

Psalms 38:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.

Analysis

For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. David acknowledges precarious position: ready to halt (נָכוֹן לִצְלַע, nakon litslo'a, prepared for limping/stumbling), and sorrow continually before me (מַכְאוֹב נִגְדִי תָמִיד, mak'ov negdi tamid, pain opposite me always). This isn't self-pity but sober self-assessment.

The limping/halting posture suggests both physical weakness and moral vulnerability—one wrong step and he'll fall completely. The sorrow continually before me means perpetual consciousness of failure. Unlike denial or minimizing, David maintains awareness of his condition. This honest acknowledgment of weakness is prerequisite to receiving grace—God gives grace to the humble who know their need (James 4:6).

Historical Context

Ancient warfare made limping warriors vulnerable to finishing blows from enemies. A 'halting' king couldn't lead troops or flee danger. The metaphor captures David's total dependence on God for stability. His 'readiness to halt' admits he's one blow away from collapse—only God's sustaining hand prevents total ruin.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you maintain awareness of your moral vulnerability ('ready to halt') without sliding into morbid introspection?
2. What role does continual remembrance of past sin play in maintaining humility and dependence on grace?
3. When is consciousness of 'sorrow continually before me' healthy conviction versus unhealthy inability to receive forgiveness?

Interlinear Text

פִּי	אֶנִּי	לִפְּנֵי	נָכֹן	וּמִכְאוֹבִי	נִגְדָּה	תָּמִיד:
H3588	H589	to halt H6761	For I am ready H3559	and my sorrow H4341	H5048	is continually H8548

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 35:15 (Parallel theme): But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not:

Psalms 38:6 (Parallel theme): I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

Psalms 6:6 (Parallel theme): I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.