

# Psalm 6

“Blessed Are Those Who Mourn”

August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## 1. Intro

- a. In the year 1812, a man named Adoniram Judson experienced a flurry of activity that would leave most of us gasping for breath
  - i. In just two weeks, Adoniram was married, was ordained into the ministry, and was commissioned as a foreign missionary
    1. At the end of those two weeks, Adoniram and his wife, Nancy, set sail for India, becoming the first American missionaries sent to a foreign land
      - a. He and his wife were both Congregationalists – basically Presbyterians – who believed in infant baptism
      - b. Judson knew that when they got to India, he would be working alongside the famous Baptist missionary, William Carey
        - i. He wanted to be able to defend his views on infant baptism, so he spent the long journey to India studying everything the Bible had to say about baptism
        - ii. Interestingly, by the time they got to India, both Adoniram and his wife had become Baptists!
          1. Which is why we get really excited to talk about Adoniram Judson, reminding people that the first missionaries sent out from America were BAPTISTS!
    - ii. While they were in India, Adoniram and Nancy felt the call to go to the people of Burma, where they would spend many years, slowly and diligently bringing the Gospel to these people whom we would call today, “unreached”
      1. They would both experience persecution and sickness and rejection
        - a. Adoniram was imprisoned in awful conditions for over 19 months
        - b. And they lost three children in Burma as a result of the harsh conditions there
      2. And in 1826, Nancy would die as well, shortly followed by the death of their third child
        - a. Needless to say, Adoniram knew what it meant to mourn
          - i. Following Nancy’s death, and the death of their daughter, Adoniram retreated into the jungles of Burma, where he battled with an intense depression and despair
            1. Even going so far as to dig his own grave in the ground
          - ii. God brought him through those times in the valley of mourning
            1. And after a period of around four years, Adoniram’s heart for the Gospel was renewed, and God would use him mightily to transform the hearts of the Burmese people
        - iii. But Judson’s path was a path of intense mourning, wasn’t it?
  - b. King David experienced many similar valleys throughout his lifetime
    - i. We’ve talked before about the mourning he experienced as his son Absalom rebelled against him and attempted to steal the Kingdom
    - ii. We know of the mourning he experienced when the son born to him by Bathsheba died, as a direct consequence of their sinful affair
    - iii. David was a man who knew what it meant to mourn
      1. And we get a glimpse into this mourning in Psalm 6
        - a. We don’t know the context of this Psalm, but it’s not hard to see that it was written during a very painful time in David’s life
          - i. Let’s look at this Psalm together...

## c. Psalm 6

- i. *(To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments; according to The Sheminith. A Psalm of David.)* <sup>1</sup>O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. <sup>2</sup>Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled. <sup>3</sup>My soul also is greatly troubled. But

*you, O LORD—how long? <sup>4</sup>Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love. <sup>5</sup>For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise? <sup>6</sup>I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with weeping. <sup>7</sup>My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes. <sup>8</sup>Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping. <sup>9</sup>The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer. <sup>10</sup>All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.*

- d. “Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing...”
    - i. David’s heart was in much turmoil as he penned this Psalm
      1. Maybe he was also going through a season of depression and despair, similar to what Adoniram Judson went through after the deaths of his wife and daughter
        - a. His mourning was very deep
        - b. And his mourning was very real
    - ii. Which brings us to the striking statement that Jesus made in Matthew 5:4, “BLESSED are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”
      1. This word Jesus used for blessed can be defined as “happy, due to the fortune and favor of God”
        - a. HAPPY are those who mourn???
        - b. HAPPY are those who mourn like David, as he saw the tragic consequences of his own sins??
        - c. HAPPY are those who mourn like Adoniram Judson, as he experienced loss that none of us could even comprehend??
      2. What in the world was Jesus saying when he said, “Blessed – happy – are those who mourn???”
    - iii. I believe that Psalm 6 can help us to understand what Jesus was teaching in this verse
      1. And we’ll look at it in four parts...
        - a. Blessed are those who mourn over their own sin
        - b. Blessed are those who mourn over death
        - c. Blessed are those who mourn over the sin in this world
        - d. Blessed are those who mourn, for their weeping will be heard
2. First, blessed are those who mourn over their own sin
    - a. David opens this Psalm by writing in verses 1-3
      - i. *<sup>1</sup>O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. <sup>2</sup>Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled. <sup>3</sup>My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O LORD—how long?*
      - ii. It’s clear from the way David starts out that he is dealing with his own sin here
        1. He is deeply concerned that the Lord is going to rebuke him in his anger
        2. He is fearful that the Lord is going to discipline him in His wrath
          - a. These are the words of a man who KNOWS he is guilty of sin against God
            - i. Maybe this was written after David had his affair with Bathsheba, and had her husband murdered on the front lines of battle
              1. That would certainly fit these words, wouldn’t it?
            - ii. Or, maybe David wrote this hymn after he ordered a census of the fighting men in Israel in 1 Chronicles 21
              1. And as a result of God’s displeasure with David’s actions, 70,000 men were killed by an angel of destruction
              2. That would DEFINITELY fit these opening lines of Psalm 6
      - iii. Whatever the context David was in at this time, he was deeply mourning over the sin in his own life
        1. This word that David used for languishing has the idea of being physically and emotionally weak and feeble, to the point where your body actually becomes sick
        2. Maybe you can relate?
          - a. Maybe you’ve been in a place where your sin has gotten to its lowest point

- b. Maybe you've been in a place where the consequences of your sin deeply and painfully affect your life, and the lives of those around you
        - c. Maybe you've been in a place where your eyes have been opened to see the magnificent holiness and splendor of God, and your own wretchedness in comparison
          - i. These are the places where our mourning affects us so strongly, that our bodies become weak and feeble, even sick
  - b. And Jesus says, "Blessed are you who mourn over your own sin in such a way, for you shall be comforted"
    - i. Jesus' half-brother, James, gives us this same idea, only he uses far less tender words than Jesus...
      - 1. James 4:8-10 says,
        - a. *<sup>8</sup>Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*
    - ii. My friends, I would argue that this kind of mourning is absolutely essential in our journey as followers of Jesus Christ
      - 1. For we are ALL sinners
      - 2. We are ALL double-minded
        - a. And if you say that you are not then I would say that you are not being honest with yourself
        - b. Even the Apostle Paul struggled with being double-minded in his life
          - i. This was what he was expressing when he said in Romans 7:15,
            - 1. *<sup>15</sup>For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.*
          - ii. And then he cries out in mourning in verse 24,
            - 1. *<sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*
          - iii. Paul KNEW what it meant to be double-minded – he KNEW what it meant to be wretched and to mourn and weep over his own sin
        - c. But Paul ALSO knew the answer to this mourning, didn't he?
      - 3. His answer came in verse 25... who will deliver us from this body of death?
        - a. *<sup>25</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*
  - iii. THIS is why it is absolutely crucial that we mourn over the sin in our own lives
    - 1. Because when we mourn over our own sin, that mourning leads us into the only true and lasting comfort that can cover our sins, the comfort of our Lord Jesus Christ!
      - a. And IN CHRIST, you will find true blessedness
      - b. IN CHRIST, you will find true happiness
        - i. For it is only in Christ that your sins can be forgiven!
          - 1. In Christ, the wretched become righteous
          - 2. In Christ, the double-minded become pure
          - 3. In Christ, the sinners become saints
    - 2. And this all comes as we mourn over the sin in our own lives, and find comfort in the forgiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ
      - a. Blessed are those who mourn over the sin in their own lives, for they shall be comforted
3. The second truth we see this morning is blessed are those who mourn over death
  - a. In Psalm 6:4-5, David writes,
    - i. *<sup>4</sup>Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love. <sup>5</sup>For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?*
  - b. As we look at these verses in Psalm 6, they give us the opportunity to take a brief look into the Hebrew concepts of death and the afterlife
    - i. As we see in verse 5, David says that in death, there is no remembrance of God
      - 1. And in Sheol, who will give God praise?

- ii. So what is he talking about here?
  - 1. There are a few different theories about what Ancient Israel believed about death and the afterlife
    - a. The view that seems to have the strongest biblical support is the idea that they believed that everyone would descend into Sheol – both the righteous and the wicked alike
    - b. Sheol is described in many ways throughout the Old Testament, but basically it is a dark and gloomy place, where the soul rests in some kind of intermittent state
      - i. As we see here in Psalm 6, those in Sheol don't remember God, and therefore, they do not give Him praise
    - c. But there was also a belief that at some point, there would be some form of resurrection from Sheol
      - i. But this resurrection would only be for the righteous, who would go to be with God
      - ii. The wicked would remain in Sheol, presumably for all eternity
  - 2. We need to understand that, while these ideas regarding death and the afterlife are somewhat different than what is presented in the New Testament, they are NOT in competition with one another
    - a. In the Bible, we see that God is progressively revealing Himself to His people throughout the Scriptures
      - i. As the Scriptures progress throughout real-world history, God shows Himself to His people in new and deeper ways, culminating in the sending of His very own Son, Jesus Christ
      - ii. So it isn't that we look back on the Old Testament views of death and Sheol and say, "Oh wow, they sure got that wrong."
        - 1. But instead, we need to understand that we have been given MUCH more revelation than they had, since we have the inspired Word of God right here to access
- iii. So when you see the term Sheol in the Old Testament, know that for the writers in those days, it was NOT how we think of heaven and hell today
  - 1. But instead, it was simply a place of darkness and emptiness
    - a. If your life was good, and you had experienced a lot of God's blessings, then Sheol represented a place of grief – a place where the earthly blessings would be taken from you
    - b. But if your life had not gone well, Sheol represented a place of rest and peace from the trials of this life
      - i. We see this in Job 14:13, as Job pleads with God and says, *"Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!"*
- iv. But for David, in this Psalm, death was not something he desired, and so he mourned over the possibility that his death might be soon at hand
  - 1. And he pleaded with God to save him, for the sake of the Lord's steadfast love
    - a. Isn't this our prayer as well?
      - i. As much as we long for heaven...
      - ii. As much as we long to be free from sin and sickness and the problems of this world...
      - iii. As much as we long to be with Christ,
    - b. We still mourn over the idea of death, don't we?
      - i. For, even if we believe all that the Scriptures tell us about the glories of eternity in heaven, death here on earth still represents loss
        - 1. It still represents sorrow and tragedy
        - 2. It still causes us to mourn
          - a. And it is RIGHT for us to feel these things

- v. For death is not supposed to be
    - 1. When God created the world, and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden, they were meant to live forever, as they ate freely of the Tree of Life
    - 2. But, when Adam and Eve rebelled against God's commands, they were cast out of the Garden, away from the Tree of Life, and death entered the world
      - a. As Paul said in Romans 5:12-14
        - i. *<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned – <sup>13</sup>for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.*
      - b. Death reigns in the world, as a consequence of all of our sin
        - i. And therefore, we mourn over that reality
  - c. But, as Paul also said in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, we do not grieve as those who have no hope!!
    - i. For, as he continued in verses 14-18...
      - 1. *<sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.*
    - ii. Brothers and sisters in Christ, it is right for us to mourn over death in this world, for that is not the way it was supposed to be
      - 1. But we do not mourn as those with no hope, for one day, we will ALL meet Jesus in the air, and we will ALWAYS be with the Lord
    - iii. Blessed are those who mourn over death, for they shall be comforted
4. And the third truth we see in Psalm 6 is, blessed are those who mourn over the sin in this world
  - a. Psalm 6:6-7
    - i. *<sup>6</sup>I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. <sup>7</sup>My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes.*
  - b. We live in a broken and fallen world
    - i. We see this reality all around us, when we turn on the news, when we get on social media, even just driving down the street
      - 1. The world is becoming a darker and darker place, right before our eyes
        - a. David experienced this himself, many centuries ago, half a world away
          - i. He flooded his bed with tears
          - ii. His eyes wasted away because of grief
          - iii. He mourned for the sin in this world, that came at the hand of all his foes
  - c. Jesus would experience these same emotions, as he stood on the road approaching Jerusalem, and gazed upon this city that should have been the heart of God's Kingdom on this earth
    - i. And in Luke 19:41-44, we read,
      - 1. *<sup>41</sup>And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side <sup>44</sup>and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*
    - ii. Jesus mourned over the sin in this world
      - 1. And the question we must ask is, "Do we?"

- a. When we look at the world around us, and we see the awful effects of sin tearing apart the very fabric of society, does it lead us to MOURN over these things?
      - i. Or does it make us angry?
      - ii. Does it make us want to fight back?
      - iii. Does it make us want to get even?
    - b. My friends, these may be the emotions of everyone around us, but they were not the emotions of our Savior
  - iii. Jesus saw the sins of the people in Jerusalem, and he wept
    - 1. For he knew the destruction that awaited them
      - a. Within a short four decades, these prophecies would come true
        - i. The city of Jerusalem would come under siege from Roman soldiers
        - ii. The Temple would be destroyed
        - iii. And vast numbers of the people would be deported as slaves
      - b. As tragic as those days were, they were nothing compared to the tragedy that awaits all those who continue in their sin today
        - i. The Scriptures are clear...
          - 1. As we heard earlier, there will come a Day when Christ returns and we will meet him in the air, and we will be with him always
          - 2. But not all will be with him, will they?
            - a. No, there will be many that day who will finally realize the extent of their rebellion
            - b. And for them, it will be too late
    - iv. Do these truths cause us to mourn, friends?
      - 1. They should... for they caused the very Son of God to weep tears of great sorrow
  - d. But in the midst of our mourning over the sins of this world, we will be comforted
    - i. We will be comforted by the truth that SOMEDAY, there will no longer be sin in this world
      - 1. Revelation 21:3-4 tells us that, when the NEW Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband, this truth will be confirmed:
        - a. *"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*
      - ii. There will be a day, Christians, when sin will be no more
        - 1. Christ will make all things new, and all mourning shall pass away
          - a. This is where we place our hope, even as we mourn at the condition of the world around us
    - e. Blessed are those who mourn over the sin in the world, for they shall be comforted
- 5. And finally, blessed are those who mourn, for their weeping will be heard
  - a. David concludes his Psalm by writing in verses 8-10,
    - i. *<sup>8</sup>Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping. <sup>9</sup>The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer. <sup>10</sup>All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.*
  - b. Three incredible statements from David in his mourning...
    - i. The Lord has heard the sound of my weeping
    - ii. The Lord has heard my plea
    - iii. The Lord accepts my prayer
  - c. David was a man who knew what it was to mourn
    - i. He had PLENTY of opportunities to mourn over the own sin his life, as his decisions resulted in not just the loss of Uriah's life, but the lives of seventy THOUSAND of the people he had been entrusted with
    - ii. He also knew the intense mourning that comes as the shadow of death creeps across your doorstep
      - 1. As his anguish brought him nearer to the grave and nearer to Sheol, David mourned deeply over the thought of his own death

- iii. And David also knew what it was to mourn over the sin in this world, as so much of his story consisted of men trying to take his kingdom and his rule away from him
- d. David KNEW what it meant to mourn
  - i. But he also KNEW the comfort of the Lord
    - 1. He knew that his comfort was found in the truth that the Lord heard his weeping
    - 2. He knew that his comfort was found in the truth that the Lord heard his pleas
    - 3. And he knew that his comfort was found in the truth that the Lord had accepted his prayer
  - ii. My friends, this is where we must find our comfort as well
    - 1. For we will find much to mourn over during our few years on this earth
      - a. But OUR comfort comes in the knowledge that, as we mourn over the sin in our own lives, and repent of our rebellion against our King, the Lord will stoop down and hear our weeping
      - b. Our comfort comes in the knowledge that, as we mourn over death and all the loss and grief and sorrow it brings, the Lord hears our pleas and grants to us eternal LIFE – a life that will be unaffected by the second death
      - c. And our comfort comes in the knowledge that, as we mourn over the sin in the world – the sin that we once so eagerly enjoyed as well – the Lord hears our prayers of repentance, and He ACCEPTS those prayers!!
- e. Have you thought about that recently?
  - i. Have you thought about how amazing it is that, in the midst of OUR sin and rebellion against Him, God ACCEPTS our prayers when we come to Him in true sorrow and repentance?!
    - 1. It is for this reason that, even as we mourn over sin and death, we are a people who OVERFLOW with joy!!
      - a. For the Lord has heard our weeping!
      - b. The Lord has heard our pleas!
      - c. And the Lord has accepted our prayers!
  - ii. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!!
- f. We opened this morning by hearing of all the tragedies that Adoniram Judson endured out on the mission field in Burma
  - i. I'll close by reading to you this quote from him, as he wrote to a fellow brother in Christ who was also enduring many trials...
    - 1. "You are now drinking the bitter cup whose dregs I am somewhat acquainted with. And though, for some time, you have been aware of its approach, I venture to say that it is far bitterer than you expected... But don't be concerned. I can assure you that months and months of heartrending anguish are before you, whether you will or not. I can only advise you to take the cup with both hands, and sit down quietly to the bitter meal which God has appointed for your sanctification...Take the bitter cup with both hands, and sit down to your meal. You will soon learn a secret, that there is sweetness at the bottom. You will find it the sweetest cup that you ever tasted in all your life."
  - ii. Judson went through much mourning in his service to the Lord
    - 1. So much so that his life almost ended in despair
      - a. But, rather than stopping at the mourning, Judson took up the cup with both hands
      - b. And he found a sweetness at the bottom of the cup that he had never expected to find
        - i. And thousands of people in Burma found Christ as a result!
          - 1. Blessed are those who mourn, for IN CHRIST, they shall be comforted!