

Psalm 6 • The Right Focus in the Midst of Trial

Introduction

Human thinking advocates that in a time of trials and extreme personal stress, particularly one that has come upon us due to no fault of our own, that we have license and forgiveness to act any way we want. It is one of those times when, from a worldly point of view, such are granted carte blanche to behave and act in a way giving into the extreme nature of the experience. However, a biblically righteous person is visibly different in that, like the example of Job, they never allow such to overcome them spiritually. In this Psalm, David provides valuable insight into just how a biblically righteous person is able to accomplish what is impossible according to the conventions of worldly wisdom. It is not accomplished in a vacuum of no emotion, but rather channels the deep emotions which will naturally come from such an experience much more constructively.

For the choir director; with stringed instruments, upon an eight-string lyre. A Psalm of David.

¹O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,
Nor chasten me in Your wrath.
²Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away;
Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.
³And my soul is greatly dismayed;
But You, O LORD—how long?

⁴Return, O LORD, rescue my soul;
Save me because of Your lovingkindness.
⁵For there is no mention of You in death;
In Sheol who will give You thanks?

[Read v.1-3]

Q: How do we know whether David's call to God is over an issue of sin or not?

A: It is most likely **NOT** due to an issue of sin as nowhere in this Psalm does David actually confess nor ask forgiveness for sin.

Q: So what is David's situation?

A: He is seeking God's rescue from undeserved suffering.

Observation: Scripture documents many times when David is unjustly pursued and persecuted, and some of his Psalms were even written during these experiences. Although Psalm 6 does not specifically identify one of those events recorded in Scripture, it is not unreasonable that this applies to one of those situations.

Q: What is the dual nature of his suffering? How are they presented in parallel to each other?

A: On the one hand is physical suffering in "my bones are dismayed" (v.2) related directly to spiritual anguish in "my soul is greatly dismayed" (v.3). The internal pressure is so great that it shows outwardly.

Q: But what is David's greater concern?

A: That the Lord will not "rebuke me...nor chasten me". (v.1)

Application: The biblically righteous are always more concerned about their relationship to God, even in the midst of undeserved suffering.

[Read v.4-5]

Q: What is the object of David's appeal for rescue?

A: "Your lovingkindness" (v.4)—that is, the Hebrew "hesed" which is used in the OT not just as an expression of God's grace, but also speaks of God's permanent and loyal devotion to His chosen people.

Q: What is the meaning of David's statement, "For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?"

A: This is a way of stating, "If I die, there will be one less person to publicly praise You in this life".

Q: Is David describing Sheol as a place which is beyond God's apprehension?

A: No, it is rather that God and anything good in this life are beyond the reach of those residents in the afterlife. It is a stark contrast to one's visible, public testimony in the course of this life, especially in the midst of trials and suffering.

Application: *The biblically righteous are more concerned for the glory of God than their own glory, even in the midst of undeserved suffering.*

⁶I am weary with my sighing;
Every night I make my bed swim,
I dissolve my couch with my tears.
⁷My eye has wasted away with grief;
It has become old because of all my
adversaries.

[Read v.6-7]

Q: What is David describing through these various examples?

A: He has reached his lowest spiritual depths so that it has become inseparable as to what it is doing to him physically.

Q: How does this relate back to his requests in v.1 & 4?

A: Both prioritize addressing a spiritual rescue and remedy—"do not rebuke me...nor chasten me" (v.1) and "rescue my soul" (v.4).

Application: *The biblically righteous bring to God the reality of what they are experiencing, but always in the context of a greater spiritual rescue.*

⁸Depart from me, all you who do
iniquity,
For the LORD has heard the voice of my
weeping.
⁹The LORD has heard my supplication,
The LORD receives my prayer.
¹⁰All my enemies will be ashamed and
greatly dismayed;
They shall turn back, they will
suddenly be ashamed.

[Read v.8-10]

Q: How does v.8 express a key response by the biblically righteous even in the midst of undeserved suffering or a trial?

A: David ensures his primary condition of this not having come about because of personal sin by seeking a removal of all those who might be bringing influences of sin.

Application: *The biblically righteous not only avoid personal sin, but the company of those engaging in sin.*

Q: What are the three aspects of addressing God which David has engaged?

1. "...my weeping". (v.8) David has presented his true, unembellished emotional condition to God.
2. "...my supplication". (v.9) The underlying Hebrew terms carries with it the meaning of obtaining a heartfelt response from someone who has something to give to someone who has a sincere need.
3. "...my prayer". (v.9) This is the combined result of rightly approaching God as one truly is ("my weeping") who will in turn lovingly respond ("my supplication").

Q: According to David, what has been God's response?

A: God has not only "heard" (v.8 & 9) but "receives".

Point: *By scriptural standards, that which God "receives" is something upon which there is absolutely no doubt He will respond to, although that response will come according to God's will and timing. This is actually a statement of faith according to the biblical definition, "the evidence of things not seen". (Heb. 11:1)*

Q: How does David's statement of faith produce the result which he states in the closing v.10, even though such has not yet actually occurred?

A: Even in the midst of a personal trial, and even at its lowest point emotionally and spiritually from an earthly point of view, biblical faith sees God's response as **already** having occurred.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen." (Heb.11:1)

Application: *The biblically righteous authentically express and demonstrate their faith even in the midst of undeserved suffering.*

Overall Application

Whether in the original Greek or Hebrew, translators have a choice when it comes to rendering it in English as "faith" or "faithfulness". In fact, whenever we read these words in our English translations, mentally substituting one for the other will bring us to a greater understanding that "faith" is not so much believing with the mind as it is the result of obedience to God's Word and ways from the heart. As a biblically righteous example, David is able to live and act faithfully in the midst of the worst times because he has regularly done so in advance during times of relative peace and prosperity.

Just in the course of normal life, do we consistently and faithfully...

- *Remain more concerned about our personal relationship and spiritual state with God than anything else?*
- *Remain more concerned for God's glory than our own glory?*
- *Remain open and honest about both our emotional and spiritual state?*
- *Remain not only abstinent of personal sin, but separate from those who incite and influence sin?*

If not, it would be difficult to make the case we are examples of biblical faith in the course of the normal events in life, much less when the pressure cooker of trials—particularly undeserved suffering.