

An Urgent Cry

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[0 : 00] Verse 6, Psalm 69, at the beginning of the psalm, the psalm of David, where he cries, Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold. I have come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me. So we're going to look at the first six verses of this psalm together this evening.

And God willing, over a period of time we'll go through the whole of the psalm, probably in four different sections. Do you ever feel a little perplexed in life?

Do you ever feel like you're a poor witness for the Lord? Maybe your behaviour among others leaves you feeling that you've let the Lord down. Do you ever feel guilty about how you've prayed to God?

Maybe you've prayed abruptly or in haste, maybe thinking you've used the wrong words. I'm sure these kinds of situations are situations where we've all found ourselves.

[1 : 12] But perhaps we feel at the time like the only one who has ever done it. We feel like we are the only ones to suffer this kind of guilt. We are the only ones to feel a failure in that way.

And it's in that situation so often that the devil comes in and has a field day with us to make us feel even more of a failure. Convincing us that we are a failure. That we're not right with God.

Maybe turning to Psalm 69 doesn't seem like the answer to that situation. A Psalm that as you read through it, as we've read the first 15 verses, you can get a sense of where David is at.

And you almost maybe think to yourself, what help is there in this for me? David is in a grim situation. There are enemies all around him.

They're hounding him. They're slandering him. They're mocking him. He himself feels overwhelmed by it all. Like he says in the opening verses, As the waters have come up to my neck, I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold.

[2 : 21] It seems like everything is overwhelming him. And in the midst of this, he's feeling a sense of guilt in his witness before others.

David feels like he's dishonoring God. How does he respond in this situation?

How should we respond in this situation ourselves? Well, there's many lessons for us as we come to look at this Psalm together. Psalm 69.

Because the Psalm reminds us of the reality of living in a world that's full of sin. Where we see the sins of others so much, we see and realize our own sin.

But also as we see in this Psalm, we see the greatness of God and the hope that that gives. Psalm 69 is one of the most quoted Psalms in the New Testament.

[3 : 22] Second only to Psalm 22. Psalm 22. We heard it preached on at our recent communion by the Reverend Ewan Dodds. And perhaps you've heard it mentioned in the way it's quoted in the New Testament so often as we think of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And hearing Psalm 69 as the second most quoted Psalm might be a... You wonder, well, how come we don't hear much about it? Or how realize that so much of it is in the New Testament and so much of it is pointing us to the life of Christ and the suffering of Christ.

If Psalm 22 speaks about the death of Christ, here in Psalm 69 we see so much of the life of Christ leading up to that point. It reminds us of the suffering of Christ.

You know, how low do you meet the angels who have hated me with Jesus Christ. What you see in Psalm 76, he has hated me with me with me with me with me with you with you? He's in Christ wanting me with me with you with me with me with me with you with me with me with you. V.J. He's now with me with me with me with you.

And the Lord i még i mehr is here with you in the ■■■! So, his Imocelyn am I in place of Christ! I really dont know, if you have sin we won't hear in Your moves! But the Lord has regrets, this■ic jer lalbert of Christ, there will be me with you with me with you with a cause." And that's the very situation that David is in here.

[5 : 02] He feels the world has hated him. And yet it's pointing us towards Jesus. Jesus who was without sin, yet hated by the world.

And we too, as we put our trust in the Lord, so often we'll find ourselves in that situation. Where the world will hate us. And what does David do in that situation?

What are we to do in that situation? We are to cry to God in our need. When you read a book, when you start reading a book, the temptation is so often just to flick to the end and see what the ending is.

Perhaps you're reading through a book and again and again you're tempted to flick to the end and just see what happens at the end of the story. But you try and just read through the story until you get to the end.

But I think it's worth us just reaching the end of this psalm before we go into it. Because the beginning of the psalm, it seems the situation is hopeless. But if we always take the end of the psalm with us as we go through each section of this psalm, it helps us to realise that there is hope in the midst of despair.

[6 : 20] So let's read the end of the psalm, verse 33. For the Lord hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.

Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah. And people shall dwell there and possess it.

The offspring of his servants shall inherit it. And those who love his name shall dwell in it. The end of the psalm shows us the end for David.

The end for the Lord's people is that security, that assurance that there is in Christ. Those who love his name shall dwell in it. The city that the Lord prepares.

So I think it's good for us to know the end of the psalm as we go into the beginning and work our way through it. And the first three things I want us to take from this psalm is first to see the situation that David is in.

[7 : 24] Secondly, to see how he pours himself out to the Lord. And then thirdly, just to see the kind of prayer that he has in this psalm.

Now what we see first of all in the situation in the psalm is that David doesn't immediately tell us what the difficulty is. He doesn't tell us what the situation is immediately.

He doesn't get into that straight away. We're first of all introduced into how David himself is feeling. And he's feeling overwhelmed. And as you read these opening verses, things seem chaotic, things seem disorganized.

What he's saying is not the way you would want to approach God. And yet this is how David is approaching him. And this is what helps us.

When we are feeling perplexed and overwhelmed and we feel we're a failure for the Lord, it helps us to come to the psalm or to the psalms.

[8 : 29] As Gordon prayed before, he mentioned in the psalms we so often see everything, warts and all. We see the reality of life. We see the difficulties of life.

We see how we're not always perfectly coming before God in beautifully formed prayers that seem to just flow eloquently. How often have you prayed and you just say, that seemed all over the place.

I just didn't have any structure there as I was praying. I just, my mind was going from one thing to another. I just felt overwhelmed by it all. Well, here's a reminder to us that even David himself had situations, many situations as you read through the psalms, where you find that his prayer wasn't polished and perfect.

And yet he's bringing everything to God. David here is saying exactly how he feels. He doesn't gloss over things. And the language is so strong.

It's so powerful. He's baffled by what's going on. He's baffled by what he's going through. And yet still he brings it all to God in prayer.

[9 : 41] And it's good for us to do likewise. It's great when we're able to still ourselves before God, to prepare ourselves quietly to come to him in prayer and spend that close time with God in prayer.

But just because we don't feel prepared, just because we're feeling harassed in life, just because our mind is so cluttered with anxieties and fears, isn't a reason not to come to prayer.

Imagine if David had said that. We wouldn't have this psalm. We wouldn't have so many of the other psalms where we see the reality of his prayers and the reality of life.

So it's great for us that that is what we see. Because in verse 1 to 3 here we see the situation is just overwhelming him.

Save me, O God, is his cry. For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire. It's similar to Psalm 65, verse 3.

[10 : 55] In the book of Psalms it says, I'm not sure it's a sing psalm of the Scottish soul, but it says, When we were overwhelmed by sin. When we were overwhelmed by sin.

It's the same kind of idea that we have here in Psalm 69. Because overwhelmed by sin there, it's when equities prevail against me, it says in the ESV here.

The idea there is of a flood coming over the person. A flood of sin just carrying that person away. We're seeing and we've heard in prayer as well the power of the storms that come our way.

We've heard the rain tonight. And we know that in other parts of the country we're getting it worse and there'll be flooding in different parts. They'll be overwhelmed by the floods that pour down.

And the damage, the destruction it causes. Well, this is a situation of sin as well. It brings nothing but devastation and destruction. And here David is knowing it in a personal way.

[11 : 58] The waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold. I have come into deep waters. The situation is overwhelming.

And again, we so often find ourselves in that. In that situation, he says in verse 3, I am weary with my crying out.

My throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. It's almost like he's pouring himself out in an abrupt manner before God.

It's not the way we would want to come to God. But it's the way we often do. And we can come to God in this way. Because God knows our every need.

So we're not introduced to the difficulty of the situation. Immediately, it's more his feeling in it and how he's feeling overwhelmed. But in verse 4, then he shows us what the situation is.

[13 : 02] More in number than the hairs on my head are those who hate me without cause. This is now coming into the situation of what's going on around him.

But David is saying, don't be afraid to bring your troubles before God, whatever they are. And that's the assurance for us to take everything to God in prayer, no matter what situation we're in.

Because that's the second thing we see here is his outpouring. In a situation that he finds himself in, we see his outpouring.

And in verse 7, which we'll come to again on another occasion, but see what it says there. For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face.

What is the reason that he has been hated? It is for your sake, he says. It is for God's sake.

[14 : 12] They hate him because of his identification with God. That he is one who loves God. That he is one who worships God.

Who lives for God. They mock him. They slander him. They hate him for this. Verse 4.

Those who hate me without cause. And as Jesus himself said, they will hate you because they have hated me before.

The world hates the Christian. The world hates God. And that's the situation that David is in here. And that's the situation that he's pouring himself out in.

He loves the Lord. But this is the situation that he's in. He's surrounded by trouble. He's surrounded by enemies. But David doesn't cry out first of all, Lord, look how evil these people are.

[15 : 15] He doesn't cry out immediately, deal with them. Instead, he says of himself. As you see in verse 5. He looks in his own heart.

Oh God, you know my folly. The wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. In this situation, it's easy for David to blame others and to look to others and say, God, deal with them.

And it's easy for ourselves to do that as well. To look on those who hate God and to say, Lord, deal with them. Have justice on them. But David starts here looking to himself.

And there's a great reminder to us here for ourselves too. We look first to ourselves. Because remember what this psalm is ultimately looking to is the suffering and the hatred that Jesus knew.

And that's so often what keeps us right. And what David is almost praying here is, Lord, don't let me fail you in the midst of everything that's going on.

[16 : 30] David confesses his own wrongs. How thoughtless he is in his life and the way he sins.

How deliberate he is in his sins. You know my folly. The wrongs I have done, they are not hidden from you. He may be being falsely accused of many things.

But he knows that they could come and accuse him of something that he has done wrong. And don't we all know that? We may be falsely accused ourselves in different ways.

But when we look at our hearts, we know too that there are things that people could say about us. And we've got no defense. Because we are all sinners. We all sin in different ways.

So we too are the same. We can pour out our hearts to God in this way. To God you know my folly. You know the wrongs I have done.

- [17 : 33] Because they are not hidden from you. But that is what brings us close to God. Because we recognize that when we come to God, he is the one who is able to forgive us our sins. Again, you look back in Psalm 65 verse 3. When the sins that overwhelmed me, it speaks to you atone for our transgressions.
- You forgive our sins. When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave us. And that's the focus of David here.
- He's pouring out his heart to God and saying, Don't let me fail you in the midst of everything that's going on here. And as you think of this Psalm applying it to Jesus, He didn't have to confess sin.
- Because he never sinned. He was without sin. We are not. But what he did was bear our sins.
- [18 : 47] And that's where we start. Not looking at others. But first of all, looking at ourselves. The folly of our hearts. The wrongs we have done. They're not hidden from you.
- But we bring them to God knowing that he is able to forgive. John in 1 John chapter 1 verse 9 says, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- So David is starting there, confessing his sin. And knowing that he is able to forgive our sin.
- And so there is what we are to do as well. To pour out our heart to God. To look at ourselves and know the sin in our heart. But know where we go with it.
- To the one who was hated first. They hated the Lord. They despised him. They rejected him. But he bore our sin on the cross.
- [19 : 54] He was sinless. But he came to bear our sin. And we thank God for that. And then you see, just thirdly and finally, the prayer that he is offering.
- The way he pours himself out to God. But then we just look, just for a moment, at the prayer that he is offering. He doesn't play down how deeply discouraged he is.
- How baffled he is by everything that's going on. But as we said, what he does is, he brings it to God. He is waiting on the Lord.
- Maybe impatiently, as we'll see as we go through the psalm. But in verse 3, he says, My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. He's crying out. He's waiting for an answer.
- But he's praying. And just look at how he prays. You see it more powerfully in verse 6. Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord God of hosts.
- [21 : 03] Let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel. His prayer is this.
- Lord, you know what I'm going through. You know my enemies. How they're mocking me. How they're accusing me falsely. But his prayer is, Lord, don't let me dishonor you.
- Don't let me keep anyone from coming to you because of the way I behave. And when you look at verse 6, you see that he's asking that this will be the case for those who are already hoping in the Lord and those who are seeking the Lord.
- Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me. Don't let the way I act. Don't let the way I speak.
- Don't let the way I deal with this situation. Don't let it put other believers away from you. Don't let them lose hope through me and my actions. And that is a great prayer for us.
- [22 : 15] Lord, don't let whatever I do in my life, whatever I say in my life, be any harm to any other Christian brother or sister. Guard me and help me to live my way in a way that that will not be.

But it's also this. Let not those who seek you be brought dishonor through me. And again, there's the harsh reality for us there when others are living in this town and around us and they see us and they think, well, if that's a Christian, I want nothing to do with it.

What a challenge for us there. Let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me. As witness to those who are seeking the Lord, Lord, don't let them turn away because of my actions, because of my behavior.

It's an unselfish prayer. It's looking to the concern for the people of God and to those who are seeking God that they would not be discouraged through him.

And it's a prayer that we should have every day. Every day we wake up and before we go out into the world, Lord, let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me.

[23 : 45] Let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me. Help me that my steps, my words, my actions would bring honor to you, would show others the grace of God.

And when I do fail, may it be that in my failures, I remember your mercy and continue to pray that people will still see their need of Christ through me.

It's a powerful prayer. And what David is showing us here is the importance of being near to God day after day, knowing the grace of God growing us, drawing us closer to himself day by day.

Even in the difficulties, even in our trials, even when we're feeling perplexed, baffled by what's going on around us or in us, that we'll be able to bring it all to God and know that he is with us.

Jim Packer in his book, *Your Father Loves You*, he says this, this is the ultimate reason from our standpoint why God fills our lives with troubles and perplexities of one sort or another.

[25 : 10] It is to ensure that we shall learn to hold him fast, the reason why the Bible spends so much of its time reiterating that God is a strong rock, a firm defense and a sure refuge and a help for the weak is that God spends so much of his time showing us that we are weak, both mentally and morally and dare not trust ourselves to find or follow the right road.

And he goes on to explain it in this way. When we walk along a clear road, feeling fine, and someone takes our arm to help us, likely we would impatiently shake him off.

But when we are caught in rough country in the dark, with a storm brewing and our strength spent, and someone takes our arm to help us, we would thankfully lean on him.

And God wants us to feel that our way through life, though rough and perplexing, is that we may learn to lean on him thankfully.

David is asking, what is the purpose in all of these things that are going on? What is the purpose when I feel overwhelmed by the waters?

[26 : 38] I feel I'm sinking in the mire. What is the purpose in it all? that I might be brought closer to you.

That I may rely on you. That I would be able to show your honor to others in faithfully walking close to you.

Jesus was hated without cause. And yet, as he went to the cross, it says at one point, he set his face towards Jerusalem.

He had that focus in what he was doing. As he was on the cross, he cried, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

They hated him without a cause. And yet he bore our sins. So for us, this psalm reminds us of the difficulties, the perplexities in life.

[27 : 44] But it assures us of the confidence we have in Christ. That he was hated before us. That he bore reproach for us.

And that we can lean and trust on him in every situation. God willing, we'll see more of this as we go through the psalm over the coming weeks.

But we pray that as we go on, even for the rest of this week, that that would be our prayer. Lord, let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me.

Let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me. That we would live close to and leaning upon the Lord. We'll conclude our time of worship now by singing to God's praise and singing.