“My Heart Longs for God”

September 13, 2015

Psalm 84:1-12

Haven’t you had times when you felt like you should be praying, but couldn’t it? And what should you do when you feel like you are suffering? And, like me, haven’t you prayed the “How long, O LORD” prayer? And what did you do? Did you turn to a particular Book of the Bible for help? I have.

History tells us that it took two years to write the Treaty of Paris. It took Mark Twain six years to write Huckleberry Finn. The first Oxford Dictionary of the English Language took forty-four years to compile. The poem “The Cantos” by Ezra Pound; fifty-two year. Now, which book took nine hundred years to complete?

And the Holy Spirit used at least six men upwards to six hundred years to compile the Book of Psalms: Moses, King David, Heman the Ezrahite, Ethan the Ezrahite, Solomon, Asaph, and a group known as “the sons of Korah.” Beginning with Moses in the year 1,400 B.C., through the times of King David in 1000 B.C. and concluding with the building of the second Temple in Jerusalem under Haggai in 520 B.C., the Psalms were written.

And, by the way, the Book of Psalms is actually five separate books.

Today, I want to take you back some 3,000 years ago -- to the Psalms; Psalm 6.

The Book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible; with 150 chapters. A Psalm is a “song; usually sung to an accompaniment of stringed instruments.” The Book of Psalms is a really just a Divine Collection of Jewish songs. Actually it’s both a Hymnal and a Prayer Book. And what’s so wonderful about the Psalms is that they cover nearly the entire gamut of our human emotions and attitudes.

Here’s what you’ll find in Psalms. **Worship**. You find people worshipping the LORD. **Emotion**. You can and should people relating to the LORD with every emotion as well as in every circumstance; anger, grief, joy, frustration, peace, complaining, and anguish. As one man puts it “It speaks about our desperate circumstances and how to deal with them, both with God at your side and with Him at a distance.” [Found on http:radicaltheologians.blogspot.com]. **Praise**. You’ll find that many, many of the Psalms are songs of Praise. Then, **thanksgiving**. And just like when you look to the Holy Spirit today to help you when you **pray**, He will often take you to the Book of Psalms to teach you.

Now, how about those time when you knew you should pray; but couldn’t? Did any of the Psalms ever become *your* prayer? How about those times of suffering? Didn’t the Psalms comfort your heart? Maybe you’re in a time of prolonged difficulty. And like me you’ve prayed “LORD, how long?” And when you turned to the Psalms, you found other people before you prayed had the very same feelings you’ve had. Actually I found that there are twelve specific occasions when someone in the Psalms prayed the “How long, O LORD” prayer.

The sixth Psalm is a huge encouragement because it’s a Psalm written by a man who is in trouble, which we’ve all had experience with. He’s in physical as well as emotional pain. So, today I’ve titled today’s sermon “My Heart Longs For you O God.” Shall we pray?

“The Psalms have a unique place in the Bible because all of the Scripture speaks *to* us while the Psalms speak *for* us.” [Anathasius of Alexandria]. Martin Luther wrote “For every man, on every occasion, can find in the Psalms that which fits his needs, which he feels to be appropriate as if they have been set there just for his sake.”

I hope you’ll find with me that the Sixth Psalm is set here just for your sake. Find with me verse one of the sixth Psalm. Please follow as I read this sixth Psalm. And as I read, watch for the ways in which David refers to his soul.

Psalm 6:1 *“O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. (2) Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed [troubled]. (3) My soul is also sore vexed (very troubled): but thou, O LORD, how long? (4) Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake*.

*(5) For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? (6) I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. (7) Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth (grows) old because of all mine enemies.*

*(8) Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. (9) The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer. (10) Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed [troubled]: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.”*

Sometimes I read the Bible and just read it for reading’s sake. But there are also those times when I read to know the LORD more. When I do that, I see more. Reading is important. But fellowship with God is much more important. And you can simply stop and consider your spirit as you open your Bible each day and come before His voice.

Now, many, many of the Psalms have a prayer in them.

You might say that the sixth Psalm is one of those prayers. It’s a Psalm that you should pray when you are sick. And that’s true. But, when you are sick, there’s just one thing you’re concerned about; usually. You want get well. Here’s one easy-to-memorize verse. And isn’t this exactly what David prays for? Notice again verse two. (2) “Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.”

When was the last time you prayed “LORD, heal me”?

God intended for the lessons in this Psalm to be practical. And if you’ve ever been ill or if you are ill today, you can just see David wanting an answer. There *is* a way to honor the LORD when you are in the depths of sickness: pray to the One Who can heal you.

Look with me at the lessons here in the sixth Psalm.

First, God listens. You are learning to walk God by the circumstances that He allows to come your way. Did you notice how David saw himself when he was so ill? Look again at verse one. Psalm 6:1 *“O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.”*

Did you ever consider your illness as the LORD chastening you? David took his sickness as an indication of two things: God’s displeasure and His chastening. David sees the chastening hand of the LORD on him. And folks, it’s true. God does sometimes use illness to chasten His Children. And yes, the LORD does allow us to experience His rebukes and discipline.

But let me remind you of the difference between punishment and discipline. Punishment for a child of God took place at Calvary. Jesus took God’s wrath upon Himself for what you’ve done.

Chastening is “God’s individual and personal training of His children so as to further your development of holiness.

Now, as His child, be glad when you are chastened. Why? It’s a clear sign to your of your being a child of God.

I Corinthians 11:30 *“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (31) For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. “But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”*

Don’t ever think that God is punishing you if you are one of His children. The punishment took place on Calvary. And, at the moment of your salvation, God completely and permanently removed the condemnation for your sins from you.

Now you stand before Him as one of His beloved children. Hebrews 12:7 *“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (8) But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (11) “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

Now let me share with you here some of the reasons why we experience sickness.

The first one is discipline. And we would be wise to consider God’s discipline when we are ill.

Second, we live in a fallen world and so we are prone to sickness and disease. When sin entered the world through Adam, so did sickness and disease and death.

Third, we all have often made poor decisions regarding our health and we experiences the consequences. I Corinthians 6:19 *“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”* Your body clearly belongs to God. You are called to daily present it to the LORD for His use. And when you don’t take good care of your body, you might get sick.

Fourth, the power of Satan. Sometimes the reason for our sickness is the devil himself. Luke 13:11 *“And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. (16) And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?”*

Fifth, God allows some sicknesses and disease solely to show His works. John 9:1 *“And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. (2) And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? (3) Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”*

And what goes on in your heart and mind when are ill? Your heart longs for the LORD. Psalm 63:1 *“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;…”*

Folks, it’s good that we experience affliction. It’s good because it gets our attention and turns our hearts towards the LORD. In David’s case, like you and me, he saw his affliction as the chastening hand of the LORD.

You see, God allows you to experience chastening in the very same way you discipline your children. It’s designed to draw you closer to your mother and father. He wants you to pray “My heart, O God, longs for You.”

So, chastening is the LORD’s way of removing specific sins from our lives. And, at the same time, He teaches us that He is ready to listen to our cries.

First, He listens.

Second, you need to listen.

Whenever you are ill, something you need to do is this: Go through this list of reasons for illness and suffering and honestly ask yourself this question “Is there a need in my life that calls for God’s chastening?” Is there a sin that I am unwilling to give up?

Think about it like this. How does a little child see the chastening that comes from his parents? Does he expect it? Probably not. Does he sometimes anticipate it? Yes, if he knows he’s been doing something he shouldn’t be doing. And does he like it? No. But, is it good for him? Absolutely.

Yet, once your son or daughter has been disciplined, it’s over and he gets on with his life of play and wonder. Do you think it’s any different with the LORD?

As you can see, David does the right thing in his time of pain and grief. He goes to the LORD. Psalm 6:1 *“O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.”*

Shouldn’t we do the same? Folks, rejoice. Be glad when the LORD disciplines you. You belong to Him. You are His son or daughter. Should He not discipline you? And His purpose in chastening is to further sanctify you and conform you to the image of Jesus.

One very wise man puts it like this “God never wastes His disciplines.” He’s not only allowed it, but He has designed it so that we will learn to walk in close fellowship with Him in this world.

First, He listens.

Second, you need to listen.

Third, pray while you long for God.

It’s alright to pray for God’s healing power when we are sick. Psalm 6:2 says this. *(2) “Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed [troubled. (3) My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long? (4) Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.”*

Did you notice that old English word “vexed”? This is the only time it’s found in the entire Book of Psalms. It’s usually translated “troubled.” Here’s what it means. Vexed = “agitated and troubled,” disquieted and disturbed.”

Now, notice that two things are vexed, according to David; one, his bones; and two, his soul. Psalm 6:2 *“Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed [troubled]. (3) My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?”*

In other words, David feels this particular sickness in two places. He feels it physically in his bones and he feels it emotionally in his heart. His bones refer to his physical body and his soul is a reference to the rest of him.

But here’s the point. David, just like you and me, was experiencing unrest in his body and in his soul. And his response was a response directly to God. *(2) “Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me;…”*

Folks, when you are sick, the first thing to do is respond to the LORD. Look to Him. You can pray these four words in full faith *“O LORD, heal me.”*

You see, even if it’s a time of chastening from the LORD, it’s still OK to pray a healing prayer.

First, He listens.

Second, you need to listen.

Third, pray while you long for God.

Fourth, what should you do if you think you might die because of this sickness?

Look at verse five. Look with me at David’s reason why He’s asking the LORD to heal him. *(5) “For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?”*

Can you see the true motive here of David’s heart here? He wants to live so that he will be able to give God praise and thanks. In other words, if you’ll allow me “LORD, I don’t want to die. I want to live so that I can still praise you here. Heal me.”

Folks, this might be your motive when you are languishing on a bed of sickness. And, as you can see, it comes from a tender and submitted heart.

One of the most wonderful things about being a child of God is this. You can be honest with God. You can be more real with God than you can be with even those who are closest to you. You never have to think God doesn’t understand your feelings. Folks, He knows your thoughts. And He fully understands your feelings. As a matter of fact, the Only One Who truly understands your feelings and thoughts about suffering, sickness, death and dying is the LORD.

Hebrews 4:15 *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

So, yes, it’s OK to pray “LORD, heal me” even when you think you are nearing death. But carefully weigh your own motives.

First, He listens.

Second, you need to listen.

Third, pray while you long for God.

Fourth, what should you do if you think you might die because of this sickness?

Fifth, make sure you long for God.

Folks, it’s normal and natural to cry when you’re hurting. Look at David again in verse six. *(6) “I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.”*

Sometime you should read through the Psalms and just note how the Psalms describe the heart when you are alone and awake at night. It will amaze you that it can become your greatest time for meditation.

Here’s David in tears probably because he realizes that it was his sin that has been the cause of this affliction. These are tears of his repentance.

But how many times have you been sick and just felt like crying? Haven’t we all? But doesn’t a time of crying before the LORD actually help? It’s just natural to cry when you are going through a tough time with sickness.

But notice this. Not one of us likes to be sick. And none of us wants to die. It’s just God’s way that we don’t enjoy either sickness or dying. But every one of us will experience both.

There’s certainly a lot that can be said about crying. But, again, I’d like to save that for another day. Now there’s one last lesson you can learn from this man on his bed of sickness here in Psalm 6. Here it is.

Sixth, as long as we are on this side of Heaven, there will always be enemies to contend with. Notice David’s words in verse seven.

*(7) Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. (8) Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. (9) The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer. (10) Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.”*

David, as you know, is the King of Israel. And, based upon this psalm, he must have been ill for some time. And during that time, his enemies were rejoicing over his illness and, apparently, wishing and hoping for his death. They had been, just like those who, when Jesus died, mocked Him.

Now, I’ll admit this is simply terrible. But it *is* true. The ways of man will always be a conundrum. Why should anyone rejoice when his enemy is suffering?

But, even though you’ve got your enemies, you’ve always got your faith. Look at David’s words in verse eight*. “… for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. (9) The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer…”*

If there’s one thing that will always work for the child of God, it’s faith. Whenever you are in need, pray. Why? Because you have faith that God will hear and supply your need. When you are ill and you pray, you are exercising faith. Why? Because you know that the LORD is the true and the greatest physician. And the LORD is pleased every single time you exercise faith. And that He is the One Who can and will heal you. Anytime your heart longs for the LORD, it’s good.

And folks, confidence in the LORD will always see you through; even if you are ill right up unto death’s door.

So, here are the lessons from this great Psalm.

First, He listens.

Second, you need to listen.

Third, pray while you long for God.

Fourth, consider the seriousness of your sickness that you might die.

Fifth, make sure you long for God.

Sixth, as long as we are on this side of Heaven, there will always be enemies to contend with.

Discipline, faith, prayer, longing for God and healing all go hand in hand. There are so many Psalms that reveal this. I went through the Book of Psalms a while back and found these. And when you are sick you should read them. Psalm 41:3-8; 77:1-12; 88; 1-18; 91, 102, 109:21-27.

In conclusion, would you turn with me to the prayer of Psalm 38? It’s a prayer well worth memorizing.

Psalm 38:1 *“A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance. O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. (2) For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. (3) There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*

*(4) For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. (5) My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. (6) I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. (7) For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.*

*(8) I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. (9) Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. (10) My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.”*

You see, you are not hidden from the LORD. And when you’re ill, there’s a reason for it. Go to the LORD with it and learn to trust Him in and through it.

Every one of us would like to in full health all the time. But we all know that that’s not the case. So, in your trial of illness and pain, long for the LORD.

Now, in closing, I want to offer you a prayer that you can pray today that will enable you to begin to put these attitudes and ideas into action. It’s another of the many “Prayers of Surrender” by St Ignatius Loyola

*“Take O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess You have given me. I surrender it all to You to be disposed of according to Your will. Give me only Your love and Your grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will desire nothing more." [Found on* [*http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/new\_thought\_science\_mind/85679#ixzz0idum8XKv*](http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/new_thought_science_mind/85679#ixzz0idum8XKv)*].*

And finally, a word to those who have never put their trust in Jesus Christ.

The greatest need in your heart and the largest problem in your life is your sin and the fact that your sin is what separates you from God. The Prophet Isaiah said. *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”*

Yet, out of love, Jesus became the Substitute for your sins.

The Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans says this. Romans 3:23 *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” and (Romans 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

There’s only one way to receive God’s Salvation. It’s through God’s Son. And here’s how. The Bible says Acts 20:21 *“… repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Will you repent and exercise faith towards Him?

Today is the day of Salvation? What will you do about the condition of your heart for eternity?

REPENT - “Will you change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God’s free gift of salvation?”

BELIEVE - “Will you simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins?”

Here’s a simple salvation prayer for you to pray if you’ve never trusted the LORD for His free gift of eternal life. Salvation Prayer

* “LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and in need of your grace. I believe that You sent Your Son to the Cross to die for me. Please forgive me of all my sins and make me Your child. Thank you.”

Everyone who calls upon the Name of the LORD will be saved.

Now please turn with me to Hymn # 548 “As The Deer.” Let’s sing all these verses together as you remind yourself and those around you of what the LORD Himself says about sickness.