

Solo Reflection Exercise¹

(this is optional and is provided as a resource for you: you can do this Saturday afternoon, or Sunday morning before breakfast)

Psalm 6

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: WITH STRINGED INSTRUMENTS; ACCORDING TO THE SHEMINITH. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- ¹ O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath.
- ² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;
heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.
- ³ My soul also is greatly troubled.
But you, O LORD—how long?
- ⁴ Turn, O LORD, deliver my life;
save me for the sake of your steadfast love.
- ⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of you;
in Sheol who will give you praise?
- ⁶ I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
- ⁷ My eye wastes away because of grief;
it grows weak because of all my foes.
- ⁸ Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.
- ⁹ The LORD has heard my plea;
the LORD accepts my prayer.
- ¹⁰ All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled;
they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.

¹ Questions come from Peterson, Eugene H. Psalms: Prayers of the Heart. Intersociety Press, Il. 2000.

1. What different emotions are expressed in this Psalm?
2. It is not popular in our culture to talk of an angry God (v1). What experience have you had of God's anger?
3. Compare the first verse with the last. Are the tears because of the Lord or the enemies? Explain.
4. "How long?" (v3) is a frequent question in prayer. Considering the frequency with which it is uttered in Scripture, God must welcome it. What in your life, past or present, evokes the question?
5. What is the cumulative effect of the three verbs *turn*, *deliver* and *save* in verse 4?
6. The emotional center of this prayer is verses 6-7. How many different ways is weeping expressed?
7. Why the tears? Go through the psalm and note every possible source.
8. Tears are often considered a sign that something is wrong with us – depression, unhappiness, frustration – and therefore either to be avoided or to be cured. But what if they are a sign of something right with us? What rightness could they be evidence of?
9. In verses 8-9 there are three phrases in parallel: *weeping*, *cry for mercy* and *prayer*. Are these aspects of one thing or three different things?
10. Remembering and praising (v5) are set forth as if they should mean something to God. Why should they?

Are you practiced and skilled in remembering and praising? Explain.

11. Who do you know who is in grief?

Pray for those who are in grief now, using the phrases from Psalm 6 to express their sorrow.

Sing this metrical version of Psalm 6 – you can sing it to the tune of the songs *Before the Throne of God Above*, *How Deep the Father's Love For Us*, or *And Can It Be That I Should Gain*.

In anger, Lord, do not rebuke, nor judgment in Your wrath decide.
 My weakness, Lord, pity and heal, for in my bones I'm terrified.
 My soul is in me terrified. O Lord, and yet how long You take!
 Return, O Lord; my soul set free, and save me for Your mercies' sake.

For none can remember in death, or there shall your memory keep,
 And who can give You praises then, within the confines of the deep.
 My groaning all day wearies me, through ev'ry night till morn appears,
 My grieving makes my bed to swim and waters all my cot with tears.

Because of my enemies all, this grief is consuming my eyes.
 Then let evil men all depart! The Lord has heard my weeping cries.
 The Lord hears my suppliant cries. The Lord has my prayers brought to mind.
 My foes shall be vexed and ashamed, and sudden shame they all will find.