

Psalm Four and Six**Title: The Conflict against Distressing Circumstances.**

Psalm 4

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have relieved me in *my* distress;

Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

² How long, O you sons of men,

Will you turn my glory to shame?

How long will you love worthlessness

And seek falsehood? *Selah*

³ But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly;

The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin.

Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. *Selah*

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,

And put your trust in the LORD.

⁶ *There are* many who say,

“Who will show us any good?”

LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart,

More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

⁸ I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;

For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 6

O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,

Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.

² Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I *am* weak;

O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.

³ My soul also is greatly troubled;

But You, O LORD—how long?

⁴ Return, O LORD, deliver me!

Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake!

⁵ For in death *there is* no remembrance of You;

In the grave who will give You thanks?

⁶ I am weary with my groaning;

All night I make my bed swim;

I drench my couch with my tears.

⁷ My eye wastes away because of grief;

It grows old because of all my enemies.

⁸ Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity;

For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.

⁹ The LORD has heard my supplication;

The LORD will receive my prayer.

¹⁰ Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled;

Let them turn back *and* be ashamed suddenly.

Introduction

This week I have grouped Psalm four and six together because they relate to a similar set of circumstances.

In Psalm four David was struggling with a very difficult situation and again in Psalm six we see David again going through a very difficult time.

Both of these Psalms give us an insight into the heart of David as he struggles with his circumstances.

These two Psalms also help us to realise that God appreciates that when the difficult times come in life, then we are going to get hurt.

However, although we may shed tears and express grief during the difficult times, we can overcome these problems and need not be defeated by them.

It is one thing to have problems in life, but as a Christian we must not let these situations paralyse us and affect our functioning in life.

We must always remember that when we are in a dark tunnel in life, Jesus declares himself as the “**Light of the world**”.

Jesus is the person that we need to turn to for comfort and joy inside our hearts, despite all that we are experiencing on the outside.

Paul reacted to his difficult circumstances in this way.

2 Corinthians 4: v. 8-9. (N.L.T.)

⁸We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. ⁹We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

In these two Psalms David identifies his problems, but he also points to where his confidence lies, and gives us guidance to how we can move forward in times of difficulty.

1. David’s first action is prayer in his time of trouble – Ps. 4: v.1, Ps. 6: v.1-3.

Psalm 4: v. 1

¹Answer me when I call to you,
O God who declares me innocent.
Free me from my troubles.
Have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

Psalm 6: v. 1-3 in the N.L.T.

¹O LORD, don’t rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your rage.
²Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak.
Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.
³I am sick at heart.
How long, O LORD, until you restore me?

When Christians go through very difficult times in life, prayer is not always the first thing that they think of doing.

The reason for this is that they are hurting so much and are so upset about their circumstances that they feel that they can’t pray.

If they did pray they would only be angry with God or pour out their grief to God in an unhealthy way.

I have good news for you. David was upset and angry, he went through hurtful emotions about his circumstances, but he still felt able to pray to God and **be honest about his inner turmoil.**

David was hurting in his heart, but he felt free and able to express that hurt towards God.

David didn’t hold back on sharing his heart with God.

Many Christians request prayer for themselves when their circumstances are very difficult, however they don’t always come to God first of all and pour out their hearts to God, expressing their deep need.

In 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5: v-16-17(N.K.J.) it says “rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

May I suggest that when you experience difficult times in life that you share your hurt and grief towards God first, before you go to others for help or even request prayer.

This will immediately engage God’s help to deal with the hurt or anger that you are experiencing in your heart.

Ultimately it is only God, through Jesus, by His Holy Spirit that can **change your heart** and make you **strong to confront your difficulties**.

2. **David was honest with God about his difficulties.**

In these two Psalms David expresses from his heart about his difficult situation.

In Psalm 6: v. 1 David feels that God is angry with him and David doesn't want God to discipline him. David wants God to have compassion upon him.

David describes that he has a "sick heart" (v. 3 in the N.L.T.)

David is also requesting God for physical healing. He describes himself as being in agony because his bones or body are really hurting.

In Psalm 6: v. 6-7 David describes his night-time experience.

He says in the N.L.T. "all night I flood my bed with weeping".

David also declares that his vision is blurred because of his grief. – v. 7.

We know the reason for David's difficult situation in Psalm 4 but we are not sure exactly what has caused David to write Psalm 6.

It was the behaviour of David's son Absalom who caused the writing of Psalm 4 when Absalom defeated his father and committed treason.

Although we are not sure about the immediate circumstances which come before Psalm 6 we do know that it is the first of seven "**penitential psalms**" or "**psalms of repentance**".

The other "repentant psalms" are Psalm 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and Psalm 143.

In view of this fact, we will find this Psalm and the other Psalms mentioned very helpful when we need to confess our sins and draw closer to God.

David records in Psalm 6 the stages of his difficult experience when he was moved by faith from his trial to a place of trusting God.

3. **David invites us to experience the different stages of his situation**

(Psalm 6 v. 1-10)

a) **The pain of discipline – v. 1-3.**

Eight times in this Psalm David addresses God as "**Lord**".

This is the covenant name of God. David was aware that he was addressing a covenant keeping God.

God had made promises to Abraham and his descendants, and David was included in these covenant promises.

The promises included blessing for obedience to God, but discipline if the Israelites disobeyed God's word. (Deuteronomy Chapter 28)

It appears that David has been disobedient to God and is undergoing a period of discipline.

Hebrews Chapter 12: v. 5-11 in the N.L.T.

⁵And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.

⁶For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."

⁷As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? ⁸If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. ⁹Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

¹⁰For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that discipline by God to His children is part of our training to make us more Holy and **eventually more like Jesus.**

Discipline is **not a negative thing if we embrace it with an open heart and try and let God change us from what we are to what He wants us to be.**

It is never a positive thing when we are going through discipline, but afterwards it does make us more usable by God for His purposes.

Sometimes God disciplines us in order to deal with our disobedience, but at other times God disciplines us in order to prepare us for what lies ahead in the future.

For some Christians discipline is like training.

A Sportsman, whether it is soccer, baseball, athletics, or whatever sport, must train hard in order to be fit enough and disciplined to be his or her best in their chosen sport.

People who are professional sportsmen or women, don't see their training as punishment, although it may be very hard on their bodies.

In the same way God is always preparing us for the next step in His service and therefore He is always working in our lives.

It is up to us to co-operate with His Holy Spirit and learn from the experience.

Rejecting God's disciplined love, means that we will **not grow to be a better witness for Jesus.**

So whether it is through disobedience, or through God wanting to refine our lives for His purposes, the fact that God wants us to grow to be more like Jesus must be a positive experience **and it is worth the pain.**

For David the pain was quite difficult and for us it may be like that too sometimes!!!

In the Benediction that is often said at the end of a service in lots of Churches, is a prayer for God to work in the lives of believers, in order to please God.

(Hebrews Chapter 13: v. 20-21 in N.K.J.)

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

b) The confidence in God's mercy - Psalm 6: v. 4-5.

There is one thing that we need to be sure about when we go through difficult times, and that is to understand the "**character of God**".

Every Jew knew about **Exodus Chapter 34: v. 6-7. (in N.L.T.)**

⁶ The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out,
"Yahweh! The LORD!

The God of compassion and mercy!

I am slow to anger

and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

⁷ I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations.

I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin.

But I do not excuse the guilty.

I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren;
the entire family is affected—

even children in the third and fourth generations."

David asked God to manifest His mercy and spare his life.

David's argument with God was that if he died, he could not be a witness for God or be used by God here on this earth.

David was convinced that God had more work for him to do and wanted to live to accomplish God's purposes.

This was the same argument that King Hezekiah made in Isaiah.

Isaiah Chapter 38: v. 15-20 in N.L.T.

¹⁵ But what could I say?

For he himself sent this sickness.

Now I will walk humbly throughout my years
because of this anguish I have felt.

¹⁶ Lord, your discipline is good,
for it leads to life and health.

You restore my health
and allow me to live!

¹⁷ Yes, this anguish was good for me,
for you have rescued me from death
and forgiven all my sins.

¹⁸ For the dead cannot praise you;
they cannot raise their voices in praise.

Those who go down to the grave
can no longer hope in your faithfulness.

¹⁹ Only the living can praise you as I do today.
Each generation tells of your faithfulness to the next.

²⁰ Think of it—the LORD is ready to heal me!
I will sing his praises with instruments
every day of my life
in the Temple of the LORD.

God extended Hezekiah's life for another 15 years.

I am sure that during that period God was able to use him.

So when we are going through a dark and difficult time, we need to know about the character of God. **We need to know that God is merciful.**

c) **The agony of David's suffering - v. 6-7.**

In v. 6-7 David doesn't hide the agony of his suffering.

David is going through a very hard time.

(v. 6-7 in the N.L.T.)

⁶ I am worn out from sobbing.

All night I flood my bed with weeping,
drenching it with my tears.

⁷ My vision is blurred by grief;
my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.

David's sleep had been replaced by suffering.

The problem with pain and suffering is that it can either **make us better or it can make us bitter.**
The difference between these two experiences is "**faith**".

If we turn to God and pray, remember His promises, and trust Him, we will find His grace sufficient for our needs.

2 Corinthians 12: v. 9. (N.L.T.)

⁹ Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

Quote from Warren Wiersbe

"The Lord may not do what we ask, when we want it, but He will do what needs to be done and help us glorify His name.

The question we should ask is not – "When will I get out of this problem?", but "What can I get out of this problem?"

d) **The joy of deliverance - v. 8-10.**

At this point in the Psalm there is a change from suffering to joy.

David now has confidence in what God is about to do, or perhaps he has had news about what God is doing on his behalf.

David starts his positive mood by saying **“Depart from me all you workers of iniquity” (N.K.J.)**

These words are also quoted by Jesus in Matthew Chapter 7: v. 23 and also in Luke Chapter 13: v. 27.

The way that Jesus says these words and the way that David says these words has a **note of finality in it.**

David has the confidence that God has heard his cry for mercy and David can now command his enemy to depart.

Whatever the situation was for David, he now knew that God was in full control of David’s difficult situation and his future life.

God had more ministry for David to perform and the preparation for that ministry was now complete.

It is a wonderful **“joy”** for a Christian believer to know that **his or her suffering has been worth it.**

God has actually accomplished something in our hearts as well as in our difficult situation.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, his disciples suffered in heart and in mind, and most of them saw no benefit in that suffering.

However, three days later when Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples realised that the suffering of Jesus was needed in order to accomplish their Salvation.

If Jesus had not suffered and died on the cross for our sins, then we would die in our sins and our suffering would be eternal.

However, Jesus took the punishment for our sins and He invites us to put our faith and trust in Him and all that He has accomplished through His death on the cross.

Q. Have you put your faith and trust in Jesus to forgive you for your sin?

If you have you can also trust Him for everything else that He allows to happen in your life.

With Jesus in your heart, ultimately all experiences, good or bad turn out for God’s glory if we embrace them in God’s love and purposes for us.