

Psalm 6
Yahweh Hears Our Prayers

As we continue in a summer series on the Psalms, one might ask, “Why the Psalms?”

I’ve heard it said that the Book of Psalms is the “libretto of Mosaic ritual”. (that explains it).

The libretto are the lyrics or words sung in an opera or any work for musical theater.

The Psalms help us learn what was sung and felt in worship while Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy tell us what and how worship was done.

The Psalms serve as a public expression of faith in real life. They reflect the public and private life of the people of God. The Psalms turned confession and lament into public songs along with expressions of praise and rejoicing. The Psalms have been used by the people of God in the OT and the NT age. The Psalter is quoted more in the NT than any other OT book.

The Psalms also are a guide for prayer. They will lead in in areas of prayer that we may never go to on our own. There is honesty and emotion in the Psalms that we may find hard to express in our own words, but the Psalmist often captures how we feel. Such is the case with Psalm 6.

But first a quote from Martin Luther:

“Whoever prays the Psalms earnestly and regularly will soon stop those other light and personal little devotional prayers and say: Ah, there is not the juice, the strength, the passion, the fire which I find in the Psalms.”

PSALM 6

Prayer for Mercy in Time of Trouble.

For the choir director; with stringed instruments, upon an eight-string lyre. A Psalm of David.

1 O Yahweh, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your wrath.

2 Be gracious to me, Yahweh, for I am pining away;

Heal me, Yahweh, for my bones are dismayed.

3 And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, Yahweh—how long?

4 Return, Yahweh, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness.

5 For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?

6 I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears.

7 My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries.

8 Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, For Yahweh has heard the voice of my weeping.

9 Yahweh has heard my supplication, Yahweh receives my prayer.

10 All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed;

They shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.

THIS WAS MEANT TO BE SUNG – catchy words, right? This is NOT an upbeat Psalm that we learn at VBS.

You don’t find many needlepoint pillows or wall hangings with these verses on them.

v. 1-3 David is in some sort of mess but it’s not clear why.

Is he being chastened by God or does he merely think he is?

He is seeking God’s mercy in a time when he is weak and trembling – v. 2

Is this physical, metaphorical, or psych-somatic? WE DON’T KNOW.

There is a combination of physical weariness v 6-7 and emotional exhaustion and fear.

For some reason, David appears to be conscience struck; he feels God's displeasure and takes the blame on himself. No specific sin is mentioned or referenced in the text, but if we're honest we may often feel this way. In one sense that is valid. If we really know our own hearts, we will see that God would have reason to be displeased with us.

BUT, if we really know God's grace, we know that in Christ there is NO CONDEMNATION, even if there is conviction of sin.

Ps 32:

1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!

2 How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

1 Jn 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us from all our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

V 2-3 – David is in the midst of all of this despair because God doesn't seem to be watching or He doesn't seem to care.

David mentions his 'bones' and his 'soul' - likely a way of indicating that he is suffering in his whole person.

HOW LONG???

David has cried uncle; he has tapped out and God has still not let up. HOW LONG???

"I can't go on anymore. I've thrown in the towel. Let's all go to our mutual corners."

In the center of this is the sense of having lost the smile of God. Where do you go when you think that God is angry with you, and you need grace?

You go to the only place where you can find grace. You go to God, to Yahweh, THE God of covenant steadfast love.

David knows by experience or simply by faith that while Yahweh may strike, he also heals- Isa 19:22

22 Yahweh will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to Yahweh, and He will respond to them and will heal them.

David, a man after God's own heart, had a living relationship with God. As you read the Psalms you get a sense of the give and take and honesty with which he approaches God.

Do it surprise you? Does it shock you?

Have you ever felt this way? If we're honest, we've probably felt this way more than we've felt like Psalm 34:1

"I will bless Yahweh at ALL TIMES; His praise shall CONTINUALLY be in my mouth."

v. 4 The Basis of David's plea

David actually brings an argument to God as he seeks to make a case based on the character of God Himself
chesed of God = steadfast love, covenantal love

Ex 34:6 Then Yahweh passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "Yahweh, Yahweh, God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

2 Sam 22:51 He is a tower of deliverance to His king, And shows lovingkindness to His anointed, To David and his descendants forever."

David appeals to God's promises and to His character that is behind the promises.

God's 'hesed' is His promise to never let us go.

Ps 13 echoes some themes of Psalm 6 such as:

“How Long?” “How long will my enemies be exalted over me?” “How long will you hide your face from me?”

It also echoes his confidence in the character of God:

5 But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness;

My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD,

Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

EX: story of Teddy Roosevelt Jr – he served in WWI and came back to fight in WWII. On the eve of D-Day (78th anniv was June 6th) TR Jr. asked Eisenhower if he could be in the landing assault group. He was 57 and limited by arthritis.

When asked why he wanted to hit Utah Beach. What was his argument? ‘My men expect it of me. I’m the son of Theodore Roosevelt.’ One could paraphrase: ‘I have to—it’s who I am; it’s part of my character.’ -Davis, Dale Ralph . Way of the Righteous in the Muck of Life .

It is God’s character to express his “hesed”, his lovingkindness. David knows this and he leads with that in his request.

**** Your prayer life will be enriched or diminished depending on your knowledge of the nature and character of God. DOCTRINE DOES MATTER, even, or especially in prayer.**

The character of God is a basis for prayer and for solidity in our lives. To this end Psalm 90:14 teaches us, **“O satisfy us in the morning with they lovingkindness, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.**

v.5 An appeal from the heart

“I can’t praise you if I’m dead.”

This is a small window into the soul of David. He sees that a key reason for living is to PRAISE God.

He was a shepherd, a warrior, a king, and a Psalmist, but his main purpose for being alive was to “Bless the Lord at all times”.

Do we see our lives in this way? Are we focused on praising God with our lives and our lips or are we here to make a good living, get comfortable in old age, be admired as a servant of Christ, advance in our careers, excel in our activities, etc?

*** Don’t underestimate the value of sitting or standing next to others while lifting up songs of praise to God. We live in a culture that is obsessed with being ‘our authentic selves’. Well, Christian, you’re most authentic self was made to love and praise God with your heart, soul, mind, strength, and voice.

“Make a joyful noise” is not a command as much as an overflow of a heart that is intent of giving God the praise of which He alone is worthy.

WCFSC – What is the chief end of man?

To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Forever starts here and now in this life.

AW Tozer: “Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that majesty which philosophers call the First Cause but which we call Our Father Which Art in Heaven.”

One might say to David, “you **can** still worship God when you’re dead. You will join the cloud of heavenly witnesses around the throne.”

True, but David is pointing out that the purpose of BEING ALIVE is to praise God. Believers who have died share in the praise of the saints and angels for sure, but we don't see that. There is a glory that is displayed when we in THIS LIFE learn to praise God above all else. We all worship and glorify something or someone everyday in what we do and say. The question is, "Who is the focus or object of our praise?"

EX: If a panel of six strangers were to watch a video of your life and secret thoughts during the 6 days and 22 hours that you are NOT in church, what would they conclude about the object of your worship? If they only had tape of the 1-2 hours you are IN CHURCH what would they conclude?

The value and priority of praise does NOT eliminate the reality of lament. **In the psalms we see the worship of lament – the honest cry of the soul that is turned toward God.**

While God is worthy of our praise, He is also worthy of our honesty. The Christian life is not all peaches and cream. There is a reason that Jesus said, "Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The church age does have a clearer understanding of our hope in Christ, but this is not an age void of suffering and lament.

Deep sorrow is as much a part of the spiritual world today as it was in the time of David. When you feel this way, you are in good company with David, a man after God's own heart.

v. 6-7 An appeal to God's heart for the miserable

The Psalmist doesn't need to inform God of his condition, but he knows that God extends compassion in the face of the misery of His people.

Victor Hugo says, "The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves—say rather, loved in spite of ourselves."

That is God's "hesed" – His steadfast unconditional covenant love.

God's timing is not always in line with ours, hence the question, "How long?" but God is moved by our suffering.

This Psalm shows us that while prayer can be very emotional and honest, it can also be rational. The psalmist makes arguments based on the nature, character, and promises of God.

We don't need to be honest with God because He needs additional information.

Matt 6:8 – God knows what we need before we ask, so our prayer is not for His sake.

We need to be honest with God for OUR SAKE.

Sometimes it is when we push ourselves to make our case before God, we realize that our case is really all about us and not God. What may seem like a legit request in our heads doesn't sound so legit when we actually hear ourselves verbalize our case before God. And sometimes we will be encouraged to continue because our honest cry is coming from a God centered heart.

v. 8-10 David's confidence

The text does not indicate that David saw an immediate vindication or deliverance, but that is not really the point. It will come at some time.

David puts his confidence in knowing that Yahweh "hears" his prayers and knows the voice of his weeping sons and daughters. Simply knowing that the Lord hears is cause for rejoicing. The darkness is lifted.

1 Pet 5: 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Prayer is an act of humbling ourselves before God.

VoV – God THE ALL

I rejoice to think that all things are at thy disposal,

and it delights me to leave them there.
Then lament turns wholly into praise,
and all I can do is to adore and bless thee

The holy spirit speaks groaning and weeping and he “translates’ our prayers, as it were, to God who hears and receives them.

This is consolation for OUR souls as well. God hears the weeping of His people. Jesus wept in the face of the death of Lazarus and the sorrow of his family. He wept over Jerusalem for her spiritual blindness.

Given the world in which we live, we don’t need less lament, we need more. As we see the “Pride” that our culture takes in sin, we should lament its impact in the lives of families and especially children.

The same God who heard the voice of David weeping is the same Good shepherd who knows His sheep. He is the same God who invites us to come and cast our burden on Him because He cares for us.

David doesn’t say that his circumstances automatically change, but confidence is in knowing that Yahweh has heard his supplication.

Prayer doesn't change things, but prayer lays hold of God who changes things and who, in prayer, changes you. Dr. Dale Ralph Davis . Way of the Righteous in the Muck of Life .

HE IS THE SAME God WHO HEARD THE CRIES OF Jesus ON THE CROSS.

And why shouldn't he? For he has given them a Savior, who, in the days of his flesh ‘offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears’ (Heb. 5:7)—and he was heard.

Davis, Dale Ralph . Way of the Righteous in the Muck of Life

The Jesus lament—HIS prayer in the Garden

He agonized in prayer - “If there be any other way, but not my will but thy will be done.”

When we are pinning away, our eyes have wasted away with grief, and our souls are dismayed because we feel that God is absent or His rod of chastening has come, we would do well to hear these words from

...VoV Christian calling p. 91

Let me not overlook the hand that holds the rod,
as thou didst not let me forget the rod that fell
on Christ and drew me to him.

COME TO THE TABLE- it represents how the ultimate rod fell on Christ so that we might receive the blessing of fellowship with God.

This is a Table of worship, repentance, lament, remembrance, and celebration

This is the Table of God’s lovingkindness and covenant faithfulness, his “hesed”.

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