, they rejected everything that their dad ever taught and believed, and he was a good pastor. They rejected everything. They rejected the Bible. They rejected doctrine. They rejected everything. Every teaching that their dad gave them on the King James Bible, they walked away from. Every solid doctrine on the Word of God, they rejected. Second generation. They had kids. Third generation. Those kids grew up, knew nothing about God, knew nothing about their granddaddy, who was a great preacher, knew nothing about him. Those kids married unsaved people. Two more generations down the line, there will be no remembrance of a man who once held the line with the Word of God. And that generation will not experience God's iniquity. You know why? Listen to me. When it hits the third generation, you are done.

➤ By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them

You say, "Well, I think God..." Well, you can think all you want. I am telling you, unless God miraculously does something, which it can happen, I have just never seen it in 60 years. Sin never leaves a man better than it finds him. We all struggle. We all have things in our life. We all have strongholds. We all have things that we battle every day. I am not talking about that. I want to be clear. I am talking about moms and dads, families, who continually produce kids after kids after kids that care nothing about God or the things of God. Oh, you can rationalize it. Well, they go to church. Yeah, I know, I know, I know. And we are going to get a deal in Iraq, too. You can rationalize it all you want. "*By their fruits, ye shall know them.*" You aren't saved and you don't serve God because you tell everybody your kid does or you do. You see it because of the fruit in their lives of being in a church that preaches and teaches the Bible, being involved in ministry, and helping other people get to the truth that your kids will reject at some point.

I am telling you guys; I love you to death. You need to see and understand it. This Psalm was put right in the middle of all this to show you, David, a man after God's own heart did what was right all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. If he can get into this state, Psalms 38, don't you think for a moment you and I cannot.