

# Psalm 6

**Introduction** – You can't sleep. You can't quit crying. You groan at every turn in the day. You feel like your bones are crushed and that the situation can't get any darker. Your friends tell you that you are probably clinically depressed and need medical attention. There are many sources for depression, but there is one that is overlooked more often than not.

Many times we try to change our circumstances, thinking that such a change will produce joy, satisfaction, and contentment. If we could just be king, then our problems would go away (Note: this psalm is by a king). But often, what truly is eating at us is our own conscience - pricked by the Spirit of God to repent, to repudiate our desires and actions and to turn again to the Savior for forgiveness, efficacious discipline, and restoration in our covenant union in Christ. Depression is certainly not only due to sin. But unconfessed sin in the life of a believer will lead to depression – “*restore to me the joy of my salvation*” was David's prayer in Psalm 51. And like Psalm 51, Psalm 6 is one of what is known as the penitential psalms.

**Prayer in Distress** (vv1-7) – “*...for while they cry out that they are afflicted, scarcely one among a hundred looks to the Hand which strikes...*” – John Calvin. Spurgeon said that Calvin's favorite prayer was this, “*How long, O Lord?*” So if you find yourself with these emotions before the Lord or in similar circumstances, remember, you are in good company – David, Calvin, Spurgeon, and most importantly, your Lord and Savior (Heb 5:7, Luke 22:44). We learn from Jesus and his type, David, that the One to turn to is Jehovah.

**Good Discipline** (v1) – In David's case, it appears most likely that the issue is one of personal sin. He knows God is chastising him, and He longs for God to do so efficaciously and not out of wrath (Heb 12:11).

**Mercy** (vv2-3) – We are objects of mercy and grace (Eph 2:4-7). We should never pray for what we deserve, but rather for what God would graciously give. When we come together in corporate worship, it is never on the basis of God owing us anything, but rather at His summons to renew with us His covenant of grace. In His mercy, God often takes us much further in our trials than we think we deserve to go, further than we think we can handle – and this continues to show us our desperate condition for His grace at all times (1 Cor 10:12-13, 2 Cor 12:7-12). How long? Longer than we would usually prefer and usually far shorter than we fear.

**For Your Mercies' Sake** (v4) – God delights in mercy, for it glorifies His name, and so we petition God on the basis of His name being glorified (Psalm 25:11, 79:9, Jer 14:7-9). This is why our sins are forgiven: “*for His name's sake*” (1 John 2:12). We never can earn forgiveness, but Christ has vindicated the name of the Father through His death, and so our hope rests entirely on God and not ourselves.

**No Praise from the Grave** (v5) – David remains concerned about the glory of God and Sheol was a land of forgetfulness. He is not overlooking the final resurrection. His concern is for the earth to be a place of praise unto God, for that is man's purpose on earth (Psalm 67:1-3). “*Courtiers in the royal presence are most happy, but soldiers in the field are more useful...*” – M. Henry.

**Hitting Bottom** (vv6-7) – There are times in which the Lord, due to our own sin, or according to His secret counsels, allows us to come under tremendous grief. David, the giant-killing soldier, cannot sleep, cannot stop weeping, cannot find an end to his grief. Yet, even in these times, we must learn from him, as from Jesus, where he turns. The pain brought about by the Lord's discipline can last for days on end. But never forget that the pain brought about by the Lord's judgment upon the unsaved, regardless of the momentary pleasure of the sin, is everlasting. It is a loving Father who disciplines us in Christ. It is an angry God who pours out His wrath upon sinners found outside of Christ.

**Confidence in God** (vv8-10) – There are times where we pray, “Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy,” again and again. But God answers the prayers of sinners, and sometimes surprisingly swiftly. David's confidence is in the Lord and this is why he prays, even in the midst of great grief. And this psalm is given to us that we might sing it with faith as well. God is the great Deliverer.

**A Prophetic Cry** (v8) – Notice that now the prayer addresses the unbelieving enemies of God and David. As we pray this, we are turning to those not even here and declaring in the name of the Lord that they stop their unbelief, their shameful actions, and their attacks upon God's children. We can do this because God directs us to in this psalm, and because we know that God will vindicate us against all our enemies, sometimes in this life, but always in the Final Judgment.

**The Great Comedy** (v10) – God will vindicate His name and His people who are called by His name. He will render upon these enemies the very trouble they thought they could bring upon David. Jesus is crucified, and in His death the world is saved. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Nothing.

**And So** – David knows that he needs forgiveness and mercy. He humbly complains before God his own feelings in the midst of God's chastisement – He talks to God during the discipline. David knows that if he were to be chastised to the full extent, he would be crushed. But in all of this, he humbly cries to the Lord and God turns David's enemies away – again. Psalms of penitence are to be sung and they are not to be a dreary occupation. They are given to raise our hope in the living God even in the darkest nights of the soul. Pray them. Learn to sing them. Believe them. Believe on the Lord Jesus.