

Psalm 6

Title: Prayer for Mercy in Time of Trouble

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 6:2

Outline

- A. Earnest appeal: the prayers of the psalmist (verses 1-5).
- B. Extreme anguish: the problems of the psalmist (verses 6-7).
- C. Expectant answer: the pronouncements of the psalmist (verses 8-10).

Notes

Title: “For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments, set to the Sheminith. A Psalm of David.” See notes on Psalms 3 through 5. “Sheminith” means “the eighth”. It is a music notation with an uncertain meaning. It may be a reference to an eight-stringed instrument (lyre) or an eight note melody (an octave). Some believe it denotes the male chorus, as distinguished from the “Alamoth”, the female chorus (see 1 Chron. 15:19-21; Psalm 12).

Verses 1-2: The psalmist’s two petitions, “rebuke me not” and “have mercy upon me”, make this psalm the first of seven “penitential psalms” (songs of a sinner). The psalmist has a penitent attitude toward his sin (see also Psalm 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). The sin is not specified, but we know that sin is involved because the “hot displeasure” of God is revealed against the sin of man (see Deut. 9:19; Psa. 2:5; and Psa. 38:1-8).

Verse 3: “How long?” is a common question asked by those who are suffering (see Rev. 6:10).

Verse 5: The psalmist is not suggesting an unconscious existence in the grave or afterlife (Heb. *sheol*). He is talking about the lost opportunities when one dies. Unlike the living, the dead have no more opportunity to praise the Lord to their fellow-man (see Psa. 31:17; Eccl. 9:10).

Verse 9: The “workers of iniquity” may be referred to by Jesus in Matthew 7:23.

Questions

1. What does the psalmist request of the Lord (verses 1-2)?

2. Why does the psalmist petition the Lord for mercy and healing (verses 2-3)?

3. What question does the troubled psalmist ask (verse 3)?
4. What effect do the psalmist's troubles have on him (verses 6-7)?
5. What confidence does the psalmist express regarding the Lord (verses 8-9)?
6. What confidence does the psalmist express regarding his enemies (verse 10)?

Applications for Today

1. The Lord rebukes and chastens us when we sin (verse 1). What does the Psalmist request (Psa. 38:1)? What does Paul do with the Corinthians and why (1 Cor. 11:31-32)? What do Christians experience from God (Heb. 12:5)? What rebuke does James give his audience and why (Jas. 4:1-10)? What does Jesus say to Laodicea (Rev. 3:19)?
2. It has been said that mercy means that the Lord does not give us what we deserve, and grace means that the Lord gives us what we do not deserve. What a loving Lord he is! We need the Lord's mercy and love (verses 2 and 4). What does God (Rom. 11:32) and Jesus (Jude 21) show to mankind?
3. When the soul is greatly troubled, turn to the Lord (verse 3). What did Jesus do when he was troubled (Mt. 26:38; Jn. 12:27)?
4. The Lord's loving-kindness is great. It delivers us and saves us (verse 4). What does God's love do toward mankind (Eph. 1:6; 2:4-8)? What did the Lord do for Paul (2 Tim. 4:18)?
5. Praise the Lord and work hard for him while you are living; you can't do it in death (verse 5). What attitude must we have toward our work (Eccl. 9:10)? What attitude did Jesus have toward his work (Jn. 9:4)?

6. Inward sin or outward enemies can cause great physical and emotional pain. The Lord offers a divine pain reliever for this when we come to him (verse 2-4 and 6-7). What did Jesus do for the sinful woman in Simon's house (Lk. 7:38ff). What did the Lord do for Paul (Acts 20:19, 31; 2 Cor. 2:4)?

7. God wipes away the tears of weeping (mourning) with answered prayers (verse 6-9). What does Jesus promise (Mt. 5:4)? What did God do for his son Jesus (Heb. 5:7)?

8. Workers of iniquity are told to "depart"; they are not found among the faithful or the Lord himself (verse 8). What do the righteous do (Psa. 119:115)? Where are the wicked found (Mt. 7:23; 25:41; Lk. 13:27)?

9. Those who trouble the righteous will be troubled by God (verse 10). What happens to those who oppose the Lord and his people (Lk. 13:17; Phil. 1:28; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; Heb. 10:27)?

10. The psalmist traveled the road from troubles (verses 1-7) to triumphs (verses 8-10). What road does the faithful Christian travel (Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:6-9)?