

Friday 11 September 2020

Ps.39,12: *"Hear my prayer, LORD, listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping."*

Mt.15,25: *"The woman came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said."*

What David does in Ps.39 has become quite uncommon, in fact even unfashionable, in our own day. And that is that he takes the trouble he is experiencing personally. In the verses preceding verse 12 he says: *"...for you are the one who has done this. Remove your scourge from me; I am overcome by the blow of your hand. When you rebuke and discipline anyone for sin, you consume their wealth like a moth – surely everyone is but a breath."*

Today's thinking tends to feel compelled to defend God's goodness against such an assumption and to reassure us that God is never connected to our troubles in this way. But this is not the result of a better understanding of God and His word, it is the result of a widespread, and church-sanctioned, loss of a sense of personal sin and guilt.

Yet the sense of personal sin and God's response to it leads David into ardent, fervent prayer for help – that is, he seizes upon God's goodness and mercy in way which, for His faithfulness and justice in Jesus Christ, cannot and won't fail.

Does the loss of a sense of personal sin account for the loss of the art of ardent, fervent prayer?

Luther said, "Would to God I could always pray with such ardour, for then I would always have this answer: 'Your request is granted'" (see Mt.15,28!).