



Lament Psalms Week 4 Study Guide (10/11/2020)

Psalm 6

NRSV

- ¹ O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger,
or discipline me in your wrath.
- ² Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;
O Lord, heal me, for my bones are shaking with terror.
- ³ My soul also is struck with terror,
while you, O Lord—how long?
- ⁴ Turn, O Lord, save my life;
deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.
- ⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of you;
in Sheol who can 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 eyes waste away because of grief;
they grow 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 supplication;
the Lord accepts my prayer.
- ¹⁰ All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck with terror;
they shall turn back, and in a moment be put to shame.

The Message

- ¹⁻² Please, God, no more yelling,
no more trips to the woodshed.
Treat me nice for a change;
I'm so starved for affection.
- ²⁻³ Can't you see I'm black-and-blue,
beat up badly in bones and soul?
God, how long will it take
for you to let up?
- ⁴⁻⁵ Break in, God, and break up this fight;
if you love me at all, get me out of here.
I'm no good to you dead, am I?
I can't sing in your choir if I'm buried in some tomb!

⁶⁻⁷ I'm tired of all this—so tired. My bed
has been floating forty days and nights
On the flood of my tears.
My mattress is soaked, soggy with tears.
The sockets of my eyes are black holes;
nearly blind, I squint and grope.

⁸⁻⁹ Get out of here, you Devil's crew:
at last God has heard my sobs.
My requests have all been granted,
my prayers are answered.

¹⁰ Cowards, my enemies disappear.
Disgraced, they turn tail and run.

1. This week we begin looking at different types of Psalms. For example, there are Psalms of trust, Psalms of praise, and Psalms of thanksgiving, to name just a few of the variety of Psalms we find in the middle of our Bibles. We begin our look at different types of Psalms by looking at the kind that is most prevalent: Psalms of lament (or complaint). Some scholars suggest up to a third of the 150 Psalms can be placed in this category.

2. Take the time to compare the language of the two translations of Psalm 6 above. Which of the lines get your attention the most?

3. There is a similar structure to Psalms of lament. There is the:

Address – The Psalmist is praying to God. How is the “address” seen in the opening lines of Psalm 6? This is not an internal conversation that the Psalmist is having with himself. It is a conversation with God.

Complaint – Something is wrong, and the Psalmist doesn't hold back in making this clear in his prayer. What are some examples of complaint in the Psalm above?

Request – The Psalmist expects God to do something in response to his prayer. What are some examples of request in Psalm 6?

Expression of Trust – the complaint is offered with an underlying trust in the faithfulness of God. Where do you see this trust expressed above?

4. Psalms of lament are offered by individuals in the Psalms as well as communities.

Here are several examples of both:

Individual complaints: Psalms 3-5, 7, 13, 28, 54, 63

Communal complaints: Psalms 14, 44, 58, 79, 80, 123

5. Reflect on what it means that we have so many prayers of lament in the Psalms. What does this teach us about the faith of God's people? How might the many prayers of complaint inform your prayers this week?

Going Deeper

“Belief in God doesn't exempt us from feeling abandoned by Him. Praising God doesn't inoculate us from doubts about Him. Meditating devoutly on God's Word doesn't insulate us from feelings of darkness and dryness, of desertion and desolation.”

Eugene Peterson