



**Title: Story and Song – Psalm 6**

**Text: Psalm 6**

**Date: July 17, 2022**

**Main Idea:** When God's people bring their agony to Him, He hears.

## **Personal Study Guide**

---

**READ ENTIRE TEXTS: PSALM 6**

## **Highlight – What stands out?**

---

1. What words and phrases show how David is feeling?

2. Did Psalm 6 remind you of anywhere else in Scripture?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Is there anything shocking to you in this text? Anything surprising or new?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What else stood out to you in the text?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. There seems to be a turning point in this psalm. Where is it and what happens?

## **Explain – What does this mean?**

\*Note: These introductory notes to the psalms will help as you study these first 8 psalms this summer.

The psalms can generally be divided into 3 categories:

- Orientation: Telling you what life is supposed to be like
- Disorientation: Telling you what life is like
- Reorientation: Telling you what life will be like after deliverance (future or present)

There are also different genres of psalms:

- Lament – the life that is struggling

- Thanksgiving – the life that is delivered
- Praise/Hymn – the life that is content

1. Based on these explanations above, what kind of psalm is this one? How would you explain your answer?

2. The ESV Study Bible points out that Psalm 6 is an “individual lament” of David “that is often included in the ‘Penitential Psalms.’” The passage does not specify what is troubling David—it does not tell us why he says “rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath” in verse 1, but God’s anger is clearly on his mind. Read the following passages to remind yourself of the trials that David faced because of his failings before the Lord.

- 1 Chronicles 13
- 1 Chronicles 21:1-8, 14-18
- 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 14-27, 12:15-19
- 2 Samuel 12:1-14, 20-22

3. Again, Psalm 6 does not tell us *why* David is in agony, but in verse 4 he asks the Lord to deliver him from it. In that verse, what characteristic of God does David appeal to? Let’s look at examples of how this played out elsewhere in David’s life:

- 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-13
- 1 Samuel 18:8-11, 19:9-10
- 1 Samuel 23:25-28
- 2 Samuel 7:8-16
- 2 Samuel 23:1-5
- Psalm 5:7
- Psalm 13:5-6
- Psalm 58:9-10
- Psalm 89:19-24

4. By the end of the psalm, how does David feel about his request? What does he expect from God?

## **Apply – How does this change me?**

---

1. In this psalm of disorientation, meaning a psalm that talks about what life in this broken world is like, David cries out to God about his anguish. How does this compare to how you pray when you are deeply troubled?
2. Not only does David cry out to God with his true, deep emotions, he expects that God will accept his words and not turn him away. Do you feel like you can express your hardest feelings to God? Why or why not?
3. How can we be certain, like David, that God hears our prayers? The following passages may be helpful reminders:
  - Matthew 6:5-6
  - Luke 11:5-13
  - Romans 8:14-16, 26-28
  - Hebrews 4:14-16
  - Hebrews 5:7-10
  - 1 John 5:14-15
4. Hebrews 12:7 offers us comfort should we feel stricken like David because of our sin. What is that comfort?

## **Respond – What’s my next step?**

---

1. How can you grow in bringing all things, even your hardest feelings, before the Lord?
  
2. Spend some time praying and reflecting. Is there anything, any hurt or sin or request you felt was “too big,” that you have yet to bring to God in prayer?

## **Commentary: Taken from “The Way of the Righteous in the Muck of Life” by Dale Ralph Davis**

---

### **6**

#### **WET PRAYER**

#### ***PSALM 6***

*For the music leader. With stringed instruments.  
Upon the sheminith. A psalm of David.*

- 1 Yahweh, don’t rebuke me in your wrath!  
Don’t chasten me in your hot anger!
- 2 Show grace to me, Yahweh, for I am withering;  
heal me, Yahweh, for my bones are terrified.
- 3 Yes, my soul is greatly terrified!  
But you, Yahweh—how long?
- 4 Turn back, Yahweh, rescue my life;  
save me because of your covenant love.
- 5 For in death no one remembers you;  
in Sheol who gives you praise?

- 6 I have become weary because of my groaning;  
all night long I make my bed swim,  
I dissolve my couch in my tears.
- 7 My eye has wasted away because of grief;  
it has grown old because of all my foes.
- 8 Turn away from me, all workers of wickedness!  
For Yahweh has heard the sound of my weeping!
- 9 Yahweh has heard my plea for grace!  
Yahweh will accept my prayer!
- 10 Let them be ashamed,  
Yes, let all my enemies be greatly terrified!  
Let them turn back,  
let them be ashamed all of a sudden!

Many of us are likely familiar with the 'ACTS' pattern for prayer: adoration-confession-thanksgiving-supplication. Not a bad guide, especially since it stresses that prayer is more than petition. But sometimes our neat formulas have to be smashed. It just won't do for us to stand on the sidelines here at the first verse of Psalm 6 and scold David with 'No, no, you can't do that; you forgot—that's supplication, and you have to save that for last.' Sometimes emergencies demand that we ditch recommended patterns. Sometimes we have to plunge right in with petition. As David does here. Let's track our way through this prayer, for it too teaches us to pray.

### The agony he knows

Looking at the psalm from David's vantage point, we first run into the agony he knows (vv. 1–3). These verses constitute a sort of this-is-the-mess-I'm-in section. What is it that feeds his agony?

Probably the *problem of wrath* (v. 1). 'Don't rebuke me in your wrath! Don't chasten me in your hot anger!' Some think that David may only be saying that he doesn't want God to be angry that he is bringing this matter (his need for God's intervention) up again in prayer. However, I think it more probable that there may be some sin that God is chastening him for—or that David thinks that God is chastening him for. And David does not want Yahweh to deal with him severely but to moderate his anger. We'll come back to this.

He mentions the *problem of weakness* (v. 2): 'I am withering.' He is wiped out with it all. It's difficult to know sometimes whether these descriptions are literal and physical or mostly metaphorical and figurative. Verses 6–7 seem to point to some degree of physical exhaustion. Add to this the *problem of fear* (vv. 2b–3a). The verb in the text is not merely 'dismayed' or 'troubled' but rather 'terrified.' Both bones (2b) and soul (3a) are in this state—hence the whole person is terrified. What causes this terror? From the psalm it might be the

disfavor of God (v. 1) or sickness (v. 2, 'withering ... heal me') or the threats of enemies (vv. 8, 10)—or maybe all of the above.

And the *problem of time* contributes to his agony (v. 3b). This is one of our perennial problems with God's ways. We have our calendar. We have figured about how long we can hold out. And somehow Yahweh allows our urgent deadlines to pass. Why? David's 'How long?' means: How long will you allow this to go on? Why don't you intervene and give me relief? Why does he wait? Why does he hold off? When we say God will intervene sooner or later, why does it always seem to be later? Our troubles, it seems, are as much with God as with our circumstances.

But perhaps the most pressing of these matters is whether one is under the displeasure of God (v. 1). Is there any agony like the loss of the friendship of God? What can Yahweh's servant do when he is under Yahweh's wrath? Simply pray as in verse 2: 'Show grace to me, Yahweh ...; heal me, Yahweh.' You go to the Bringer of wrath with a plea for grace. Where else can one go?

My father would tell of a particular occasion (as opposed to others!) when he spanked my oldest brother. Walt was a toddler and, for some apparently just reason, he came under the sway of the parental hand. My father was a pastor and had his study at the house. After the spanking he went back to his work. After a while, Walt came round the corner, into the study, crawled up on Pop's lap, put his arms around him and said: 'Papa, I love you.' I don't think we need to say that was 'sweet' or 'precious.' I think we need to think about how he was thinking. He seemed to be assuming, instinctively perhaps, that the hand that had struck him would nevertheless welcome him. Perhaps that's what drives David's plea in verse 2—he knows that the God who strikes him is often a 'striking and healing' God (Isa. 19:22).

### The argument he brings

Secondly, we should notice the argument he brings (vv. 4–7). David both brings his petitions to God and presses his reasons upon God; in the middle of the emergency he argues his case; he tells Yahweh why he should and must deliver him.

The first argument has to do, David might say, with *the God I have*: 'save me because of your covenant love' (v. 4). This is an argument that rests on the character of God. 'Covenant love' here is *hesed*, the devoted love that pledges never to let go of us. David praises Yahweh for this in 2 Samuel 22:51; there he says that Yahweh is 'the tower of deliverance for his king, the One who keeps acting with devoted love [*hesed*] toward his anointed, to David and to his seed for all time.' True to his promise in 2 Samuel 7, Yahweh had brought nations to acknowledge David's supremacy (2 Sam. 22:44–9). This, of course, is simply a particular application of Yahweh's faithful character, for he is 'rich in *hesed* and fidelity' toward all his covenant people (Exodus 34:6). We might paraphrase David's petition as: 'Save me for you have pledged yourself to deal lovingly with

me and I am holding you to your word.' It's an argument that rests on God's promise, or even beneath that, on his character.

Peter Collier tells of Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.; he had been in World War I and came back to fight in World War II as well. He was one of the few fighting generals the Americans had. He had been in North Africa and Italy, and then on the eve of D-Day he demanded that General Eisenhower allow him to go ashore with the first wave of attack at Utah Beach. He was fifty-seven years old, crippled with arthritis, having to use a cane to get around—and he wanted to hit Utah Beach. What was his argument? 'My men expect it of me. I'm the son of Theodore Roosevelt.' One could paraphrase: 'I have to—it's who I am; it's part of my character.'

That is David's argument here. He is resting in Yahweh's character, in the sort of God he had declared himself to be. Sometimes this is your only stay in trouble—simply what God has said about himself and about what he will do. Which suggests how massively important the doctrine of God is for the Christian life.

David's second argument centers on *the praise I give* (v. 5): 'For in death no one remembers you, in Sheol who gives you praise?' The verb 'remembers' has to do with expressing praise in worship, as the next line of this verse makes clear. Sheol is the realm of the dead. This may make you antsy, but let me paraphrase what I think his argument is. It's as if he is saying: If I die, if I succumb, if my enemies get me, if you do not deliver me, there will be one less to praise you, for I won't be able to sing 'Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation' among your people; they don't sing 'O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing' in Sheol; dead folks don't get up and sing 'Let us love and sing and wonder, let us praise the Savior's name!' Now, let's not get on 'rabbit trails' here: this verse does not mean David had no hope beyond death, nor is it some form of bribery. Let us think about verse 5 in terms of what he is *assuming* here.

Assumptions are frequently revealing. Some time ago I was on the campus of a prominent evangelical seminary and while in one of the buildings decided to use the men's room. After I had washed my hands in the lavatory and reached for a piece of paper towel, I was startled by a sign attached to the towel dispenser: 'Please do not flush paper towels in the toilet.' Now I knew *why* the maintenance department did not want paper towels flushed down the toilet—they would clog up the drain; they were not intended to be disposed of that way. I began to think: Why was such a sign necessary? Why would anyone commit such an offense anyway since one would have to take the trouble to walk away from the waste paper container and go back to the toilets in order to do so? What was this sign saying about the propensities of the future pastors of evangelical churches in my country? Assumptions are revealing.

Now that is the case here. When David so much as says, If I end up in Sheol, I can't sing your praise, he is assuming that the whole purpose of his life is to praise Yahweh. That is a bit searching. Oh, I know in one way someone could say this is 'old hat,' because we have our cliché in our prayers about giving God

all the glory, etc.; but this cuts deeper and is no cliché. This agonized prayer then tells you that your whole reason for existence is not to make a living, not to become the most outstanding servant of Christ possible, not to get a superb education, not to advance rapidly in your profession, nor to excel in the sport of your choice ... but to praise God. David's prayer in verse 5 may expose you. How you answer the question, What's wrong with death?, will do it. The only correct answer is: Because then I wouldn't be able to stand at that padded pew at Woodland Presbyterian (or wherever else) and join my voice in singing, 'I greet thee who my sure redeemer art—my only trust and Savior of my heart'—because that is my whole reason for existence!

David's third argument underscores *the misery I know* (vv. 6–7). Here is the toll David's trouble has taken on him; he is emotionally and physically 'shot.' The groaning, the tears, the grief, the exhaustion—why does David rehearse all this to God? Does God need this information? What does this have to do with an argument in prayer?

Well (back to assumptions again), what is he assuming about God? He is making an assumption about the mercy of God. He is assuming that all of this really matters to God and that Yahweh will be touched with pity over his condition. He assumes that our misery arouses God's mercy, touches God's heart. A prayer like this assumes that the Father is like Jesus—always going around being moved with compassion.

Perhaps these individual 'arguments' are of some help to us, but what general instruction should we derive from this matter of argument in prayer? That the use of argument is entirely proper in prayer, that it is beneficial, or even necessary! While I was teaching in seminary, I would sometimes have a student ask to take a scheduled exam at another time. Students (as a rule) knew that they couldn't simply tell me that they didn't feel up to an exam on a Wednesday. They knew a pitch like that would be turned down flat. They knew they had to make a 'case.' But if a student came in and told me that he had been reviewing for the exam but that two days ago his wife had gone into labor and was in the hospital with their second child, that while he had been with her, their two-year-old under a babysitter's care had fallen from a bunk bed and broken his arm, that his mother-in-law had been on her way to come help but the water pump had gone out on her car en route and she was delayed, and that he had not gotten more than forty-five minutes of sleep in the last two days, well then, one who had some modicum of mercy would allow him to re-schedule his exam.

I don't want to reduce prayer to an exercise in logic. But I would guess that too few believers give much thought to the use of arguments in prayer. No one can fail to see how highly emotional Psalm 6 is. And yet—with the place it gives argument in prayer—it is highly rational as well. Pushing ourselves to bring reasons for our requests may help us see how shoddy some of our petitions are—or it may encourage us if we seem to muster a cogent case. Argument in prayer shows that we are called to *thinking* worship.

## The assurance he finds

Briefly and lastly, David's prayer shows us the assurance he finds (vv. 8–10). Verse 10 shows that the *actual* deliverance is still in the future; verse 10 is anticipatory—the decisive help has not yet arrived. And yet verses 8–9 show that he has *present* assurance of coming deliverance. On the basis of this assurance he defies his enemies (v. 8a). His assurance rests on the certainty that Yahweh has heard (vv. 8b–9):

For Yahweh has heard the sound of my weeping!  
Yahweh has heard my plea for grace!  
Yahweh will accept my prayer!

Prayer doesn't change things, but prayer lays hold of God who changes things and who, in prayer, changes you. And sometimes in the midst of it all he gives you the assurance that your plea has been granted.

Notice especially David's terminology for prayer in 8b: 'the sound of my weeping.' *Yahweh has heard the sound of my weeping.* What a way to describe prayer. God can even make out what your tears long for. Shades of Romans 8:26 already! You probably ought to underline that; you can go through a lot with a text—and a God—like that!

Did you notice that strange heading to this psalm? All about the music leader and stringed instruments and perhaps the tune to be used? All of which implies the continued use of this psalm in public worship by the Lord's people. And why not? For there will be many of the Lord's flock post-David who also come with the sound of their weeping and will need the assurance that God will see their tears (cf. Isa. 38:5). And why shouldn't he? For he has given them a Savior, who, in the days of his flesh 'offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears' (Heb. 5:7)—and he was heard.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, [\*Way of the Righteous in the Muck of Life: Psalms 1–12\*](#) (Scotland, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2010), 73–81.



## Group Study Guide

---

\*This lesson is for the Group Leader to use to teach the lesson and facilitate the discussion. It is not intended that you will use every question in this guide during your group time. You will likely only be able to cover 4-5 questions, depending on how discussion goes. This guide is longer than what you will need but provides the freedom and flexibility to pull questions out for discussion that will best serve your group time.

**Tip:** You may want to pull one question from each section for discussion or spend more time on a particular section than another on. It's totally up to your discretion.

# Introduction

---

## Icebreaker Question:

Can you think of a time when you cried out to God, no holds barred?

OR

Have you ever experienced suffering that you believed was chastisement or discipline from the Lord?

**READ ENTIRE TEXT: PSALM 6**

**\*Note: Suggested answers in the Highlight and Explain section are in red. Suggested small group (2-3 people) questions are also noted.**

## Highlight – What stands out?

---

1. What words and phrases show how David is feeling?

Rebuke me not in your anger  
Be gracious to me  
I am languishing  
My bones are troubled  
How long?  
Deliver my life  
I am weary with my moaning  
I drench my couch with weeping  
My eye wastes away from grief  
The Lord has heard the sound of my weeping  
The Lord accepts my prayer

2. Did Psalm 6 remind you of anywhere else in Scripture?

Answers can vary

3. Is there anything shocking to you in this text? Anything surprising or new?

Answers can vary

4. What else stood out to you in the text?

Answers can vary

5. There seems to be a turning point in this psalm. Where is it and what happens?

Verses 8-10 seem to be the hinge of turning. He has cried out to God, then he has confidence that God hears him and will deliver him.

## **Explain – What does this mean?**

---

\*Note: These introductory notes to the psalms will help as you study these first 8 psalms this summer.

The psalms can generally be divided into 3 categories:

- Orientation: Telling you what life is supposed to be like
- Disorientation: Telling you what life is like
- Reorientation: Telling you what life will be like after deliverance (future or present)

There are also different genres of psalms:

- Lament – the life that is struggling
- Thanksgiving – the life that is delivered
- Praise/Hymn – the life that is content

1. Based on these explanations above, what kind of psalm is this one? How would you explain your answer?

Lament

He is crying out to God in his distress

**Note: If your Group is larger, you could divide into groups of 2-3 to have each group look up these verses and then come back together with what you found.**

2. The ESV Study Bible points out that Psalm 6 is an “individual lament” of David “that is often included in the ‘Penitential Psalms.’” The passage does not specify what is troubling David—it does not tell us why he says “rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath” in verse 1, but God’s anger is clearly on his mind. Read the following passages to remind yourself of the trials that David faced because of his failings before the Lord.

- 1 Chronicles 13
- 1 Chronicles 21:1-8, 14-18
- 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 14-27, 12:15-19
- 2 Samuel 12:1-14, 20-22

**Note: If your Group is larger, you could divide into groups of 2-3 to have each group look up these verses and then come back together with what you found.**

3. Again, Psalm 6 does not tell us *why* David is in agony, but in verse 4 he asks the Lord to deliver him from it. In that verse, what characteristic of God does David appeal to? Let’s look at examples of how this played out elsewhere in David’s life:

- 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-13
- 1 Samuel 18:8-11, 19:9-10
- 1 Samuel 23:25-28
- 2 Samuel 7:8-16
- 2 Samuel 23:1-5
- Psalm 5:7
- Psalm 13:5-6
- Psalm 58:9-10
- Psalm 89:19-24

4. By the end of the psalm, how does David feel about his request? What does he expect from God?

He feels like God has heard him and that God will deal with his enemies. Justice will prevail.

## Apply – How does this change me?

---

1. In this psalm of disorientation, meaning a psalm that talks about what life in this broken world is like, David cries out to God about his anguish. How does this compare to how you pray when you are deeply troubled?
2. Not only does David cry out to God with his true, deep emotions, he expects that God will accept his words and not turn him away. Do you feel like you can express your hardest feelings to God? Why or why not?

**Note: This is another section you could divide into smaller groups to look up these passages and then come back together with what you found.**

3. How can we be certain, like David, that God hears our prayers? The following passages may be helpful reminders:
  - Matthew 6:5-6
  - Luke 11:5-13
  - Romans 8:14-16, 26-28
  - Hebrews 4:14-16
  - Hebrews 5:7-10
  - 1 John 5:14-15
4. Hebrews 12:7 offers us comfort should we feel stricken like David because of our sin. **Have a Group member read this verse.** What is that comfort?

## Respond – What’s my next step?

---

1. How can you grow in bringing all things, even your hardest feelings, before the Lord?
2. Spend some time praying and reflecting. Is there anything, any hurt or sin or request you felt was “too big,” that you have yet to bring to God in prayer?

## Additional Resources:

---

**Extra Resources:** Charles H. Spurgeon’s *Treasury of David* on Psalm 6 ([online version found here](#))

**Song:** [Psalm 6 by Deryck Box](#)

### Extra Commentary on Psalm 6 from Mark Futato

#### ◆ F. Psalm 6

##### NOTES

**6:**TITLE ***eight-stringed***. The meaning of the Hebrew is not certain.

**6:1** This verse finds an almost exact parallel in 38:1 [2]. The language is thus formulaic for situations where illness is owing to God’s anger (contra Craigie 1983:92, who suggests that the plea is for God not to rebuke the psalmist for bringing the request).

**6:2 weak**. The predicate adjective occurs only here; the related verb is frequently used of fields, vines, figs, etc., withering (DCH 1.314).

**6:3 sick**. The same word is translated “agony” in 6:2 [3].

**6:4 Save me**. The same words are translated “rescue me” in 3:7 [8].

**unfailing love.** God's *khesed* [2617, 2876] is the basis of the petition, as in 5:7 [8].

**6:5 grave.** Heb. *she'ol* [7585, 8619] occurs 16 times in the Psalter. The NLT uses "grave" 13 times (see 6:5; 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14 [twice], 15; 55:15; 89:48; 116:3; 139:8), "burial" one time (141:7), and "death" twice (86:13; 88:3). In none of these texts does *she'ol* refer to a place where departed spirits go; the reference in all of them is to the "grave" (TDOT 2.892–893; see also Harrison 1986 and VanGemeren 1984).

**6:6 All night.** This echoes the motif of prayer and meditation at night, as in 3:4–5 and 4:4.

**6:8 the LORD has heard my weeping.** This answers to the request of 5:3 ("Listen to my voice").

**6:9 has heard my plea ... will answer my prayer.** This answers to the request of 4:1 ("Have mercy on me and hear my prayer").

**6:10 all my enemies.** The same phrase occurs in 3:7 [8]. For the mention of "enemies" in prayers for healing, see Pss 31, 38, 41, and 102.

**terrified.** The same word is translated "agony" in 6:2 [3] and "sick" in 6:3 [4].

**May they ... turn back.** The Heb. *yashubu* [7725, 8740] is a play on the request of 6:4 [5], *shubah* [7725, 8740] (return).

#### COMMENTARY

This prayer for deliverance from illness and ill-treatment has three stanzas: (1) 6:1–4 [2–5] is a series of requests (note the volitives, i.e., verbs that express the will of the speaker) to the Lord (*yhwh* is used five times); (2) 6:5–7 [6–8] provides the reasons for the requests (note the indicatives and the absence of the divine name); and (3) 6:8–10 [9–11] is a series of requests (note the volitives) to and about those who have subjected David to ill-treatment during his illness, and the Lord is once again in view (*yhwh* is used three times).

"This prayer for help is a passionate, agonized appeal to the grace of God against the wrath of God" (Mays 1994:59). That David's heart was sick when his body was in agony shows the integration of body and soul and articulates the depth of agony experienced in prolonged illness, a depth that leads to the terse cry, "How long, O LORD?" Just as body and soul are not separated, so too David's illness and God's activity are not separated: The illness is owing to divine anger. True, David makes no confession of sin nor requests forgiveness (as he does in the related Pss 38, 41, and 102), but this is not unique. Psalm 88 is also a prayer for healing from illness that is owing to the anger of God, and it contains no confession of sin. Since all sickness is a result of humanity's (Adam's) rebellion against God, all sickness is in some sense owing to God's

anger (see below on 90:3–11). Psalm 6 does not make explicit whether David was suffering because of some particular sin or the general sinfulness of the human race. But we do know that in Psalm 6 David does not complain about the injustice of divine anger; rather, he pleads that God would turn from that anger and heal him. This is a plea for compassion flowing from the unfailing love of God.

Two reasons are offered in 6:5–7 to support the petitions just made. First is the loss of praise to God that would result from the psalmist's death (6:5). While at first glance this seems odd to us, this same reason is offered elsewhere in the Psalter (30:9 [10]; 88:10–12 [11–13]; 115:17). Dead bodies in the grave cannot praise the Lord, but the living can (115:17–18). Since God created us to praise him, sickness leading to death is contrary to his original purpose. Thus, the request for healing rooted in the praise of God makes perfect sense. Second is the intensity of the sickness (6:6–7), noted by such expressions as “worn out from sobbing,” “flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears,” “my vision is blurred by grief,” and “my eyes are worn out.” These convey the intensity of the physical illness and the internal pain it caused, and these expressions stand in stark contrast to the joyful existence of the godly in 1:1, 3 and 2:12b. But the godly are part of a fallen creation. They must trust the Lord for protection (2:12; 5:11), a protection that should provide health (see note on 1:1), as well as security from the “enemies” (2:12; 4:2; 5:10–11). Such agony is not the way it should be, and the articulation of this agony in the presence of a compassionate God is intended to get him to respond.

The mood changes in 6:8–10. “After David has disburdened his griefs and troubles into the bosom of God, he now, as it were, assumes a new character” (Calvin 1979:1.73). He reverts to petitions, but this time with regard to those who have been opposing him. Perhaps they, like Job's friends, have been tormenting the psalmist with false accusations and lies (4:2; 5:9) that traced his sickness to some personal sin. Or maybe they were simply hoping for his demise as a result of disease, saying, “God will never rescue him!” (3:2). Whatever the nature of the opposition, David gained the confidence that his prayer had been received by the Lord and that the Lord would answer that prayer. With poetic irony we read that when the Lord would return from his anger (*shub* [7725, 8740] in 6:4 [5]), the enemies would “turn back in shame” (*shub* in 6:10 [11]), and instead of David being in “agony” and “sick” (*bahal* [926, 987] in 6:2 [3] and 6:3 [4]), all his enemies would be “terrified” (*bahal* in 6:10 [11]).

There is also irony in the fact that we can pray this “passionate, agonized appeal to the grace of God against the wrath of God,” because Jesus did not! Echoing the language of 6:3, Jesus said, “Now my soul is deeply troubled” (John 12:27). But he went on to say, “Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour?’” Since Jesus endured the wrath of God, both for our personal sins and our sin in Adam, we can have confidence that God will hear and answer our prayers for healing. But just as David had to wait long for the answer, so we

too may have to wait long. In fact, we may have to wait until the day of resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Mark D. Futato, [“The Book of Psalms,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 7: The Book of Psalms, The Book of Proverbs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 45–47.