

## Psalms: The Songs of the People of God

### Psalm 6: A Psalm of Anguish

Sunday, April 22, 2018

#### Introduction

John Calvin rightly said *the Psalms are an anatomy of all the parts of the soul*. It's true, the Psalms speak to times of joy, and times of pain; times of great gain and times of deep loss.

In Psalm 6 David addresses a dark season of the soul. It has been called a Psalm of Lament and tells of a season of suffering and deep anguish.

As we consider Psalm 6 two things become very clear: Suffering is real and can be intense, and God is near and can be trusted in our times of pain.

#### The Reason for the Suffering

It is unclear what kind of suffering David is enduring or what caused his suffering. While it is possible that David is suffering because of his sin, the Psalm does not make this clear. While he asks God to withhold anger and show mercy (vs. 1) this is an appropriate request in any season. We are all sinners who deserve God's wrath and we are all in need of constant mercy.

#### The Severity of the Suffering

A large part of the Psalm is spent with David describing his suffering. While we don't need to be convinced that life is hard, it can be encouraging to be reminded that our suffering is not unique. David was called *a man after God's own heart* and yet he suffered deeply.

- **Frail and weak**– In verse 2 David says that he is languishing. This word can be understood as weak and unable to stand. David asks for the mercy of God because he doesn't feel like he can go on.
- **Shaken in his entire being** – David says that he is troubled (shaken) in his bones, which is to say that he feels his suffering to the core of his person. This trouble also extends to his soul. Both physically and emotionally he feels this deep pain.
- **How long?** – As David tells of his pain he inserts this incomplete thought, a seeming sigh of exhaustion, *how long?* David's pain is so deep and so pronounced that he's not sure how long he endure.
- **Sleep replaced by weeping** - When life is crushing the nights can be the hardest. During the day we may have some distractions, but at night we are alone and the thoughts keep coming. David says that his sleep has been replaced by weeping. No rest for the weary.

- **Failing eyes** – It has been said that our eyes reveal the health of our soul. David's eyes are tired and failing from his intense weeping.

#### The Response to the Suffering

- **A Request for Mercy** – The first thing that David requests is God's mercy - not because he deserves mercy, but because He knows that God is kind and desires to show mercy to sinners.

As we consider this request there is an important reminder – none of us deserve good, we all deserve God's wrath. As we approach God we should always come to Him in humility and aware of our own position before Him (Luke 18:9-14). Even if we aren't aware of sin in our lives we should ask God to search our hearts (Psalm 139: 23-24).

- **A Request for Relief** – Five times in four verses David asks God to intervene. He asks for healing (physical and spiritual) and also for God to turn to him. Often in our suffering it seems as though God has turned His back on us, David asks God to turn toward him and deliver him.
- **The Basis for his Requests** – Although David is at his lowest his knowledge of God and his trust in God remains. He appeals to God based on His steadfast love (vs. 4). He knows that God is faithful to His promises – His love is sure (Psalm 136; Lamentations 3:16-26).

David also appeals to God's love for His own glory (vs. 5). He knows that God is jealous for the praise of His name and that if he is delivered he will remain in a position to praise God before others.

#### The Result of his Requests – An Answer to His Prayer

- While David speaks clearly about his suffering he also speaks clearly of God's deliverance. Three times in two verses he says that God has heard and answered.
- In this final section David speaks of his enemies. We don't know if these enemies are the cause of his suffering or if they contributed to it in some way, but David is confident that God will deal with them appropriately.

#### Conclusion:

- This Psalm is a stark reminder of the reality of suffering, but it is also a reassuring reminder that we have a God whom we can turn to in our darkest moments. He is good and merciful and He hears our prayers (Psalm 34).

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