

Summer in the Psalms: Psalms 6

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[0:00] Amen. If you're a guest with us today, we have been walking through the Psalms this summer, and we find ourselves in Psalm chapter 6.

! And so if you have a copy of Scripture with you, I welcome you to open that to Psalm chapter 6. Also, there is a Bible in the pew in front of you, and if you turn to the middle of that Bible, you will find the Psalms, the book of Psalms.

Psalm chapter 6, I would like to read the psalm with you as we prepare to hear.

So let's listen to the whole psalm in one reading, and then we will get into the message. Psalm 6.

Oh, Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. Be gracious to me, oh Lord, for I am languishing.

[1:06] Heal me, oh Lord, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled, but you, oh Lord, how long? Turn, oh Lord, deliver my life.

Save me for the sake of your steadfast love. For in death there is no remembrance of you. In Sheol, who will give you praise? I am weary with my moaning.

Every night I flood my bed with tears. I drench my couch with my weeping. My eyes waste away because of grief. It grows weak because of all my foes.

Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea. The Lord accepts my prayer.

All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled. They shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment. If you have never filled a pillow with tears, not over physical pain or the circumstances that surround you, but over the brokenness of your own sin, in grief that you committed that sin, you probably will have a difficult time relating to David in this psalm.

[2:38] David is very weary. And he's weary over his sin. There is a pernicious heresy among Christians today that think that Christians are somehow absolved from feeling pain and that Christians do not face great heartache.

And if you're truly a Christian, you've never been crushed by your own humanity. However, I think the record of Scripture, or I don't think, I know the record of Scripture does not paint that picture. We in our humanity still sin and can be devastated by our own sin and brokenness before the Lord. This psalm introduces a new kind of psalm to us that we have not yet read.

There are seven psalms in the Psalter, in the book of Psalms, that are called penitential psalms.

Penitential comes from the same root word that we get, penitentiary, penitentiary, and it's a prison for people who convicted serious crimes.

And a penitentiary is supposed to be a place that makes a criminal feel bad for their crime and should solicit an expression of contrition and penitence for the crime against society that they have committed.

[4:09] Somehow, I think our penal system rarely produces that outcome, but that is the desired outcome rooted in the word penitentiary. A penitential psalm then expresses one's brokenness and one's contrition over wrongdoing.

That is what this psalm is doing. And this is what David is feeling and expressing. In this psalm, we see the affliction of David's soul.

He is repenting of doing wrong. Hmm. If you are in the category of Christian, though, and you think, well, I don't necessarily think I sin that deeply, you are going to have difficulty with this psalm.

This psalm expresses one's deepest regret, one's deepest trouble of one's soul. The psalmist deeply regrets his deepest trouble and is rooted mainly because of his own willful sin.

But what I love about this psalm is he ends with a psalm of knowing that God heard his cry. And so we'll end there, but if we're going to outline the sermon, there's going to be three points if you're

taking notes.

[5:40] And it's the process that David expresses and he's shepherding his own soul. And he... It's going to start with this.

We're going to see that David expresses the circumstance that he is in. It's going to move on to a prayer that he offers to the Lord. And then thirdly, the point will be the destination of his plea or the conclusion of his plea.

But let's first see this circumstance that David is in. I think we can see that the circumstance that he is in because in verse 2 he says, I am languishing, meaning I am very weak at this point.

He doesn't try to sell himself to the Lord as someone who he is not. And we, if we're not careful, we can be in a habit of trying to sell to others something we are not.

I think about a person in sales. They're trying to get a purchaser to buy their product. And perhaps they...

[6:49] If they think their product is not necessarily greater than any other product on the market, they still have to maybe think, well, then you can trust me. I am going to set myself apart from all of those other...

I will be there for you in this as a customer. And so someone may talk bigger or better or more relatable than they perhaps really are in the home.

We do this also on social media. We try to sell ourselves, if you will. I don't always eat like what I may portray. I may not travel to all those destinations that I always post.

I'm speaking hyperbolically. I don't... I may not always dress like that. I don't always go out with my makeup on. I don't always have those kinds of life experiences that I may portray on social media.

And so I try to sell myself as something that I'm truly not. David is not doing that here. He says flat out, verse 2, I am languishing. I am in a place of weakness.

[7:51] I am growing faint. And David testifies to this in Psalm 139. I believe this will be on the screen.

But Psalm 139, David says this. He writes this psalm. O Lord, you have searched me and know me. So why does he try to have to portray himself as something he isn't?

The Lord knows him. He searches him and knows him. He already knows this about the Lord and himself. And then verse 2, You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my paths and my lying down. You are acquainted with all my ways. There's no deceiving you, Lord. I can be fully known to you and I'm sharing with you. I am languishing.

This is how David says. And in Psalm 139, what is he doing? He says, Lord, you know the thoughts before I think them. You knew my ways before I even moved. You knew my fatigue even before I lay down.

[8:49] And you knew the words before they were even on my lips. You know me. And I can be honest with you. I'm languishing. And ultimately, his reason for languishing is his sin.

But also, there are some people in the psalm that he references that are not helping. Not only is he broken from sin, but he also, he calls people, Depart from me, you workers of evil.

There are people harassing David who are workers of evil. So perhaps there's a whole host of reasons that David could be languishing. We know that earlier in an earlier psalm, there is the rebellion of his son Absalom.

And perhaps those in the kingdom have also turned on David and have joined forces with his son Absalom. No longer do they view him as the legitimate king, but there's his son who usurped the throne, Absalom.

Perhaps David is still languishing and stemming from his isolation that he went into hiding to get away from being killed. Perhaps it is still the consequences of Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah.

[10:02] The weight and the consequence of sin. And the death of his son. That weight of adultery, of murder, of sin.

The weight of public shame. It is weighing on David. He is saying, I am languishing. And it goes on. David goes further. He says, my bones are troubled.

He turns, not only, yes, I'm languishing, but even I can feel it in my bones. Not because of age or disease, but because of his sin.

My life is not what you desire, O Lord. And so in verse 3 he says, my soul is greatly troubled. Now he's turning internal.

My soul. Not only is it my physical bones, but my soul. The part of me that feels and thinks and wills and has desires. That very part of me, my life, it is troubled.

[11:05] Before God, he has been living a lie. Before God, he has been pretending. Before God and man, he has been deceiving. And he knows it. And he says, I am greatly troubled.

When a condition like this exists in all of us, our energy is sapped because we are living in rebellion against God.

Dark shadows move in on our faith. We remember a day when we were more bold and more courageous in the Lord, but now we can hardly speak of him. We knew a day when we were undoubtedly convinced of God's goodness, but now doubt is creeping in.

There comes when we're living in sin. There is a devotion turns into some kind of slavish dread. When duty is replaced, the motivation of delight.

So we think this way. Do I have to read my Bible? Do I have to pray? Do I have to go to church? And all of a sudden we feel more dutiful than devoted to the Lord out of delight.

[12:20] When these kinds of questions arise, watch out. Watch out. When your get to is replaced by have to's, watch out.

And David continues his circumstance. Verse 6, I am weary with my moaning. Weariness comes out of his moaning and groaning.

And this is David we're talking about. It's hard to see him like this. David is the one who prevailed against Goliath. David is the one who killed a lion and a bear to protect his sheep.

Notice with me in 1 Samuel. This is a little bit of a rabbit trail, by the way. But it's hard to see David like this. This is the David in 1 Samuel 17 is the David we want to see.

This is the David we remember so beautifully. This is David's response to Saul, King Saul. And when Saul is kind of basically communicating, you're a young boy.

[13:30] You're not a man of war. You're not fit to go after Goliath. And this is David's defense of what makes him qualified to take on Goliath before King Saul.

He says this, and David said to Saul, and this is the young boy David. Your servant is used to keeping sheep. This is what qualifies me, Saul.

This is David speaking. This is what qualifies me. Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion or a bear and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it, that is the lamb, out of his mouth.

For he arose against me, and I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like them. And he has defiled the armies of the living God.

That's the David who is now in this psalm saying, I am weary with my moanings.

[14:35] I am troubled in soul. It gets worse. Verse 7, his circumstance. He describes it this way.

My eyes waste away because of grief. And then in verse 6, he says, every night I flood my bed with tears. I drench my couch with my weeping.

David is suffering. And he is mostly describing it as private. It's on my bed. It's on my couch. I am weeping in the privacy of my home.

My eyes are flooded with tears. I am weak. I am curious how many perhaps even here today are in a season of suffering like that.

Where if we could peel back the curtains of your life and your home, we could see not everything is roses. And there is a troubling of one soul that you face.

[15:46] And so I want to help all of us. I'm going to give you two things that I do to try to draw someone out so that their struggle doesn't just remain private.

I always appreciate the second question that is the same question. So they can go like this. Hey, how are you? That how are you is more of a pleasant greeting that is superficial.

And it's expected with a like, I'm fine. I'm great. Thank you. And that's kind of the expectation. It's just a superficial greeting. It's a way we greet. But I always appreciate also the person who asks the same question twice.

Hey, Scott, how are you? Yeah, I'm great. Thanks. No, no, no. How are you? That's different. That's now someone saying, I actually care. And I'm inquiring of you.

And I was the glad recipient of someone doing this to me recently. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of meeting with Dottie Calvert in my office. And she asked, not, hey, how are you?

[16:46] She asked, hey, Scott, how are you doing? Second thing I want us to do, so ask the same question twice. Second, and now my secret will be out.

And you'll know. You're like, oh, here he does. He just did it to me. And from this point on, you'll know. But I state an observation, and then I ask a question. I will say something like this.

What's my observation? Hey, when you were speaking about that, I heard your voice kind of crack. Obviously, there's something behind this. That's my stated observation.

I heard your voice crack. Then I ask a question. Hey, if you would be willing to share, I'm willing to listen, and I'd love to know what lies behind that. You can do that by stating an observation.

Hey, I noticed there's some wetness in your tears, in your eyes, when you maybe talked about that. Can I? There's the observation, the question. Can I know what lies behind the tears?

[17:53] That's just a thoughtful way of not presuming you know anything, but you're saying, hey, I actually care about you. I want to know what is it behind those tears? What is it behind that voice that is shaking and cracking?

I wonder if anyone took the time with David to say, hey, brother, how are you doing? That's his circumstance.

Now we want to move on to a prayer that David, this is the second part, the prayer that David offers. We find the prayer in verse one.

Do not rebuke me, or oh Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. Notice that David does not say, do not discipline me.

There are two kinds of people that I thought of that say, don't discipline me. That is the fool and the scared son. David is neither the fool, nor is he a scared son of the father of God.

[18:55] He just says, don't rebuke me in this way with your anger, and don't discipline me in this way of your wrath. I deserve your discipline. I'm under your discipline.

I feel the weight of this discipline, but don't discipline me in that way. Discipline, scripture tells us that it is the evidence of fatherhood.

So discipline is painful in the moment, but purposeful in the long run. And David acknowledges he needs this discipline, but not in God's anger and not in God's wrath.

Every parent probably here knows of an occurrence when they may be disciplined their child in anger. But sometimes you discipline your children, I pray, in ways that are true and how scripture instructs a parent to discipline.

Where you say to your child, hey, I'm sorry that you did this, but therefore as a loving parent, I must discipline you. I am not angry with you. I'm not mad with you.

[20:03] I'm heartbroken over what you have done. And it saddens me to have to discipline you. But now I must administer that discipline. And I'm sure you say it just like that. But now I must administer this discipline.

But David is saying, God, please discipline me in that way. Not in your anger, not in your wrath, but discipline me in a way that is corrective, not out of condemnation.

Redeeming, reclaiming, rebuffeting, correcting. Lord, use the discipline that will save me. That's the kind of discipline I want. And David continues with his plea.

Lord, be gracious to me in verse two. Be gracious to me. He has an appeal to God and he has appeal to God's grace. Discipline me in a manner that is grace filled.

So in gracious kindness. And this is what the Lord does. Christ bore our sins so that you don't have to.

[21:09] Christ bore our punishment so that you don't have to. Christ bore your sin so that you don't have to. And Christ paid the penalty of sin so that you don't have to for all who believe in him.

Hmm. Why is that important? Notice what David did not say. He did not say.

David did say, be gracious to me. The only way I have of going forward with you, Lord, is by your grace. So you be gracious to me, Lord, please. Would you be gracious to me?

Notice what David could have done. That can be our habit if we're not careful. Lord, and to prove to you how broken and repentant I am.

And to earn your forgiveness, I am going to now do for you. And that is so contrary to the gospel. But it's been the habit of church history for a long time.

[22:18] Just for kicks, I did some research in the Catholic Church in the early, early ages. So this is around the third to the seventh century. They had categories where they would ask their parishioners.

So you would go to a priest. You would share your sin. And they would either absolve you of your sin somehow. Or you would do some form of penance. And the form of penance that you would pay dependent upon the grievousness of your sin.

And this is how the Catholic Church used to handle this. Again, this is historic. But if it was grievous, you would stand outside the doors of the church, in the rain and in the cold, dressed in ragged sackcloth, covered with ashes, and begging parishioners as they would enter to pray for you.

So can you imagine? I'm a deep sinner. I've told my priest. And so you stand outside, weeping, sackcloth, ashes, praying, asking people to pray for you.

And you're not allowed to come inside. For a lesser sin, some were allowed inside the church, like the foyer area, to listen to Bible readings and the sermon. But you were forced to leave before you could observe the Lord's Supper.

[23 : 33] Others were permitted inside the main nave, that's the main area where you would hear the sermon, and were required to remain prostrate or kneel, receiving specific prayers. So this, I'm sorry, you guys were just having to sit in the wrong section.

So then the priest would say a prayer over the deep sinners that were here today, and then they would be dismissed early. And so, because there's nothing like being called out.

And then others, if you were a lesser sinner, you were allowed to stay the entire mass, but banned from receiving the Lord's Supper. So you could all be here, but just not observe the Lord's Supper. But what, but notice, this is a form of penance, where we do something to earn God's grace. But David didn't say that.

He said, Lord, simply be gracious to me. I can do nothing to deserve your grace, and it is upon your grace that I desire to receive you.

[24 : 42] Please, Lord, be gracious to me. We are all poured in needy, and we are all in need of God's grace. Be gracious to me.

Be merciful to me, O Lord. Deliver me. Save me. In verse, why is this so important?

In verse six, we read two things. If it weren't for God's grace, and it weren't for God's mercy, and David's life, notice he says, in death, there would be no remembrance of you.

If I die, and I don't receive your grace, and I'm in my sin, then guess what? Then in death, I will not even remember you. I don't want that, Lord. And then he says, and in Sheol, who will give you praise?

If I end up in Sheol, who's going to give you praise there? I need your grace. Be gracious to me, Lord. I'm counting on that, because I don't want the alternative.

[25 : 44] For in death, there is no remembrance of you. And Sheol, who will give you praise? So notice, David in this psalm defines his circumstance.

David in this psalm shares his prayer. And then lastly, we're going to look at the destination of his plea. Where does he end up? But before we read where he ends up, in some ways, if I had known David at this time, I would say, he is not just down, he's out for the count.

He is like a boxer that lost a fight. He is knocked out, and there is no hope of him getting up. But somehow, David looks up.

And in verse 8 through 10, we see him looking up. Depart from me, all you workers of evil.

So there's those enemies that also are compounding his situation. And then we read where he looks up. For the Lord, in verse 8, has heard the sound of my weeping.

[26 : 54] The Lord has heard my plea. The Lord accepts my prayer. There are three phrases of David's plea that this psalm concludes with.

The Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. I've had the privilege of traveling to a few countries, and there is something interesting that I've noted, that one does not cry in French, or German, or Arabic, or English.

it all sounds the same. And the Lord has heard the sound of David's weeping.

And David is confident. Lord, I know you know all things. I know you see and hear all things. And I know and I have confidence that you have heard my weeping. I am weakened.

My soul is sick. I am troubled in soul. And you and I have filled my bed and my couch with tears, and you heard it.

[28 : 05] David is confident in the Lord noting his circumstance. That's the first part. The second thing that David notes is that you have heard my plea.

Well, what was the plea in this psalm that the Lord heard that David is confident? You heard that, Lord. I see two pleas in the psalm.

The first one is in verse 2 that we've already talked about. Be gracious to me. One of his pleas was, Lord, be gracious to me. And he is confident the Lord heard that plea.

Be gracious to me. I am languishing. Heal me. Heal my bones. My bones are troubled. David's appeal to God's grace for forgiveness and healing.

Penance was not necessary. Forgiveness in Christ is free. It is based upon his grace. It is unmerited favor. He's asking the Lord, and I'm confident, Lord, he heard me when I said my plea, be gracious to me.

[29:16] There's another plea. I see another plea in verse 4. Deliver my life. Save me for the sake of your steadfast love.

Deliver my life. Rescue me. Save me. Deliver my life. On the basis he was, what is the basis that he was requesting this salvation, if you will? Deliver me. Save my life.

And he says for this, for the sake of your steadfast love. I know I don't deserve being loved. The only thing I have done is sin against you.

I'm not worthy of being saved. I'm not worthy of being rescued. I'm not worthy of being delivered. I know that. But Lord, for the sake of your chesed love or your steadfast love, the kind of love where you commit yourself to loving me on the basis of your love, deliver me.

save me. On the basis of who you are and your kind of love, David is reminding God of the kind of love that he has committed himself to in loving his own.

[30:27] The third phrase that I see that David's plea that he concludes with is this, the Lord accepts my prayer. Look at David's confidence.

First one, the Lord heard the sound of my weeping. David knows that. He heard the sound of my plea. He heard my plea. Be gracious to me on your basis of your steadfast love.

Save me, Lord. And then the Lord, it's not that he just heard it. David is confident that he accepts his prayer. And the Lord accepted my prayer.

probably one of the most meaningful memorial services I have had the opportunity to officiate are for post-abortive women.

I have partnered with Path of Life Ministries. I know I have spoken of this in the past. But among the ministries or the services that Path of Life has is like a 12-week to 14-week process that ladies who are post-abortive go through to overcome the grief of the decision they've made.

[31:44] At the tail end of it of that process they have a memorial service for those ladies for the children that were unborn.

At the start of the evening I have the opportunity to meet with each of those ladies and they share with me their story.

Because I don't want to officiate a memorial service of people I don't really know and so I don't want it to be just this impersonal thing. And they have been gracious to me in sharing with me their story.

I will never forget that there was a woman in her 70s. And she says I've never even told my husband I've never told my children this decision I made when I was a teenager.

And she filled she told me of a time where she filled her pillow with tears. And the soul-wrenching nature of that.

[32:52] And she said Scott I should have gone to prison for murder. She was very honest. And she went on and on to tell me her story. And as I was studying this psalm I'm thinking of this woman she's in my mind because the very things that David is saying she was saying but this is the most beautiful part of it.

She said but now I have shared with my husband just through this process. I've shared with my children. I refuse to let shame adhere to me any longer. I know that I am forgiven and the Lord has heard my plea.

And I think and so there I am officiating this memorial service and she is in tears and she has her family there and they are all rejoicing over the forgiveness that she is now embracing and it was very moving.

And when I read this psalm I thought wow oh I want to be broken of my sin in that way but I also want to know God's forgiveness in the same way as well.

And so if you are here and you think well I am not I have not sinned grievously oh yes you have. If you are living a double standard in your home you too need to cry out to the Lord.

[34 : 19] If you live at home and your public life are altogether different you need to cry out to the Lord. If you are living a double life online you need to cry out to the Lord.

If you are playing fast and loose with sin you need to cry out to the Lord. If you have been hiding sin behind religious activity you need to cry out to the Lord.

If you have been harboring resentment and unforgiveness toward another you need to cry out to the Lord. If you have been concealing bitterness and resentment and jealousy and hatred behind a pleasant exterior you need to cry out to the Lord.

Have mercy on me oh Lord. if there has been an area of your life you have kept deliberately from the light of Christ confess your sin to a brother and sister and cry out to the Lord.

If you have been pretending to be spiritually healthy all the while your soul is growing cold you need to cry out to the Lord. If you have been privately excusing the very sin you publicly condemn you need to cry out to the Lord.

[35 : 26] the greatest danger is not that we sin every believer still battles in sin the greatest danger is when we begin to hide it protect it excuse it think you can manage it medicate it or worse yet make peace with it that's the danger so may we be a people that are broken over sin and go through this process that David does where he he cries out to the Lord he defines his circumstance truthfully he offers a prayer to the Lord to plea for God to be gracious to him and ask for his forgiveness but he also knows at the end of the psalm the Lord accepts my prayer he hears my plea he's heard the sound of my weeping and I pray that we all would have that same confidence as we pray to the Lord who is very gracious would you pray with me

Lord I thank you that you do hear the sound of our weeping over sin Lord I'm thankful that you have heard our pleas to you I'm so grateful that you accept our prayers so Lord I pray that we would be a people who are very contrite very broken over our sin we freely admit wrongdoing we say I am sorry please forgive me to one another but also to you that we would readily admit fault we would not when caught in sin and found out Lord I pray that we would be ready to admit it but I pray that it wouldn't take just being found out to confess sin but before you we would know

Lord I have sinned against you grievously would you please forgive me Lord I thank you that on the basis of your word and the basis of the cross we know it to be true you forgive Lord you are too gracious to us thank you so much we love you amen thank you so