

“MERCY ME!”

Psalm 6

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INTRODUCTION

Whom the Lord loves, he chastens. And if you belong to Him and backslide or turn away from godly living, He will chasten you (Hebrews 12). Sadly, some believers do not recognize that they are under God’s chastening hand, or, if they do, they stubbornly refuse to repent and turn to God for help. David was not like that. He knew that he had sinned, was guilty, deserved God’s chastening, was unworthy of God’s blessing, and **desperately needed His help**. David also knew where to turn for that help—**to the Lord, Yahweh, Himself**. Yahweh, the God of the covenant, the faithful God who always keeps His word and fulfills his covenant responsibilities, is the God to whom David pleas—**seven times** he refers to Him as Yahweh in this brief psalm. **And, David will not cease crying out to Yahweh until he receives a positive answer from the Lord.**

In your distress, you must cry out to your Faithful God until He answers your prayer and restores you to Himself.

There are seven Psalms that we classify as penitential psalms: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143. This first penitential psalm does not actually mention sin, but David everywhere implies that he has sinned and that Yahweh is the only One who can help him. In verse 2 he asks the Lord to manifest His **grace**, and in verse 4 He asks God to save him due to His **loyal love**.

We can never come to God for help based upon our goodness: “There is none righteous, no not one.”

In this psalm David asks the Lord to **desist** from His chastening (1-3), to **deliver** him before he dies (4-5), to take note of his **despair** (6-7), and to **drive away** his enemies so that they **depart** from him.

[Comments on psalm title: *Choir director*—see Psalm 3; *stringed instruments*; on a *lower octave*—i.e. the bass (better than idea of “8 stringed instruments”—I Chr. 15:21 can’t refer to an instrument, for instruments were played “upon the 8th”; the contrast seems to be with the previously mentioned instruments played to the “maidens”—likely soprano voices. *A psalm composed by David.*]

I. DESIST FROM YOUR CHASTENING, O LORD (1-3)

A. Description of Chastening

1. Rebuke—verbal correction for wrongdoing, accompanied by appropriate consequences.
2. Chasten—various form of discipline—here especially negative correction.

B. Motivation for chastening—God’s righteousness has been violated

1. Anger—God hates sin
2. Wrath—this word stresses the *heat of anger*.
 - The stress in the verse (1) is on these two words: **Not in your anger** rebuke me; **not in your wrath** chasten me.
 - It is not that David asks only for the Lord to stop correcting him in anger, and continue correcting him in love. For 1) all chastening of a believer is in love—even when His anger is expressed; 2) David here asks for all the chastening to cease—as the context makes clear. 3) The experiences he goes through are due to his sin, so once he is forgiven and right with God, he may be free from this particular suffering. 4) It is true that once David no longer senses Yahweh’s wrath, he will be able to endure the gentle chastening of a child and not be perturbed by it—but such an emphasis **is not found in this passage**.

C. Results of the chastening

1. David “wastes away”—“withers, dries up, languishes”
2. His “bones are dismayed”—the word is very strong, having the idea of being “troubled, terrified out of one’s senses.”
3. His soul is dismayed—same verb.
 - Bones are the solid framework for the entire body, and here seem to be a representation of the entire person.
 - Soul here refers to the “life, self, the entire being”
 - It is not simply an emphasis upon the physical suffering and then the spiritual suffering.
 - The “bones” do hint at the physical side, and the “soul” the spiritual side of the suffering. This is another example of Hebrew parallelism.

D. Solution to the chastening

1. “Be gracious to me”—I am totally deserving of punishment and unworthy of relief and love. **Manifest your grace to me, O Yahweh, the God of grace.**
2. “Heal me”—Note that both actions apply to both the bones and soul.

David concludes this section, and introduces the next section of his prayer by crying: **“But YOU** [very emphatic] **O Yahweh; HOW LONG?** He doesn’t even finish the statement in order to increase the dramatic effect. We all understand what he implies.

II. DELIVER ME, BEFORE I DIE (4-5)

A. Basis of “salvation”—Loyal Love based on His covenant (4)

B. Terms of salvation

1. “Return”—David was out of fellowship and God seemed far away; fellowship needs renewing (4).
2. “Deliver”—“deliver my soul”—that is me, my life.
3. “Save me”—Save me in every way—physically, morally, spiritually.

C. Consequences of No Deliverance (5)

1. I will die—I am close to death now!
2. I will be in the realm of the dead—Sheol (not that David expects to participate in the **Second Death**—he knows that he has a relationship with the Lord. Yet, all this is even more true of those who are lost.)
3. I will not be able to participate in remembrance of, mention of, and giving thanks to the Lord along with God’s people on earth.
 - This is not meant to be an exact description of life after death.
 - Revelation of the after-life was not as clear in David’s time.
 - David was also in a condition of despair at this point.
 - There are clear statements in the OT of continued fellowship with God after death—and even of “resurrection” or “rapture”—e.g. Ps. 16; Ps. 73; Dan. 2; Is 26; etc.

As David continues in a less direct form of prayer (6-7), he points out his **Despair** and needs Yahweh to take note of it and help him.

III. HELP ME OUT OF MY DESPAIR (6-7)

A. I am weary with my moaning (6a)—I need a break!

B. I make my bed “swim” every night!

C. I dissolve my “couch”—bed—with my tears.

D. My eye (sunken in its socket and swollen and red) has “wasted away”—becomes weak like something moth eaten—because of grief and irritation.

E. My eye has “grown old” because of “my adversaries”—those who are *hostile toward me, surround me, and squeeze the life out of me!*

However, David hears God’s answer, and he gains certainty that he will be delivered and that his enemies will be ruined and ashamed (8-10).

IV. DRIVE AWAY MY ENEMIES SO THAT THEY DEPART FROM ME (8-10)

A. The Lord has heard my prayer

1. He **has heard** “the voice of my weeping”—so does God hear the weeping of His saints (8).
2. He **has heard** “my supplication”—my earnest entreaties.
3. He therefore **receives** “my prayer”—responding favorably to it.

B. The Lord Deals with my Enemies

1. They **depart from** David—no longer doing him harm or able to continually mock him
 - Note that they are “doers of iniquity”—that which is empty, vain, and corrupt.
 - Note that Jesus uses this expression at the judgment: Mt. 7:23—in the words of this verse!
 - To stand against the man of God is to stand against God himself.
 - This is not really a statement of separation from sin and evil-doers, but a statement of their judgment and ruin.
2. They will receive their own medicine—what they had dished out to David: “**they shall be troubled—greatly dismayed, terrorized**”—same word as in vv. 2 & 3 of David’s bones and soul.
3. They shall “turn back”—going the opposite way; no longer troubling him.
4. They shall experience **double shame**—twice he states they “shall be ashamed.” This shame will come upon them “suddenly.”

CONCLUSION

Yes, “weeping may last for a moment, but joy cometh in the morning.”

One day our bed will no longer be wet with tears; no longer will our “bones be dismayed;” no longer will our soul “be greatly dismayed;” no longer will we be “pining away;” no longer will we be weary with moaning; no longer will the Lord seem so far away; no longer will His hand of chastening in anger rest upon us; no longer will we seem to be at the brink of death and of the realm of the dead.

God is gracious to us; He manifests to us His loyal love.