

## A Prayer for the Heavy-Hearted

*Psalms Series*

By Don Green

**Bible Text:** Psalm 6

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We have a very provocative Psalm before us this evening to study together. Psalm 6 which I read just a moment ago and I would venture to say that if we were all honest at the end of this time, we would find a reason to say, "I am familiar with this Psalm by experience even if I didn't even know it by text before I walked in here." Psalm 6 gives you voice when you have lost the will to pray. I have lived through the spirit of this Psalm in the past, I'm not there now, but I have lived through the spirit of this Psalm enough that I can honestly say that I sympathize with you who struggle with discouragement, who deal with a heavy heart and who find it difficult at times to wake up in the morning. Psalm 6 is a Psalm that addresses your condition with sympathy and with words that you can adopt as your own.

Psalm 6 has traditionally been viewed as a penitential Psalm, a Psalm of repentance along with six other Psalms that we won't bother to identify here this evening and many commentators think that this is a Psalm that is expressing repentance from sin of some kind of or another. But I believe that if we look at it and just let it speak for what it says and not be completely influenced by past interpretations of it, we will see that that doesn't quite exactly describe this Psalm. This Psalm does not have any explicit confession of sin; it does not contain a prayer for forgiveness. At best, all of those things must be implied or read into the text before you can come up with that interpretation. Commentators just don't agree with each other. Some say it's a prayer of repentance, some say it is a prayer in sickness because David says, "My bones are greatly dismayed." But I think it's best to simply see this Psalm as we go along, this is best to see this as simply a prayer that is in deep sorrow. It applies to any time of profound anguish where you are seeking relief from the Lord. It is a prayer for the heavy-hearted who have lost the ability to articulate all that is in their heart before the Lord and you'll see that as you go along. This is a request for God to be gracious when the words aren't there to be more articulate about it.

We're going to break this Psalm into two parts for the sake of this evening. In the first seven verses, you're going to see David's grief and in the last three verses of it you're going to see David's relief. But he spends most of his time in the Psalm expressing his

grief and as you look at the first two verses as David opens this Psalm, his suffering is more than he can bear. There is no relief on the horizon for him and he is despairing even of the favor of God as he begins. Look at the first two verses with me again, he says, "O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your wrath. Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed. And my soul is greatly dismayed." What is he saying there? He's saying, "Lord, I have a problem that is deep. It is chronic. It has been ongoing and there is no relief on the horizon for me. This suffering is more than I can bear. I don't have any solution ahead." He is profoundly discouraged and he comes to the Lord and he opens up his heart in a way that is almost foreign to our modern ears even within the church. Put on a happy face. We had the old yellow smiley face and, "Don't worry, be happy." All of that is utterly foreign to this very honest Psalm.

And David, coming with a discouraged, broken heart, is asking God not to rebuke him in his sorrow, "God, don't be displeased with my broken heart. Don't deal with me from a sense of correction and punishment because of the anguish of my heart. This is beyond my strength to deal with." And what he does is, look at verse two, this is kind of his entrée into the presence of God here, he says, "Be gracious to me, O God." He's appealing to God to deal with him graciously, not according to a correction because he is discouraged. He says, "Lord, I'm already under the weight of more than I can bear, don't add to it by adding a corrective discipline to me. Deal with me according to your grace. Be kind with me. Show me favor even if I don't deserve it." What he's saying is, "Lord, this is beyond my strength. I appeal to your grace to soften this situation because I am at the end of my rope." Look at verse two with me again when he says, "Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed." It has the idea of, "Lord, restore me in body and spirit." His emotional turmoil is such that he feels it physically. We have that phrase, don't we, "I feel this in my bones," and there's a sympathetic reaction of the body's physical dimension to the sorrow that's on his heart. He aches in sorrow. He has pain in his body because of the pain in his heart. But as you look at what he is saying here, what I want you to see is that even if there is an element of physical illness involved or physical suffering that is involved in this, that is not the core of his complaint; it's not the core of his lament before the Lord. Look at the end of verse 2, he said, "my bones are dismayed," but then look at what he says in verse 3, "And my soul is greatly dismayed." There is the inner anguish that is what is predominant in his mind as he comes before the Lord and he says there at the end of verse 3, it reads very out abruptly in the English text just like it does in the Hebrew text, "But You, O LORD - how long?" Doesn't that strike you strange? It's not even a complete sentence. It's a broken, disconnected expression of thought and David here is not writing as a theologian, he's praying as a broken man just like you sometimes speak in your agony. Sometimes as you think it's hard to even put a complete sentence together when you're under the weight of this kind of sorrow and suffering. He's looked inside and he sees this great dismay. He looks back up and it's like he loses his voice for anymore words. "But You, O LORD - how long?" It's as if the weight of the circumstances pull his head back down as soon as he looks up to heaven to pray. He doesn't even finish the thought. His emotions are so intense that even words fail him.

I want to just say that I understand that some of you are living right in that realm right now. You are discouraged. The physical pain has been relentless, the suffering has gone on. There is the sense of financial reversal that has no immediate relief in mind. You turn to the empty half of the bed again and groan in sorrow. That is the kind of depth of emotion that David is expressing. It is that which has no easy answer. It is that which cannot really be articulated into words. It is that level of sorrow and anguish of heart that we don't even readily share with one another. It is that that profound level of grief and heavy heartedness that David is praying here in Psalm 6. With intense emotion, with deep sorrow, and he looks at the Lord and he says, "Lord, don't rebuke me in this condition. I'm already shattered. Don't add to it by dealing with me in anger. Lord, you have to be gracious to me."

And in the midst of that, that's what he does, he calls on the Lord. Look at verse 4, "Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness." And here is what I want you to see as we sweep through this first half of the Psalm a couple of times. Five times in the first four verses here, David has appealed to the name of the Lord. You see it in all caps in your English text most likely. That's the proper name of God, Yahweh. We've looked at that in the past here on Tuesday nights. It's the name that invokes God's promise to bless his people. It invokes his faithfulness to those who know him, his promise to bless them, his assurance that he will deliver them from their distresses. That is the name on David's lips as he prays in this Psalm. Five times, look at it with me: verse 1, "O LORD, do not rebuke me"; verse 2, "Be gracious to me, O LORD"; "Heal me, O LORD"; verse 3, "But You, O LORD"; verse 4, "Return, O LORD." Here is what I want you to see: that in the midst of this great sorrow and suffering that he is feeling, the center of his prayer is an appeal to the name of God and the name of God represents the character of God. He is appealing to the nature of who he knows God to be when he prays here and so that's why he can say in verse 2, "Be gracious to me." He can say in verse 4, "Save me because," because why? What is the basis of the appeal? "Save me because of your lovingkindness, because of your loyal love, because you are good and faithful to your people. You never abandon us, O God. On that basis I appeal to you and ask you to help me."

Now, I want you to step back for a moment and think about the difference that that represents to the way that we sometimes pray. Sometimes in our discouragement we are praying, "Relieve me," and the unspoken aspect of that, the unspoken causal clause, what we don't get around to saying because is, if we were honest, we'd say, "because I don't like this. I don't want it to be this way." Now David doesn't want to be this way either but what I want you to see is that his reason that he is praying, the ground of his appeal, the basis upon which he presents to the Lord to answer him and to deliver him is because of the character of who God is, "Because of your lovingkindness, O God, heal me. Restore me. Help me. Not because I don't like it, but because you are faithful, because you are my God." And so he's appealing to the unmerited favor of God. He's appealing to the loyal kindness and faithfulness of God as the grounds upon which the Lord should hear his prayer. That is remarkably different than a prayer that simply says, "God, I don't like this and I want out." We have to recognize the difference and even in the brokenness

of a discouraged spirit, we call to mind, we remember in our hearts why it is that we are going to God in the first place.

Beloved, it is exactly the same basis upon which we come to him for salvation. It is not because, we don't come to him for salvation saying, "Lord, I have done all of the right things and therefore you owe me. Therefore, I have earned it. Therefore, let me into heaven. I've done the right things. I've done what my church has taught me to do," and all of that. We do not appeal for salvation based upon our works. We appeal based on the mercy of God as it was expressed in the shed blood of the cross of Christ and say, "God, not for my sake, but on the basis of who Christ is and what he has done. Receive me and save me from my sins because I cannot save myself from the works of my own hands." Well, the principle that starts the Christian life is the same principle that sustains it and continues it. When we come to those valleys of despair, when we come to those thunderstorms of grief that show no sign of relief, there are no holes in the clouds to let any light through, in those times, we are appealing to God to show us kindness that we don't deserve. We're appealing to a faithful, gracious character and saying, "God, you sort through this. Intervene and help me because I can't help myself and God, I appeal to that because of who you are, not because of who I am." That distinction is critical into entering into the proper spirit of this Psalm. It is critical to a proper prayer in times of living with a heavy heart.

David is not saying and this searches us to realize this, it searches us to examine the motives upon which we ask God to help us. You and I are sharp enough now, we are sophisticated enough not to so blandly, boldly state, "Lord, deliver me because I don't deserve this." But if the truth were known, there is that element of pride and a sense of entitlement to life as we want it that would actually, if it was all stripped away and exposed, there would be an element of that. "Lord, I don't deserve this. Why am I suffering like this because I've been a good enough person? This should not be happening to me." I remember with great, great shame many, many years ago going through a time of sorrow and discouragement and I remember the place on the streets of Chicago where I was walking at the time and I was commiserating with myself in my despair and disappointment of whatever it was at the time. It's not like I don't actually remember, I'm just not going to disclose it. But I remember in raw anger looking up and literally with a clenched fist saying, "God, why are you doing this to me?" Wow. Really? Really? I'm speaking to that past Don Green, "Really, you want to address the God of your salvation like that? You would come with a clenched fist to God and say, 'I deserve something better from you?' Who do you think you are, Mr. Green? To address a holy, gracious God with such defiance and resistance of heart?" It's a wonder he didn't slap me dead with a Chicago lightning bolt. It's a testimony to his grace that he didn't. It's a testimony to his grace that he dealt with me and turned me like a big cruise ship over time in a different direction. But the intentions of my heart were selfish. They were self-righteous. There was no sense of submission in my heart to who God is and there was no sense of submission to his sovereign right to order my circumstances however he deemed fit. There was no sense of remembrance of the grace that saved me through faith in Christ alone; there was no sense, there was no remembrance of the fact that I had a future home

in heaven. I just didn't like that moment in my life and so, "God, why are you treating me like that?" Shame on me. I'd like to flick that guy away if I only could.

Here's what I want you to see and as you examine your own heart in light of the word of God, what I want you to see, let's look at these verses again and I want you to see the basis upon which David is pleading. Notice the distinction between what I described, what may be one or two of you might possibly know from remote personal experience and how David prays. "Lord, be gracious to me," verse 2, "don't rebuke me in your anger. Don't chasten me in your wrath. I'm pining away, Lord. Heal me. My bones are dismayed. My soul is dismayed. Lord, how long? Lord, return and rescue me. Save me because of your lovingkindness." There is no appeal to what he deserves at all in this prayer. It is simply an appeal to the love and goodness of God. That is so much different. David wanted relief from his circumstances just like I did back on the streets of Chicago many years ago but my prayer was, "Lord, I don't deserve to suffer this way." Unrighteous. Wrong way to pray. David is praying, "God, this is difficult and I ask you according to your mercy to help me." There is a recognition of the character of God, there is a submission to it, there is a trust and dependence that is expressed on that that is the sweet nature of a biblical prayer of the heavy-hearted man. He's saying, "God, I know who you are. You are a sympathetic God. You are a loyal God. You are a promise keeping God. And because of who you are, I ask for your help."

You may remember if you were here when we preached on Psalm 5 and said that it was a Psalm that is describing a man set apart for God. Beloved, what I want you to see is that Psalm 6 is showing how a man who is set apart for God prays when he has a heavy, broken heart. "God, it's not that I don't deserve to be in this position. Please help me because of who you are." He's so set apart for God that even in his own suffering, his appeal is to the character of God, not because he somehow deserves a better lot in life.

Then he goes on. Interesting verse in verse 5. We need to spend just a moment here. He says, "Save me because of Your lovingkindness," and then look at verse 5. He gives another reason, another basis of his appeal but it's kind of wrapped in some negative expression that sounds a little foreign to our ears today. He says, "For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?" He's saying the same thing two different ways. What he's saying is, "Lord, when people die and go to the realm of the dead, they don't thank you there. There is no one in the realm of the dead that is giving thanks before the living and honoring you because of the way that you have saved them, that way that you have helped them." This is not a theological statement that is denying the afterlife, that's not David's point here at all. He's not addressing the reality of life after death at all, he's simply saying that dead men don't praise God before the living. And what he's saying is, he says, "Lord, if this kills me, I'm not going to be able to thank you for deliverance in front of men." He's saying, "God, I want to honor you. I want to praise you for delivering me from this situation but if this kills me, if you don't intervene and help me, if this squashes me like a bug, I'm not going to be able to do that and so, Lord, save me," by which he means deliver me. "Help me so that on the other side of this trial I can stand up and declare your goodness, your faithfulness. I was suffering so much and God intervened and helped me." He says, "I want to praise you for delivering me before

man but if you don't do that, how can I ever do it?" Even in his suffering, the pulse of his spiritual life, what is coursing through his spiritual veins is a desire to honor God, not simply to escape his suffering. He says, "I want to honor you and if you'll only deliver me, I'll be in a position to do that." This is a God-centered prayer from a man set apart from the world and unto God.

He wants to praise God in the presence of men but as you look at verses 6 and 7, his anguish is so severe that it has literally exhausted him and he speaks in hyperbole. He exaggerates in order to make his point. Look at verses 6 and 7, he said, "I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears." He's not describing a literal process where his bed actually dissolved and the particles dispersed, he's simply saying, "I'm crying and I'm weeping so much that I'm soaking, I'm literally getting my couch wet with my crying." I don't know if you've ever done that. There has been a time or two in my life where I can remember: you're down and you're on your knees and you're weeping and you look up and the bed spread is soaked and wet from tears. Maybe you're not literally with your face in that but you know what it's like to have the swollen eyes that he describes in verse 7, "My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries." His anguish is so great that he's overcome with weeping. He's overcome with crying and can't even express words at that point, all he can do is weep. So badly broken is his heart, so deep is his anguish. There are no sentences, only sobs to express his sorrow and sometimes words just can't express the heartache. You can only moan as the tears come once again.

Let's stop for a moment. Let's take some practical instruction from what we have seen here in this heavy-hearted nature of David's life. What can we learn thus far from walking as a believer in the true God, as a true Christian when you have a heavy heart like that? I'd like to know some practical things, wouldn't you? Well, first of all, as you realize, David is coming and addressing the Lord here in these first seven verses and appealing to him, appealing to his character and laying it out, "Lord, I'm pining away. My bones are dismayed. My soul is greatly dismayed." That in itself teaches us something really important. I'm going to give you five little practical pieces of instruction here. First of all, don't wait to pull yourself together before you go to the Lord. Go to the Lord as you are because he will receive you. He will receive you as you're pouring out your broken heart and sometimes unable to even articulate complete sentences. "But you, O LORD, how long?" You know, even in that and I know we are reluctant to do that and I also realize that some of us never live in that realm of sorrow, some of us have never tasted that and thankfully, praise be to God that we're not always in that realm but the tendency is to think, "Before I can come to God, I've got to get my act together. I've got to straighten things up." Well, David here didn't have his act together and I find that profoundly encouraging that in the inspired word of God you have somebody who feels the liberty, it's been recorded in Scripture as an example for us in the latter days, "Just go and pour your heart out to him in a God-centered prayer and realize that he will receive you." Don't wait to pull yourself together.

Secondly, I hope this relieves somebody of something. Secondly, don't waste time saying to yourself or saying to others, "I shouldn't feel this way." That is a complete waste of

time. So what if you shouldn't feel that way? You do feel that way so just as you're going to the Lord, humble yourself before him and acknowledge that. I remember when that thought was very liberating to me many years ago. I'm trying to present this front in prayer to God. How foolish is that? Like God is going to be fooled by the fact that I come in a shirt and tie or whatever. As if the fact that I have my emotions under control for a moment to go through a little bit of a devotional time, whatever that means, is actually going to mask the fact that I am coming before him with an utterly broken heart and I don't know what to do. Why don't we just be transparent before the Lord? That's what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about privately, in your heart, on your knees before the Lord, why not just be honest with the God who sees all of our thoughts and knows what we're going to say before we even speak it? Why don't we just be transparent before him? Who are we trying to kid? David lays it out, "Lord, I'm pining away. I'm greatly dismayed. I'm crying so much my river of tears is carrying my bed away. God, this is my heart on display."

Thirdly, remember the grace of God. Remember the grace of God and I know the temptation when the heaviness of sorrow falls upon you that the temptation is that that is all that you can think about. It's an effort to think outside the realm of what's causing your sorrow. Don't let yourself do that. Don't let yourself cave in and totally succumb to your circumstances like that. If nothing else, remember God is gracious. Let that be the one pinhole of light in the otherwise dark nature of your circumstances, let the one simple three word phrase reverberate in your mind and become the light that you move towards, speaking metaphorically here, "God is gracious. I remember from Psalm 6, verse 2, David said, 'Be gracious to me, O LORD.'" And if you can't say anything else but that to God, "God, be gracious to me," because Scripture teaches us the life of Christ manifested to us the fact that God receives repentant sinners and grace tells us that God deals gently with the brokenhearted. Praise God. Praise God. God deals graciously with us in our sorrows. That's why David could say, "Lord, don't deal with me in anger but be gracious to me. God, rescue my soul. Save me." Why? "Because of your lovingkindness. God you are gracious. God you are full of loyal love and on that basis, O God, I pray that you would receive me. I can't articulate any other thought, Lord. I'm just too overwhelmed but I remember one thing from Psalm 6, that you are gracious and you are full of lovingkindness and in my heavy, broken heart I just appeal to you to receive me on that basis. I don't have anything else to offer you except to offer back to you what I know is already true about your eternal character." That's it. Remember the grace of God. Don't try to work up something in your flesh that you offered to him and think that that is going to impress him. No, impress him with his own character and say, "God, on that basis, I ask the doors of heaven's blessings to open to me in this great sorrow of mine. Be gracious to me because I have nothing else to offer you."

Fourthly, related to that, as you remember the grace of God, fourthly, ask for his mercy. Actually ask. Instead of just complaining, "Lord, I don't like this. I don't want it to be this way." Humbly ask him to intervene. Look at verse 4, "Return, O LORD. It seems like you've gone away from me. Come back. Come back and save me." Don't blame unfair circumstances. Don't complain that you don't deserve this. Don't threaten that you're going to quit, "I'm just going to give up, Lord." No, no, no, don't go there and if you are

there, come back out of that and ask him for mercy. You don't have to figure it out. You don't have to know how he's going to do that. In this realm of a heavy heart, you're making one plea and one plea alone, "God, deal with me according to the gracious, kind side of your nature. Whatever that means. It's been very dry and barren here for a long time, Lord. I'd like just a few raindrops of your mercy to moisten the ground. Would you do that for me, Lord? Just a little bit of grace to moisten my parched tongue."

Finally, could have opened with this one, probably should have. Come back next week and I'll preach this again and I'll do it in a different order. No, that's not true. Fifthly, as part of your humble appeal, do not be ashamed of your tears. Don't be ashamed of your tears. Look at verses 6 and 7 with me again. Here is King David laying it out. Here it is in the inspired word of God. Here it is in the worship book of the Bible. David saying, "every night I make my bed swim." This isn't a one time thing for him, he saying every night, do you see that? This is his daily experience as he penned Psalm 6. "Every night as I'm going to bed, I'm weeping, Lord. I can't bear this." And it's not just a couple of tears trickling down the corner of his eyes or he'd never say, "There is enough water in my tears to swim in. There's enough here to dissolve my couch." Whatever that is expressing in terms of the frequency and the length of his crying, it's a lot. He's saying, "I'm crying a lot here, enough that the tears could be measured in a bowl." And so, beloved, I'm saying this to help you and encourage you and strengthen you: in your tears, what I want you to see is, you are in good company in your tears. Don't try to emulate our rationalistic macho age in your spiritual life.

You're in good company. King David wept. You know what else? The Apostle Paul wept. He said, "I'm remembering the enemies of the cross and I tell you, even as I'm weeping, there are enemies of the cross. Their God is their appetite," Philippians 3:18. He speaks about his tears in other places. King David wept. The Apostle Paul wept. Do you know what? King Jesus wept outside the tomb of Lazarus in John 11. He wept over the unrepentant city of Jerusalem in Luke 19:41. Don't be ashamed of your tears. Don't try to emulate the slick production that you see in most churches. That's not reality. Skip over our cultural environment and look at the Scriptures and see, "Wow, the men of God were men who sometimes wept. My Lord himself was a man who wept." And let that give you strength and confidence to bring even your tears before a gracious God. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, he said, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." And so when you go with your heavy heart and your tear-streaked makeup to God, you have the certified promise on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, "I will receive you graciously. I will give you rest. I welcome the broken-hearted into my presence." And that, dear friends, that kind of sympathy from the God of your salvation, that kind of certain grace and favor and kindness is worth more than anything that this world could offer you. This is worth more than all of the sympathy of all of the people in this room. One little moment of a token of sympathy from God is worth everything the world could offer and what we have here in Psalm 6, certified by other parts of the word of God, is that he receives the broken-hearted with favor. Praise be to God that he deals such with his weak and trembling people



Now, we've seen David's grief in verses 1 through 7. I want you to see David's relief just briefly here in verses 8 through 10. There is no transition. There is nothing between verses 7 and 8 but you see a dramatic reversal of tone from the first section to the second section. It's almost difficult to believe that the same person is writing this. Verse 8, "Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping. The LORD has heard my supplication, The LORD receives my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; They shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed." David said in verse 3, "I am greatly dismayed," and at the end he's saying, "All of my enemies are going to be greatly dismayed." Wow. It's hard to fit this into the same skull of thinking. What brought about the change of attitude? How did he go from discouragement to suddenly being defiant in the face of his enemies? How did he go from disconsolation to consolation? How did he go from utter despair to complete triumph? What brought about the change of this attitude? He had just been swimming in his tears. Mark it carefully because he said it three times. It's not that his circumstances had changed because they hadn't. One thing turned the corner for his soul and it's the fact that the Lord had listened to him. The Lord gave him exactly what he had asked for and it was enough. Look at it at the end of verse 8, "Depart from me, For," here is his explanation. Here is the reason. He tells us why he is bold now, "because the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping." He repeats it, "The Lord has heard my supplication." He says it again, "The Lord receives my prayer." And I want you to see the utter simplicity of this and perhaps learn what it is that is supposed to change the course of your soul when you are heavy-hearted. It is not a change in your circumstances that you're looking for. That's not it, beloved. Even if your circumstances change and everything that has made you sad up to now is suddenly reversed and all of the circumstances are lined up, do you know what's going to happen eventually? It's going to go south again. It's not about circumstances at all and part of the reason that God withholds a change in our circumstances is so that we would learn to be satisfied with what David is satisfied here with in verses 8 and 10. This is difficult, heavy, thick meat to chew on but this, beloved, if you have been desperately heavy-hearted for a long time, this is what you need to hear. Sometimes the circumstances cannot change and so you are forced into this but the simplicity, the sincerity, the purity of what is laid forth before us here is that David was satisfied with the sense and the assurance that this Lord, this faithful covenant promise keeping God had heard his prayer. That was enough. "David, you were just crying. Why are you...?" "Because the Lord has heard my voice. I just had an audience with God and he received me favorably. He listened. He received me with care and kindness and gentleness and he heard everything that I had to say and he didn't mock me, he didn't laugh at me. He didn't turn me away. He took my soul seriously and while my circumstances may not change. I've got something better. The Lord received me as a man and all of a sudden the circumstances that were driving me to despair have been completely reverse. My perspective on them has been completely changed because God has received me in the midst of them and welcomed me and affirmed my prayer."

David's tears had no words but they found a voice with a sympathetic God and the eternal significance of that, the immense soul-deep comfort of that, the nobility that that suddenly assigned to his circumstances which prompted him to pray that way, transcended everything else in importance. Beloved, if we only recognized, if we had any

kind of sense of the depth and breadth of privilege it is for us as blood-bought believers in Christ to enter into the presence of God with bold and confident access, our whole perspective on everything would change because we would see, we would understand, we would recognize that that surpasses everything in significance and that is of value that my soul can rise to and aspire to and embrace and everything else becomes secondary by comparison. God heard my prayer. God received the voice of my weeping. He had an audience not with a man who would die, he had an audience with the God who lives eternally and he walked out transformed by the presence of God and God's great power and God's great faithfulness and the fact that God had received his prayer, meant that there would be an end to this suffering one day, one time. Somehow, God is the anchor of his soul and the outcome is assured.

Now, let's wrap this up. Here we are 3,000 years later reading this prayer and in the intervening 3,000 years, a thousand years after David wrote this, something really significant happened and the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross to offer a perfect sacrifice for the sins of everyone who would ever believe in him. You are hearing Psalm 6 expounded now on the other side of the cross and that means something really amazing. That means that your grounds for confidence are greater than David's were. That means that your audience with God is now with the full presence of light, the full presence of the gospel. That means that you have even more confidence than David did to approach God because you know now in retrospect looking back on it that which had not yet chronologically occurred in David's life for him to see and understand, you know that the Lord Jesus Christ had a heavy heart. He wept. He groaned on the cross. He sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane because of the weight that he felt on his soul. You now have in your possession a Savior, a Lord revealed in human flesh who knew affliction by personal experience and when you go in your affliction to the Lord Jesus Christ, he receives you not only as one gracious by character, he receives you as one who knows it from personal history. The Bible tells us that we are to make that part of our understanding and confidence in approaching the throne of grace.

Look at Hebrews 4 as we close. You see, this all points us to Christ. The more that I study the Psalms and the more that we study them together, we're going to see that the Psalms teach us about Christ. We see Christ fulfilling what David knew from afar. You and I are in a position better than David because we see this fulfilled in a person in time and space in a way that he had not yet seen. In verse 14 of Hebrews 4, it says, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest," one who intercedes for us, as it were, at the throne of God, who represents us, who offered his own life as the sacrifice for all time, once and for all, since we have such a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Who is that high priest? Jesus, the Son of God. No one on earth. That's the priest. That's the high priest. Jesus, the Son of God. Let us hold fast our confession. Verse 15, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." To state it positively, we do have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses. He's not a remote deity. He's not indifferent. He feels the weight of our infirmities when we come to him and therefore, there is an implication to that. Verse 16, "Therefore," as a result of that, because Christ has felt affliction, because he has groaned, "Therefore, let us," now, New Testament

believers, "let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

God does not despise your need. God does not reject your broken, heavy heart. In fact, based on what we've seen tonight, based on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can confidently say that our broken heart is the very grounds upon which we can know we will be received with favor and that on that grounds, when we come trusting in Christ alone, we find that he is willing, able and generously about to display grace and mercy to us in our time of need. What a great Savior. There is no one like this anywhere else in the universe. Let your heart be drawn to him in your weakness. Let your heart be drawn to him in your sorrow and let Christ alone be the one who provides the relief that you so desperately want and need. He is faithful. Go to him and let him prove his word to you.

Let's pray together.

*Father, we give glory to you. We acknowledge and affirm your goodness to us in hearing our prayers and we wait upon you in the midst of our difficulties as we look to you alone for the relief that our heart cries out to. We thank you that you're a merciful, gracious, caring God and that our sorrow somehow matters in the courts of heaven.*

*Father, I pray for these men and women, young people, that are here in front of me some facing grief over lost loved ones both spiritually and also those that have left this earthly life and left a major hole in hearts when they did. I pray for them. I pray that you would hear their tears even if their words aren't adequate to express the sorrow. Father, look on the tears of those grieving widows, those who have been on the receiving end of ruptured relationships that they did not expect or see coming. Father, look on their tears and receive them as the urgent prayers that they really are for relief and help them, be gracious to them. Father, for those going through physical sorrow, financial stress, just kind of tired of the routine of life even, Father, in that level of daily sorrow, prove yourself gracious and merciful to us.*

*We look to you, Lord. We pray that you would be kind to us. Give us favor even if we don't deserve it because, Father, our appeal is based on who you are. We appeal to your grace, your lovingkindness. This is how you deal with your people, Father, and so with no thought of merit of our own, we ask you to deal with us as you, yourself are, by your very character. Deal with us that way.*

*And Father, as we walk out tonight, we thank you that you have heard our prayer. That's enough. That's enough for us, Father. The God who brings about the rumble of thunder has heard us in the realm of peace and we thank you for that and pray that you would help us appropriate the turning of soul that it represents in Psalm 6. You've heard the voice of our crying, you've heard the voice of our weeping. You have received our prayer. Father, help us all to understand that that really is enough. If we are in your hand, that's all that we need to go out of here rejoicing.*

*So Father, for those of us that know Christ, we do rejoice and thank you for we are in your hand forever and Jesus said no one can pluck us away. For those who might be here outside of the realm of repentance and faith, Father, I pray that as you did with Lydia, you would open their hearts to believe the things that are being said and that they might turn to Christ and trust him as their Savior, embrace his cross work as their only hope of salvation, abandon all thought of self-righteousness or compliance with rules or some other thing and just trust Christ alone to receive them in their sin, to forgive them, to cleanse them and to give them eternal life. Do that, Father, too as you comfort your people who have known you for some time now. Lord, we lift these things up to you with gratitude that we can be called by your name. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

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