

Psalm 6 - O Lord, Deliver My Life

Opener: Have you ever had a “near death experience”? If not, what was the most scared you’ve ever been?

Read Psalm 6.

Q. What type of Psalm is this? (Individual lament, corporate lament, hymn, royal, thanksgiving.) What are the telltale signs?

A. It’s an individual lament - you’ll notice there *is* thanksgiving at the end of the Psalm otherwise this would be a different category called, “whining!”

Q. We know this is a Psalm of David from the introduction. From the opening verses what do you think is the problem that David’s facing? What is he asking God to do?

A. David’s problem is sin! He’s asking God to rebuke him - to correct him. But this is inevitable and so it’s like he’s going to God to tell him what he’s done wrong before God finds out first!! :-) “Rebuke me and discipline me - but don’t do it in anger, I’m sorry!!”

From verse 2 it would also seem that David has some physical ailment but I think that in David’s mind, the sin is causing his physical ailment. Now, it’s hard to say for sure but it could be that David is sick and so he assumes there’s some sin in his life (see Job’s comforters and John 9:1-2) or it could be that David recognizes sin in his life and ALSO he’s not well. Alternatively, from verse 7 it could be that David is getting old - eyesight getting weak is a sign of old-age as we all know (c.f. Deut 34:7).

Q. If you were going to commentate on verses 4 and 5 how would you describe what David is asking of God?

If you need some help: In verse 4, “steadfast love” (ESV) or “unfailing love” (NIV) is the Hebrew word ‘*hesed*’. There is no direct translation but the closest Greek equivalent is ‘*charis*’ which we translate as ‘grace’.

In verse 5, “remember” isn’t “don’t forget” - it’s more along the lines of - “Yahweh, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt and fed us in the desert” - it’s remembering something which leads to praise (“the God of our ancestors - of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”).

The thought was that everyone ended up in the same place at death - some kind of eternal awareness but with no joy - this is what is referred to as Sheol (the grave - under the ground - the underworld).

Q. In verse 3 David asks, “how long?” This is a phrase repeated in many Psalms of lament. What do you suppose the Psalmists are asking God to do?

A. It’s almost always, “How long until you keep your side of the covenant promises (Deut 28)?”

Q. With this in mind - why do you think the lament Psalms end in praise?

A. Because Yahweh is a faithful God. David has won victory after victory against his enemies because of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel - “how long?” - it’s only a matter of time!

Q. So then what’s the point of this lament (and most other laments)?

A. To remind - not God, but the Psalmist - of God’s faithfulness. He wants us to cry out to him when we need him. His character is unchanging and so if he’s been faithful before he’ll always be faithful!

Close: Do you need to lament something in your life (or even your whole life)? Do you truly believe that God is faithful and will carry you through it?