

SPECIAL LESSON

Psalm 6: Prayer in Emotional Pain

Bible Study Preparation and Materials Needed:

Reflecting on: Psalm 6 - Prayer in Emotional Pain

For the Lesson: Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

Recommended Orthodox Study Bible [HERE](#).

Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition [HERE](#).

Optional Practice

If time permits, begin or conclude this Bible study with an antiphonal Psalm reading. Have students read the psalm aloud in two groups, line by line. Encourage them to hear David's emotion, allowing it to become their own prayer.

Memory Verse:

“The Lord heard the voice of my weeping.”

- Psalm 6:9 (OSB)

Bible Study Lesson

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, ee paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

A Reflection on Psalm 6: Prayer in Emotional Pain

There are days when we're just not okay. There are moments when faith doesn't feel strong; instead, it feels fragile. Like we're holding everything together with tape, hoping no one sees the cracks. We carry grief, stress, heartbreak, or pressure we can't always explain. We feel anxious about things we can't control and exhausted by things we're expected to and sometimes, even when people surround us, we feel completely alone.

In moments when we feel like no one understands, not our friends, not our family, not even God, Psalm 6 speaks for us. It's not a perfect prayer, yet it's an honest one. David doesn't hold back. He weeps. He groans. He asks, "How long, O Lord?" And somehow, that raw honesty becomes the very place where God meets him. Psalm 6 reminds us that when we're hurting, we don't have to hide it from God. He's not waiting for us to be fine. He's waiting for us to be real. Even when we have nothing left to give but tears... He listens.

In this psalm, King David doesn't pretend to be fine. He doesn't offer God perfect words or polished theology. He groans. He weeps. He cries out in confusion and asks the question many of us carry deep in our hearts:

"But You, O Lord... how long?"

Psalm 6 (OSB)

*O Lord, do not reprove me in Your anger,
Nor discipline me in Your wrath.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak;
Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled,
And my soul is greatly troubled;
But You, O Lord - how long?*

*Return, O Lord, and deliver my soul.
Save me because of Your mercy.
For there is no remembrance of You in death,
And in Hades who will give thanks to You?*

*I am weary with my groaning;
Every single night I will dampen my bed;
I will drench my couch with my tears.
My eye is troubled with anger;
I grow old among all my enemies.*

*Depart from me, all you workers of lawlessness;
For the Lord heard the voice of my weeping.
The Lord heard my supplication;
The Lord received my prayer.
Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled;
Let them turn back and be suddenly ashamed.*

This psalm gives us permission to bring our pain to God without shame. It reminds us that the most faithful prayer might just be a tear.

Let's be real. Sometimes life absolutely wrecks us and when it does, we often put on a mask, even when we pray. We believe we need to have everything in order before we can talk to God. But David shows us something completely different.

“Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak.”

David doesn't clean up his prayers or make them Instagram-worthy. He's raw, broken, completely done trying to hold it together. His prayer isn't polite, it's desperate.

*O Lord, do not reprove me in Your anger,
Nor discipline me in Your wrath.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak;
Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled,
And my soul is greatly troubled;
But You, O Lord - how long?*

Here's what's powerful about this: David's breakdown isn't a breakdown of faith. It's actually an act of incredible trust. When you're at your lowest and you still choose to cry out to God, you're saying, *“I still believe You're real. I still believe You care. Even when everything feels like it's falling apart.”*

The Orthodox Church gets this. **St. Gregory of Narek** didn't write pretty, perfect prayers. He wrote from the gutter of his soul, from the depths of his heart: *“My sighs rise to You more than prayers, my tears more than words.”*

God isn't looking for your best performance. He's not waiting for you to get your life together first. He wants the real you; messy, confused, angry, heartbroken, all of you.

Q: *When your world falls apart, do you run to God or run from Him? What holds you back from being completely honest with God?*

“How Long, O Lord?”

David asks this question constantly, but what's incredible is that he's not asking because he thinks God is clueless. He's asking because waiting in uncertainty is brutal. When you're drowning in problems and can't see the end, *“how long?”* becomes your soul's desperate cry.

But notice, David isn't cursing God or walking away. His *“how long?”* isn't an accusation; it's pure longing. Like a kid asking *“Are we there yet?”* on a road trip, not because they don't trust their parents, but because the waiting is killing them. David still believes God will show up. He's just exhausted from holding on.

The Armenian Church gets this. They put the Psalms of Lament in evening prayers, right when loneliness hits hardest. These prayers echo through centuries, not as monuments to doubt, but as proof of faith that refuses to stay quiet even when it hurts.

When we cry *“how long?”* we're actually declaring something radical: we still believe Someone is listening. Still, we think our story isn't over. That's not weak faith, that's faith strong enough to be honest about how hard it is to keep believing when everything looks impossible. Here David is waiting for deliverance, closeness and presence: *“How long will it take until you return to me, Lord?”*

***Return, O Lord, and deliver my soul.
Save me because of Your mercy.
For there is no remembrance of You in death,
And in Hades who will give thanks to You?***

Q: *What makes you want to ask God “how long?” What are you tired of waiting for?*

“I Drench My Couch with My Tears”

*I am weary with my groaning;
Every single night I will dampen my bed;
I will drench my couch with my tears.
My eye is troubled with anger;
I grow old among all my enemies.*

This is not poetic exaggeration, this is a man broken and completely open. David describes the physical experience of grief: sleepless nights, constant weeping, trouble so deep it affects his body. And yet, this emotional honesty becomes a turning point.

Q: *Have you ever cried during prayer? If so, did you feel closer to God or farther away?*

“The Lord Heard My Weeping”

In verse 8, everything shifts. David doesn't say, “God fixed it.” He says, “The Lord heard me.” That's the moment where despair turns to trust. Sometimes the healing doesn't come in the way we expect. Yet knowing that God sees us, hears us, and receives our tears plants seeds of hope in our hearts.

***Depart from me, all you workers of lawlessness;
For the Lord heard the voice of my weeping.***
*The Lord heard my supplication;
The Lord received my prayer.
Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled;
Let them turn back and be suddenly ashamed.*

St. John Climacus (c. 525-606), who was a Christian monk and spiritual writer, understood that authentic emotion in prayer, including tears of repentance, sorrow, or longing, can be more genuine and powerful than perfectly crafted words, which is why he taught that *“tears shed for God are more powerful than words.”*

Prayer doesn't always change our situation immediately: the pain may still be there, the struggle ongoing. But it does change something deep within us. It strengthens us, centers us, and reminds us that we are not alone. We see this transformation happen in David's own words: *“Depart from me, all you workers of lawlessness; for the Lord heard the voice of my weeping.”*

After all his crying, his groaning, and sleepless nights, David doesn't end in despair. He ends with hope and confidence. Nothing around him may have changed yet, but he has changed. His heart has been changed by the simple truth that God heard him. The assurance that God received his tears is enough to give him peace. It's a powerful reminder to us that even when our situation remains heavy, the moment we know God hears us, hope begins to rise.

Q: *What difference does it make to know that “the Lord heard my weeping”?*

Psalms 6 teaches us that God is not threatened by your pain. He is not disappointed when you cry. He is not impatient with your sorrow. He is near the brokenhearted. He receives our tears like incense. It teaches us that God does not need strong prayers. He needs surrendered hearts.

Reflection Questions

1. *What kind of emotional pain is hardest for you to talk about?*
2. *Do you believe God welcomes your tears and weakness? Why or why not?*
3. *What helps you keep praying even when God feels far?*
4. *What would it look like to be more emotionally honest in your prayer life?*

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ծանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.