

## PSALM 38

Rebuke me not in your anger, O Lord,  
nor discipline me in your wrath!

(PSALM 38:1)

### STRUCTURE

- v. 1-10** David's sins are too heavy for him to bear. They impact him in soul and body.
- v. 11-12** David is attacked by his own sin and the false accusations of other sinners.
- v. 13-14** David pays no attention to his accusers.
- v. 15-16** David's focus is on God's just judgement of his accusers.
- v. 17-18** Affliction is to be received as an occasion for repentance before God.
- v. 19-20** David laments that his enemies are strong and many and that they hate him, though he desires good.
- v. 21-22** Nevertheless, he puts his trust in the Lord, who promises him salvation.

### AT A GLANCE

**MORE TO THE STORY** *A Psalm of David, for the memorial offering* — David writes this psalm to be sung for the memorial offering. This was a freewill offering of grain and incense brought to Lord to show Him devotion (LEV. 2 AND 24).

**"REBUKE"** to reprimand for sins.

**"CONFESS"** to speak what God has spoken. To agree with God's Law is to confess one's sin. To acknowledge the Gospel is a confession of faith.

## CHRIST IS HERE

Christ is the One who lifts the burden of sin that David is unable to bear (v. 4). He is the One who forgives David's iniquity and sin (v. 18) as David's incarnate salvation (v. 22).



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**David was a man after the Lord's heart** (1 SAM 13:14) and a man of war (1 CHRON. 28:3), to whom the Lord gave great victory over his enemies — the nations surrounding and harrowing Israel's borders. In this psalm, however, it is David's own sin that plagues him most. Pierced by the arrows of God's Law (v.2), he confesses. He is attacked by his enemies and abandoned by his friends and family, and the reality of his own sin becomes unbearable. He receives these troubles, even the wrongful accusations against him, as a call to return to the Lord in confession and in faith. David commends himself to the Lord (v.15) and repents of his sin (v.18). He desires to live according to God's will, though his enemies hate him for it. He calls upon the Lord, his salvation. This psalm shows the depths of sin's corruption and the toll it takes on the conscience. It also teaches that only the Lord's forgiveness and removal of wrath in Christ can make the conscience clean and the person whole. His atonement and absolution are also the tools by which we can endure the false accusations and shame put upon us by others.

## USE IN THE CHURCH

**Antiphon:** v. 1b

**In the Daily Office:** Mondays at Matins;  
Good Friday at Matins

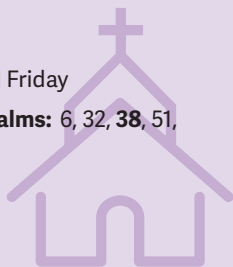
**At the Divine Service:**

Verse (Tract) for Day of Supplication and  
Prayer and for Day of National or Local  
Tragedy (v. 21–22)

**Three-Year:**

Introit verses for Good Friday

**The Seven Penitential Psalms:** 6, 32, **38**, 51,  
102, 130, 143.



## SPIRITUAL CARE

- Before Confession and Absolution.
- When confronted with past sins.
- During times of frustration.
- When falsely accused.
- Against pride.



## PSALM PRAYER

PSALM

38

Never leave us or forsake us, O Lord. Do not turn Your grace away from us, or discipline us in Your wrath, but redeem us with Your compassion and crown us with Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

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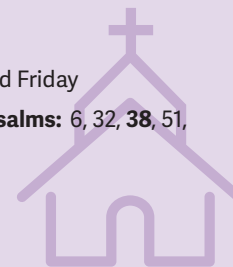
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