

“A Psalm of Contrition”
Psalm 6
(Preached at Trinity, October 25, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. There are many things that bring anguish to the human heart. There are many sorrows that accompany this life. Solomon described the life of man:
Ecclesiastes 2:23 – “For all his days *are* sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.”
2. One of the greatest sorrows for a Christian is the issue of sin. The guilt of sin is a horrible fire that burns in our bosom. There is no relief until we confess our sin turn from it in repentance. Only then can we find peace and comfort that comes through repentance.
3. This psalm is one of the penitential psalms. The others are Psalms 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143.
4. The superscription in Psalm 6 is similar to Psalm 4.
To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.
 - A. It was delivered to the chief musician. Though the exact meaning of the words is unknown it was probably a psalm accompanied by stringed instruments. This psalm adds, “upon Sheminith” which is also some form of musical notation. Some translations translate it as referring to an eight stringed instrument. This notation tells us that, like many of the Psalms, it was meant to be sung. This one was to be accompanied by stringed instruments.
 - B. Second, the superscription tells us of the author: King David
5. This psalm contains two sections.
First we find the problem of unconfessed sin – David is in anguish, body, soul, and spirit. David is under the chastening hand of God – a chastening that would have been unnecessary had David been quick to confess and repent.
Second, we find the power of confessed sin – fresh confidence before God and men.
 - I. The problem of unconfessed sin
 - A. Loss of divine pleasure
Psalm 6:1 – “O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.”
 1. You can see the rich parallelism in **Verse 1**.
 2. We are not told the nature of David’s sin. We only know that he has sinned, he knows that he has sinned, and he senses God’s displeasure.
 3. Most people today have a light view of sin. They see it as a small thing. Even Christians are guilty of this.
 4. On one hand, a Christian will never know the wrath of God. He has been justified – Christ has born his guilt.
On the other hand no one should ever presume upon the grace of God.
 5. David sensed God’s displeasure and it made him tremble.
 - a. He knew the danger of sin. For the lost man it results in the wrath of God – His fiery indignation that will end in the fires of hell.

- b. David is not praying that God will not chasten him. He is praying that God will not chasten him in His wrath. Oh God, don't look upon me as an outcast.
 - c. David is not praying that God will not chasten him because he knows chastening is for his good. God has two means that He uses to bring us to obedience: His word, by which he rebukes us (reading, preaching – applied to our conscience); and his rod, by which He chastises us.
5. God chastens his own because He loves us –
- Hebrews 12:6-7** – “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”
- Revelation 3:19** – “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”
- a. True love demands discipline
Proverbs 13:24 – “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”
 - b. God will not allow us to tread the pathway to destruction
- B. Loss of physical strength
- Psalms 6:2** – “Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I *am* weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.”
1. This could be taken figuratively. David was so moved in terror that he was shaken to his very bones. It would rather seem that David was suffering actual sickness.
 - a. The word “bones” is often used in the Psalms to describe an inner turmoil.
Psalms 31:10 – “For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.”
Psalms 32:3 – “When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.”
Psalms 38:3 – “*There is* no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither *is there any* rest in my bones because of my sin.”
 - b. David was faint, physically weakened.
 2. David was physically ill. The indication is that David had allowed a particular sin to go unconfessed and now his illness is being used of God to chasten and convict him.
 3. There are examples in Scripture where sickness has been connected directly to particular sin.
1 Corinthians 11:29-31 – “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
³⁰ For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.
³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”
James 5:14-16 – “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. ¹⁶

Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

C. Loss of inner peace

Psalm 6:3 – “My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?”

1. This is far worse than physical sickness. When we are at peace with our soul we can endure great sickness. David was filled with inner turmoil.
2. Spurgeon: Soul-trouble is the very soul of trouble. It matters not that the bones shake if the soul be firm, but when the soul itself is also sore vexed this is agony indeed.”
3. David is crying out, “Lord, how long!” The answer: Til God’s perfect work is accomplished. God works in His time.
Israel was in Egypt 430 years.
Joseph was in prison for three years.
The Jews were in Babylon for 70 years.
God is working in us patience and obedience while conforming us to Christ.

D. Loss of the fellowship with God

Psalm 6:4 – “Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.”

1. “Return” – implication is that God has departed. God senses that God’s presence has been withdrawn.
2. Unconfessed sin will result in a loss of fellowship with Christ
1 John 1:6-7 – “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
3. Sin can cause the Holy Spirit to remove His gracious influences
Isaiah 59:2 - “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.”

E. Loss of physical life

Psalm 6:5 – “For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?”

1. David expresses his concern that his sin will bring him to the grave – there is no earthly praise from the grave.
2. Unconfessed, unrepented sin can result in God removing us from the earth
1 Corinthians 11:29-31 – “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”
Acts 5:3-5 – “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? ⁴ Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. ⁵ And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.”

F. Loss of sleep

Psalm 6:6-7 – “I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.”

1. In his distress sleep had left him replaced by endless grief and tears
Spurgeon: - “Prevailed he not against Goliath, against the lion and the bear, through fortitude and magnanimity? But now he is sobbing, sighing, and weeping as a child!”

2. There is no rest in the soul of the man in sin.

Proverbs 17:22 – “A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

II. The power of confession

A. Confidence before men

Psalm 6:8 – “Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.”

1. With this verse we find a great reversal – the great turning point of the psalm. The sorrow and bitterness are gone. David now stands with strength and confidence rebuking those who had threatened him.

2. David now has the boldness to rebuke the sins of others. When we are in sin we lose our power to speak about the sins of others. It is hypocrisy to condemn others for the things we do.

Matthew 7:3-5 – “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴ Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? ⁵ Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.”

B. Confidence before God

1. God hears our prayers

Psalm 6:9 – “The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.”

a. “The LORD hath heard. . .”

There are no sweeter words – God has heard!

You can feel a sense of excitement in David's words:

“The LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping! The LORD hath heard my supplication! The LORD will receive my prayer!”

b. David was now restored to fellowship with God. He felt God's presence and was able to boldly go before God in prayer.

c. Our prayers are greatly hindered by sin.

1 Peter 3:7 – “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

2. God defends us from our enemies
Psalm 6:10 – “Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.”
 - a. The indication is that God had used David’s enemies to discipline David. Now David had the confidence that these enemies would be defeated.
 - b. Having confessed his sin he stood with a fresh confidence that God was with him. David now stands boldly knowing that God will vindicate him
 “My enemies will be ashamed of their folly, they will fall back in disgrace”
 - c. More than an imprecatory statement it is more of a statement of reality. His enemies will run into the impenetrable wall of God. They would turn back in disgrace.

Conclusion:

1. We are often so slow to confess our sins and repent. Sometimes it is necessary for God’s chastening hand to rebuke us before we return. We suffer greatly in such an estate.
2. Confession is essential to our spiritual health.
1 John 1:8-9 – “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
Proverbs 28:13 – “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.”
3. May God grant us to have sensitive hearts that are quickly wounded by sin and submissive hearts that quickly confess and turn to God in repentance.
 We will always find a loving Father quick to forgive.