

Psalm 6

(For the Director with stringed instruments—according to Sheminith)

- 1 Lord, don't-- in your anger--rebuke me,
or do not—in your wrath--discipline me.
- 2 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for faint (am) I;
heal me, Lord, for shaking with terror are my bones.
- 3 My soul also is shaking with terror--greatly
but you, O Lord—how long?

- 4 Turn, O Lord, save my life/soul;
deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.
- 5 For not in death is there remembrance of you;
in Sheol who can give you praise?

- 6 I am weary with my moaning;
I flood--every night--my bed;
with my tears, my couch I drench.
- 7 Weak are--because of sorrow—my eyes;
they grow weak because of all my foes.

- 8 Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.
- 9 The Lord has heard my supplication;
My prayer He accepts.
- 10 All my enemies shall be very ashamed and struck with terror;
they shall turn back,
and be put to shame suddenly.

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Notes:

□ **Discipline and Judgment might feel the same sometimes, but they are NOT the same!**

- “The verbs "rebuke" (tokiheni) and "discipline" (teyassereni) are often synonymous. The "rebuke" of the Lord may be a form of judgment, but it may also be in the form of a lesson in life (Deut 4:36; 8:5; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 94:10; Prov 3:12). Eliphaz states the argument that the Lord delivers man from calamities even when he has inflicted them in the process of "maturation" (Job 5:17-26, esp. vv. 17-18).
- “The discipline of the Lord **may be so harsh that it seems that he is angry**. David prayed that the Lord would not discipline him in wrath. The position of the phrases "not ... in your anger ... or ... in your wrath" in the MT is emphatic, so as to emphasize that the psalmist is not suffering justly because of his sin. The discipline of the Lord is there! [EBCOT]
- “There is a chastisement which proceeds from **God's love** to the man as being pardoned and which is designed to purify or to prove him, and a chastisement which proceeds from God's wrath against the man as striving obstinately against, or as fallen away from, favour, and which satisfies **divine justice**. Ps. 94:12; 118:17, Prov. 3:11f. speak of this loving chastisement. [KD]
- “The verb "faint" (b-h-l) may express the process of withering of leaves, crops (grapes, olives, cf. Isa 24:7; Joel 1:10, 12)... Metaphorically it signifies the weakness of strong people and of fortifications (Isa 24:4; Jer 14:2; Lam 2:8). For the psalmist it shows how his vigor (spiritual, psychological, and physical) has been brought down.
- “In his introductory cry David pleaded that God would stop chastening him in His anger. In Hebrew the words *not . . . in Your anger* precede the words *rebuke me*, and “*not*” in *Your wrath* comes first in the second line. The forward position of these words emphasizes the manner of the chastening. If God's wrath against David were to continue, he could not survive. [BKC]

□ **His powerful appeal—to the responsibility of God!**

- “In his suffering, the nature of which is only intimated in vv. 8-10, David turned to Yahweh as if to say, "Father, my covenant faithful God." **He does not confess his sins** but asks the Lord to demonstrate his covenant promises: restoration (v. 2) and loyalty (v. 4). The discipline of the Lord appears to him as too severe. In a manner characteristic of the OT, he identifies suffering with judgment (reproof) and judgment with God's wrath (cf. 38:1-3). The OT describes vividly the terrible effects of God's wrath.
- “How long, Covenant God... can You let this go on and still be honored as a God faithful to His covenant promises??”

4 Turn, O Lord, save my life/soul;
deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.

5 For not in death is there remembrance of you;
in Sheol who can give you praise?

Notes:

□ **God may feel far away, but He's always there, waiting...**

“Gaining strength again, the psalmist returns to his plea and explicitly asks God to deliver him from his sickness. He begins the next stage in his prayer by saying “Return” (v 5), presumably implying that the state of sickness had been **an experience in which it seemed that God had deserted him**; now he asks for God to return. [WBC]

□ **“Deliver” is not your normal word for ‘save’ or ‘redeem’—it means “tear out / rescue”!**

□ **A good model of prayer: God's faithfulness and God's heart for reaching others...**

- “Deliverance was requested on the basis of God's “lovingkindness” or **covenant love** (חסד), and the request is entirely appropriate. Just as Israel as a nation received God's love in covenant in, and after, the great deliverance from Egypt, so too each member of the covenant community could request the continuing experience of God's lovingkindness in the act of divine deliverance. [WBC]
- “In his earnest prayer for deliverance, David gave **two reasons** why God should answer. One is that the Lord should rescue him because of **His unfailing love**. God had shown Himself again

and again to be abundant in loyal love (chesed), so David pleaded for deliverance on the basis of God's character. 6:5. David said the **second reason** the Lord should turn to him is because of the absence of praises (tôdah) in the grave. If he died because of his illness, he then could not praise God for delivering him from it. So David reasoned that if **God desired someone to stand in the sanctuary** and proclaim that God delivered him, then God would have to do so. [BKC]

- ❑ **The psalmist argued from the importance of God's message of salvation being heard by the living—the dead don't get up and tell people about how God delivered them!**

“What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise Thee? Will it declare Thy faithfulness?(Ps 30:9).

*Do you show your wonders to the dead? Do their spirits **rise up** and praise you? Is your love declared in the grave, your faithfulness in Destruction?(Ps 88:10-11).*

*The dead do not praise the Lord, Nor do any who go down into silence; But **as for us, we will** bless the Lord, From this time forth and forever. (Ps 115:17).*

“The word “memory” does not refer to the abstract possibility of remembering God in Sheol, but rather to the **role of memory in the worship and praise of God**. It was memory which evoked the praise of God, for the memory of what God had done for the living was a basis for the living to both praise God and to go on living within the perspective of a good memory [WBC]

6 I am weary with my moaning;
I flood--every night--my bed;
with my tears, my couch I drench.
7 Weak are--because of sorrow—my eyes;
they grow weak because of all my foes.

Notes:

- ❑ “Israelite beds. The poetical metaphor of crying on one's bed is also found in Ugaritic literature: “His tears are poured forth like shekels upon the ground, like pieces-of-five upon the bed.” Beds in ancient Israel were most likely like those represented iconographically in the Near East. They were in essence **reclining couches** and high beds. The poor probably slept on flat mats on the floor, while the average person used a cot. [BBC]
- ❑ “The psalmist's sickness had created both exhaustion and insomnia. “I soak my bed” (v 7); the literal sense is that he caused his bed to swim, or float, so profuse were his tears. The insomnia was the result partly of the pain accompanying sickness, and partly of the spiritual anguish and sense of separation from God which resulted from that pain. **As for most sufferers, it was in the long**

watches of the night, when silence and loneliness increase and the warmth of human companionship is absent, that the pain and the grief reached their darkest point... But the psalmist's eye had faded before its time, partly as a result of the grief stemming from his sickness, and partly because of "enemies" (v 8). The reference to enemies may be the result of a common experience of the sick in ancient Israel; many persons believed that the sick were sinners, being judged by God, so that even a sick man's friends might become enemies. Such was apparently the experience of Job (30:1–15). The tragedy of enmity in a time of sickness is that it compounds the pain, for the person who is ill needs friendship, not enmity, and his diseased condition undermines that robustness of character which may simply shoulder the experience of enmity and bear it as an inevitable part of the experience of living. **The psalmist has no such spiritual and emotional reserves; he has reached rock bottom.** [WBC]

- 8 Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.
- 9 The Lord has heard my supplication;
My prayer He accepts.
- 10 All my enemies shall be very ashamed and struck with terror;
they shall turn back,
and be put to shame suddenly.

Notes:

☐ **His trust in the Lord breaks through the discouragement, emptiness, and confusion:**

- “These verses mark a **radical change in tone**. Instead of the lament there is a **renewal of strength** by which the psalmist proclaims to the enemies that the Lord has been victorious in him and that, consequently, they need to prepare themselves for God's vindication of him. The **transition from lament to a note of victory** is not unknown in the Psalms (cf. 20:6; 22:22; 28:6; 31:19; 56:10; 69:30; 140:13).
- “In the concluding verse, the **process of liberation can be seen**. Whereas at the beginning, both his body and his soul had been “exceedingly disturbed” (vv 3–4), now the psalmist perceives that his enemies would be “exceedingly disturbed” (the same terminology is employed in v 11). And whereas early in his prayer, he had asked God to “return” to him (using the root שׁוּב), now he perceives that his enemies would “turn back” or “return” (v 11b; the same verb is used). In his newfound confidence, **he perceives not only that God will answer his own prayer, but also that his malicious enemies would find their sin boomeranging upon themselves.** [WBC]

☐ **God answers a desperate David and rolls the external threats back onto the enemies**

- “Through prayer David’s terror (1–3) becomes his enemies’ terror (10) dismayed, lit. ‘terrified’, as (2, 3); the return of the Lord in answer to prayer (4, 5) is the signal for the enemies to go (8, 9); **when he was weak (6, 7) David found that he was strong.** [New Bible Commentary]
- “The Lord has come to the rescue of his servant. He has heard his child crying for favor. He will now deal with the enemies who "do evil" (v. 8; see 5:6) by **bringing on their heads the terrible fate they brought on David: shame, agony, and sudden disgrace.**

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“Well might David feel that the Lord had turned away from him in anger (4)! But the greatest of all perils yields to the simplest of all remedies: the cry be merciful (2) brings assurance, the Lord has heard my cry for mercy (9). If the greatest need is dispelled by prayer, then will not lesser needs be met in the same way (10)? Through prayer David’s terror (1–3) becomes his enemies’ terror (10) dismayed, lit. ‘terrified’, as (2, 3); the return of the Lord in answer to prayer (4, 5) is the signal for the enemies to go (8, 9); when he was weak (6, 7) David found that he was strong. [New Bible Commentary]

Observations:

- The problem of the Gap again...
- Some difficult situations have nothing to do with our sin...
- This was a pretty deep place to come out of
- Honesty with God—always in a healthy relationship
- God’s anger versus grief (New Covenant dynamics)