

PSALM 6

(Reading: Luke 13:22-30)

Tears Go With Prayers!

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ...

The psalms express all the tangents of human life.

In these 150 separate pieces of inspired poetry there lies every facet of human experience.

For these are all prayers!

We see that quite clearly with our text.

The emotions in Psalm 6 tell us of David in a very dark place.

We may much rather like the way Psalm 5 goes, however.

That has a positive start to a new day.

It certainly doesn't look back upon a sleepless, tearful night, as Psalm 6 does.

But just as much as Psalm 5 in looking expectantly to the Lord's guidance and blessing is a prayer, so Psalm 6 in its anguish and intense sorrow is a prayer also.

For here is where you are before the Lord!

David represents us when our lives are exactly like this.

You see, prayer is talking to God.

In the closest relationship of all - the one relationship that matters above all - prayer is **the** communication.

In the words of James Montgomery, prayer is "the Christian's native air."

Without it we cannot breath.

For if we don't pray we aren't truly alive.

So, friend, this psalm may be exactly the prayer you need.

Because you, like David here, are in a terrible despair.

Things are not as they should be.

And so, in the words of the first aspect to this psalm, you cry out, **HOW MUCH DON'T I NEED YOU!**

To say David's conscience here is uneasy is describing the situation delicately.

He's really in an awful way!

The first five verses spell this out for us.

By beginning with calling out to the God of the covenant, YAHWEH, David expresses how personal this is.

For it's God's anger and God's wrath which stand out in verse 1. David knows he's in for it, because he's gone against God. There's no getting out of this!

Pleading not to be rebuked and not to be disciplined is coming clean about what he's done.

Because he deserves to be rebuked and to be disciplined.

In fact, in a way he's already being punished.

Verses 2 and 3 bring out that he is faint, his bones are in agony, and his soul is in anguish.

There's no getting away from this.
So what can he do?

Well, what would you do?

You have been there.

You have felt God's hand heavy upon you.
Which is the way you have to go?

There is only one way.

And that's down on our knees.

We can only plead upon God's loving kindness and tender mercy.

You see, this is a time when God's love is hidden from you.

God's wrath is wearing you down.

It's the suffering beyond all other sufferings.

Isn't it?

I mean, haven't you felt that when you've found yourself apart from the Lord?

Because this is not only telling of a time when you need to pray, it's especially asking of you if you do truly pray.

For while David here has obviously sinned badly, it's what he does in response to that sin which shows what he is within.

And what is that response?

Well, his reaction isn't denial.

He doesn't reciprocate by blaming the other party involved.
He cops it fair on the chin.

Friend, you know what you're like when you sin.

You certainly have seen what other Christians have done when they sin.

And while we cannot be the ones to judge doesn't it seem that so-called Christians can actually become more self-justified after they've sinned?

Looking at them then you don't see any sense of contrition or genuine remorse.

It's more like it was just bad luck they got caught.

Or there's that strong defence of what they did.

When believers are like that they're not crying out with verse 3, "How long, O LORD, how long?," because it's weighing so heavy upon them.

And they're definitely not pleading with the words of verse 4, "Turn, O LORD, and deliver me."

For they don't need the God's unfailing love.

They haven't failed!

Is that also you?

In those times your conscience really condemned you, when your heart burned within you, did you shove it all into some obscure recess in the back of your heart?

And, then, when you did it again and again and again, did it get to the point it never bugged you anymore?

You can dull your conscience.

But don't think that God ever lets you get away with it.

Jonah couldn't get away from the Lord's will and neither can you.

Psalm 139 captures this so graphically.

It says in verses 7 and 8, "Where can I go from your Spirit?

"Where can I flee from your presence?

"If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there."

Friend, Psalm 6 is the prayer you pray when you're stuck.

This is the prayer you pray when all you can do is pray.

That's why this prayer can only be the believer's prayer.

Now, verse 5 can throw us a bit here.

It says, "No one remembers you when he is dead.

"Who praises you from the grave?"

So we might think David's gone a little askew.

Of course we'll know God when we're dead.

After our physical life has gone here, there's the spiritual life we have straight away with the Lord in heaven.

But we must not forget the context here.

There has come about this block between the believer and his God.

The Christian here is not right with the Lord.

And that affects his worship and service to God here.

The word “remembers” parallels with “praise”.

This is about recounting God’s great deeds in an act of worship.

Have you ever wondered why Sunday morning’s worship service begins with a confession of sin?

This is the reason.

For before we can properly worship Him we must be right with Him.

Sin blocks that.

It stops the openness between the Lord and His people without which worship can never happen.

So that sin has to go.

We must confess it and renounce it.

It’s that sin which has blocked up the way here.

David is scared he’ll die not worshipping God.

This is the same thought Jesus spoke of in John 9 verse 4.

He said there, “As long as it is day we must do the work of him who sent me.

“Night is coming, when no one can work.”

So this is no denial of God’s sovereignty beyond the grave.

In fact, in Proverbs 15 verse 11 He says that the grave lies open before Him.

And earlier, in Psalm 139 verse 8, we heard how He is there in that place of death.

You see, when verse 5 says that the Lord no longer remembers the dead it’s not that He forgets as men forget.

Rather, this is about how He brings an end to His saving interventions.

As Psalm 88 verse 12 says, “Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?”

All of this means that David is in a lot of trouble.

He has recognised how much he needs his Saviour God.

So much so, in the verses 6 and 7, he comes to the point in his prayer where he cries out, IT’S ALL TOO MUCH FOR ME!

This is our second aspect to this prayer.

For here is a situation of such hopelessness that it brings bitter sorrow.

In fact, this is one time in a believer’s life when joy is the forgotten word.

It is no surprise that a number of commentators believe this psalm relates to David’s adultery with Bathsheba and his subsequent murder of her husband.

That would be such a situation as verses 6 and 7 describe.

Derek Kidner says of this: “Depression and exhaustion as complete as this are way beyond self-help or good advice.

“Even prayer has died away.”

It took Nathan the prophet to boldly confront David over his sin with Bathsheba.

It took another man, sent by God, to save David from himself.

That’s what we read of in 2nd Samuel chapter 12.

And isn’t that what you’ve experienced to, dear believer?

Didn’t the Lord act when that brother or sister took you aside and told you off?

Because that’s what it was.

It was a fair call.

And much as you may have personally felt hurt at the time, it was right on the button!

While it might seem that the groaning and weeping and tears of verse 6 are part of his repentance, they actually show that he hasn’t come clean.

He’s not right with God so things aren’t going right for him.

Just as in the same way you’ll have all kind of hassles and difficulties and fears when you’re apart from God.

Not necessarily the groaning and weeping.

But you know things aren’t well.

Even if business couldn’t be better.

And also if everything else seems to be going okay, too.

The soul is not well, though.

That’s what the “eyes” in verse 7 point us to.

For here the “eyes” are the windows to the soul.

This shows up what you’re really like underneath!

Friend, you can’t run away from God.

He won’t leave you at peace.

And neither will the devil either.

Verse 7 ends being quite clear about that.

For those foes who would have stirred up David before to serve the Lord even harder now drag him further down.

It’s almost like they’re jackals moving in for the kill.

They can smell his weakness.

As Job 18 verse 7 describes it, “The vigour of his step is weakened; his own schemes throw him down.”

They're circling around him.

Closer and closer they come.

Satan and his henchmen are ready to pounce.

They're on the move.

They come in ever decreasing rings around you.

Their eyes are constantly looking for that opportunity.

Only a matter of time now.

They're coming in for the kill.

But wait!

The Lord's there!

They're suddenly nowhere!

They've gone!

And doesn't the prayer change?

For now, in the third place, David says, I KNOW YOU HEAR MY
PRAYER!

Verse 8 turns it all right around!

Before his prayer even ends the divine light and comfort is in his heart.

You see David's face suddenly beaming.

His eyes are bright!

There is fire in his belly.

"Away from me, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my weeping."

He has come clean and knows he's determined to keep it clean.

For what do we see happening?

He attacks the sin!

He puts as greater distance as he can between himself and
it.

How do you know if the Lord's heard your prayer when you're down and out?

Look at how you come out.

See if that sincere sorrow becomes your action.

Words become deeds.

Charles Spurgeon says, "Repentance is a practical thing.

"It is not enough to bemoan the desecration of the temple of the heart, we must scourge out the buyers and sellers, and overturn the tables of the money changers.

"A pardoned sinner will hate the sins which cost the Saviour his blood."

There are those Christians who go on denying their sin.

They are so right in themselves it's clear they are wrong.

We fear for their eternal destination.
But there are also those Christians who do the exact opposite.
Because they never stop going on and on about their sin.
Each time you have fellowship with them it just seems like the last
time you met with them.
As much as the denying believer doesn't get out of his sin,
that Christian just can't get over his sin!

This is definitely not the spirit here.
David is most emphatic, "the LORD **has heard** my weeping."

In case you missed it, you get to hear that twice more!
"The LORD has heard my weeping ... the LORD has heard my cry for
mercy ... the LORD accepts my prayer."
Do you get it?

From being a slave to sin the believer is now the king over sin.
With David he declares, "All my enemies be ashamed and dismayed; they
will turn back in sudden disgrace."

For what are these words of verse 10?
Look at them.
How do they sound?
Or should I say, what are they the exact opposite of?

Have you noticed?
It's no benediction is it?
Indeed, it's a damning.
In contrast to what the Lord leaves with His people - the
blessing - here there's cursing.

This is what we read in Luke 13 verse 27.
The Lord Jesus there speaks of His judgment of those who don't believe.
As Kidner notes of Psalm 6's ending, "This is not merely a hard-
pressed sufferer rounding on his tormentors, but a sovereign asserting his power to purge
his realm of mischief-makers, as his kingly vow demanded.
"He speaks in faith: the victory is yet to come, but he
already knows that he's answered."

It's an impressive close to any prayer.
But especially don't we hear it here!
The tables are turned and look who does it!

Believer, what a song!
No ordinary man could write music like this.
But ordinary men can certainly sing like this!

Let's do that!

Let's sing, "Hallelujah!
"Praise the Lord!"
Amen.

PRAYER:

Let's pray...

O Lord Jesus, what a victory You have won!
How you have turned everything on its head.
And especially how much haven't You decisively defeated the evil
one!

For we are forgiven.

And now we may live ruling in Your Name.
O please help us to so go forth looking to You in all we do.
Amen.