

SBC – Oct. 8, 2023
Psalm 6:1-10 (NKJV)
“Prayer in Time of Distress”

Intro:

Psalm 6 (NKJV)
To the Chief Musician. With Stringed Instruments. On An Eight-Stringed Harp. A Psalm of David.

Once again, we have a Psalm of David represented here in Psalm 6. It comes with a heading directed to the “Chief Musician” – perhaps the leader of choirs or musicians leading worship in David’s time (cf. 2 Chron. 6:33; 16:5-7; 25:6). Not only was it written for stringed instruments but specifically mentions it was intended to be accompanied by the eight-stringed harp.

This is the first of seven “Penitential Psalms”. In these Psalms CONFESSION is the emphasis and often the writer is experiencing the suffering of God’s disciplinary hand. These Psalms show us what biblical confession is all about (cf. Ps. 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143).

For believers in Christ, our POSITION is forever secure – we have eternal security.

Slide # 1

Hebrews 10:14 (NKJV)
14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

You can’t get any better than perfected and can’t be any longer than forever. “Perfected forever” – what a wonderful reality.

And yet while our position before God is forever perfect because of the blood of Jesus, in our walk we sometimes get our feet dirty. Our relationship is forever established but our walk needs maintenance. And in our walk when we mess up we need to get right with God through confession.

Slide # 2

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)
9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Slide # 3

CONFESSION has been called "the vomit of the soul." It is necessary to the spiritually healing process.
(cf. 1 Jn. 1:9; Ja. 5:16)

In the Psalm David is hurting physically, spiritually, and emotionally. He sees himself as under discipline and wicked enemies are part of his affliction. But as is often the case we are not told what the specific occasion may have been.

Slide # 4***Psalm 6***

Theme: Prayer in Time of Distress

- A. David's Agonizing Plea (v. 1)
- B. David Weak and Troubled (vv. 2-3)
- C. The Urgency of David's Plea (vv. 4-5)
- D. A Vivid Description of David's Agony (vv. 6-7)
- E. David's Confident Declaration (vv. 8-10)

1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.

David at this point is asking for mercy. He seems to acknowledge that he is under discipline for something but he does not tell us what that might be. He just wants God not to deal with him in hot displeasure. He doesn't want to feel the brunt of God's anger.

Eight times in this short Psalm David addresses God as LORD which is the name YHWH. This was considered the most sacred name for God – often called "His covenant name". It denotes His unfailing faithfulness as the unchanging God.

But God in His faithfulness is also faithful to discipline His children for their ultimate good and for His glory.

Slide # 5

Proverbs 3:11–12 (NKJV)

11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction;

12 For **whom the LORD loves He corrects**, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Proper discipline is an act of love. Children need discipline. And frankly we all need discipline from time to time – there is no exception. The writer addresses Hebrews who were going through hard times.

Slide # 6

Hebrews 12:3–7 (NKJV)

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become **weary and discouraged** in your souls.

4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

5 And you have **forgotten** the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

6 For **whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges** every son whom He receives.”

7 If you endure chastening, **God deals with you as with sons**; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

God puts His children through discipline for a purpose.

Slide # 7

Hebrews 12:8 (NKJV)

8 But if you are **without chastening**, of which all have become partakers, then you are **illegitimate and not sons**.

Sometimes I wonder how professing Christians seemingly get away with living in sin. There doesn't seem to be any serious discipline – and this goes on for a long time. Perhaps the issue is they are not “legitimate” children of God. God only disciplines those who are genuinely His children. Ultimately He will judge the wicked, but discipline is reserved for His own.

I never spanked the neighbors kids because they didn't belong to me. And so it is with God.

Slide # 8

Hebrews 12:9–11 (NKJV)

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but **He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.**

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but **painful;** nevertheless, **afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

No pain – no gain! That is true in reference to discipline. Although it is painful in the process it has an ultimately profitable purpose and end goal.

Discipline may be because of sin or it may be a matter of training us so that we might be stronger. It is not always a sin issue – sometimes it is a strengthening issue -which seems to be the emphasis here in Hebrews 12. Interestingly, David does not mention any specific sin in Psalm 6 but he does indicate that there may be reason to think God is angry and that would suggest there had been sin on David's part. Whatever all was involved David clearly saw God as sovereignly behind this.

And as the Psalm continues it does seem that the affliction David was going through was severe – so severe that he thought it might kill him as seen in verse 5.

2 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.

Notice that David does not come arrogantly or with self-righteousness. No, rather he comes humbly asking for the LORD to have mercy on him. This too indicates that he is admitting he had been off track in some way.

David cried out for mercy because he was weak – meaning he was languishing. He asked for healing because his bones (meaning his entire body) was troubled and wracked with pain. David was a mess and needed help!

3 My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD—how long?

Body and soul David was GREATLY TROUBLED! And in this distress he cried out, “O LORD – how long?”

One commentator said, “The question we should ask isn’t ‘When will I get out of this?’ but ‘What can I get out of this?’” That is easy to say when you are not going through it, but being human we are in midst of an agonizing experience the most natural thing in the world is to cry out “how long?”

Human anguish cries out for relief.

4 Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies’ sake!

David at this point feels like God has been distant as seen in asking for the LORD to return.

David felt *distant* from God. This was part of the agony of the trial. When we sense that God is near us, we feel that we can face anything. But when we sense that He is distant from us, we feel weak before the smallest trial. – **David Guzik**

This is a good reminder – that part of the battle – sometimes a large part of the battle is feeling like God is distant in the trial we are going through. When you go through this – remember you are not the first to have this experience. David too felt this way. And remember this is part of the BATTLE!

And in this state David plead for God’s intervening deliverance. And the basis of his plea was the “mercies” of God.

The word “mercies” is the Hebrew word “hesed” referring to God’s loyal unfailing covenant love.

David in effect is saying, “***I haven’t always been faithful, but God you are and on that basis, I am asking you to deliver me.***”

In the Davidic covenant God had expressed a hesed commitment to David (2 Sam. 7:8-17). Again and again God had proven Himself faithful in His loyal love for David and so on the basis of God’s faithful character David asks for help!

Every Jew knew that the Lord was “merciful and gracious” (Ex. 34:6, 7), so David asked God to manifest that mercy to him and spare his life. – **Warren Wiersbe**

David's ground of asking God for help was not because he deserved it, but rather it was the steadfast love and faithfulness of his God. God can always be counted on to be faithful to His covenant promises. You can drive a stake down there and it is always appropriate to seek God through the lens of His faithful character.

We often fail Him – but He will never fail us! Even when you don't feel like God is close – even when you don't feel like it – seek God. That is what David did.

5 For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?

This is an interesting appeal. David makes the case that God keeping him alive would result in worship being attributed to Him in contrast to dying where he would no longer make mention of God or give Him thanks!

The word “grave” is the Hebrew word “sheol”. It can mean the grave or it can also refer to “the realm of departed spirits”. The context is the determining factor.

This seems strange to our ears as we think about death through the lens of NT revelation. How can we explain David's response here in Ps. 6:5? Two ideas have been put forth.

- 1) David is only thinking in terms of this earthly scene and not addressing the life hereafter which in other places he acknowledges. For example, in Psalm 23:6 he says he “**will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever**”. This view argues that David is only speaking in reference to the affairs of this life and is not addressing anything beyond it. And it is pointed out that other OT passages use similar language that view death strictly from an earthly perspective (cf. Eccl. 9:5; Isa. 38:18).

Slide # 9

Ecclesiastes 9:5 (NKJV)

5 For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing,
And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten.

- 2) The second view is that in the OT the afterlife was shadowy in their understanding.

Sometimes they seemed to have great confidence as seen for example in Job 19:25 and at other times a sentiment of uncertainty prevailed as seen for example here in Psalm 6:5. There certainly were glimpses into the eternal future (cf. 1 Sam. 28:15, 19; 2 Sam. 12:23; Ps. 16:10; 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; 139:24), but clearly their understanding was “murky” in comparison to what we now know in light of NT revelation.

Slide # 10

2 Timothy 1:10 (NKJV)

10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and **brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,**

Jesus came from heaven and gave us more revelation about heaven and hell than had ever been known before (cf. Jn. 3:13).

Jesus told us about Father’s house and how it has many rooms and that He went to prepare a place for us – and that He would one day return and take us to Himself (Jn. 14:1-3). The NT reveals that now in Christ to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). It tells us that to die for the believer is GAIN – and that it is FAR BETTER (Phil. 1:21-23). And in the gospel, we clearly see the HOPE of a glorified body in the resurrection – wherein our bodies will be transformed into a glorified form just like that of our risen Lord (1 Thess. 4:15-17; Phil. 3:20-21).

David’s point wasn’t to present a comprehensive theology of the world beyond. He was in agony, fearing for his life, and he *knew* he could remember God and give Him thanks now. He didn’t have the same certainty about the world beyond, so he asked God to act according to His certainty. – **David Guzik**

6 I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.

Note the word “weary”. David was totally worn out and exhausted. Traumatic grief in combination with excessive weariness can take a tremendous toll on both mind and body. David is spent with groaning all through the night. His situation was overwhelming. In hyperbolic terms, he speaks of the severity of his suffering and sorrow.

It is truly amazing what people have to go through at times! Indescribable!

7 My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of all my enemies.

David's eyes were red and sore because of overwhelming grief and lack of sleep. David's life at this point was characterized by absolute misery.

Slide # 11

- David sensed God's anger.
- David felt far from God.
- David was overwhelmed with grief.
- David couldn't sleep.

That is a pitiful condition in which one feels helpless and hopeless. How long? (v. 3). David felt discouraged and depressed. He was both mentally and physically at the end of himself.

But prayer changes things! And David is testimony to this – even in this Psalm at this very juncture.

8 Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.

Suddenly David has a change of heart. Suddenly he goes from a very bleak outlook to having great courage that he will yet triumph over his enemies. And in that newfound courage, he tells all the workers of iniquity to depart from him (cf. Matt. 7:23; Lk. 13:27).

David now ends the Psalm with a voice of confidence. And he makes it clear what has made the difference. He says, ***“For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.”***

God has answered prayer in the inner man! God has changed his whole perspective. God hears the voice of weeping! It moves the heart of God.

Weeping has a **voice** before God. It isn't that God is impressed by emotional displays, but a passionate heart impresses Him. David wasn't afraid to cry before the LORD, and God honored the **voice** of his **weeping**. – **David Guzik**

Slide # 12

“Is it not sweet to believe that our tears are understood even when words fail! Let us learn to think of tears as liquid prayers.”

- **Charles Spurgeon**

9 The LORD has heard my supplication; The LORD will receive my prayer.

Three times in two verses David now makes the emphasis that God has heard his prayer.

Slide # 13

- For the LORD has heard... (v. 8)
- The LORD has heard... (v. 9)
- The LORD will receive my prayer. (v. 9)

This is confidence through prayer. David has gone from “weak”, “troubled”, “greatly troubled”, “weary”, “grief” to overflowing with confidence! And it is simply PRAYER that has made all the difference. His circumstances had not changed – his perspective has changed.

The act of baring your heart to God is like a balm to the soul and serves to soothe one in times of great distress. David in the time of great distress learned the secret of the Lord’s comfort and strengthening through prayer.

Slide # 14

2 Corinthians 1:3–4 (NKJV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and **God of all comfort**,

4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which **we ourselves are comforted by God**.

This is a real experience for God’s children who pour out their hearts to God through liquid prayers.

10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled; Let them turn back and be ashamed suddenly.

David asked that God turn the situation around to where his enemies are ashamed and greatly troubled. And he asked that God do it SUDDENLY!

The Psalm ends with David confident that God will act and yet asking that God move quickly.

God works through prayer!

Slide # 15



I read of a man who was very troubled about something and he wrestled in prayer over it. But as he came out of the prayer closet he cried out, "Victory, victory".

This is the story of Psalm 6 – the testimony of David as God brought him through a time of incredible distress through PRAYER!

Are you weak, troubled and weary? Take it to the Lord in prayer!

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.