



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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August 1, 2010
10th Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Text: [Psalm 6](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Genesis 18:20-32](#)
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 6](#)
Second Lesson: [James 5:13-18](#)
Gospel Lesson: [Luke 11:1-13](#)

Repentance Is The Christian's Heartbeat

Have you ever been in the middle of being sick and think to yourself, "I just can't wait to be normal again and not have to worry about this, not to have this pain." Have you had the flu and had to constantly be running to throw up and think, "I can't wait until this is done." Or have you had a bone that was broken and the pain was constant and think to yourself, "I just can't wait until I don't have this nagging pain." A lot of times in the middle of something like that, I think to myself, "If only things would be back as they were, then I'd be more appreciative." Of course, usually I'm not.

Now in the first reading of Psalm 6 that I just read to you, you might think that's kind of where David is. It sounds like it. He talks about being faint and his bones are in agony. If you just read the Psalm superficially and don't think a whole lot more about it and maybe miss a word or two here and there, you might think, "David's sick and he's saying 'LORD please heal me.'" David's sick alright when he writes Psalm 6, but the agony he is talking about...he's using pictures we can relate to, physical pain, to picture what he truly describes as his soul being in anguish...How long, O LORD, how long do I have to keep living with my soul in such anguish?

David teaches us a very real truth in this Psalm through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that when we consider our prayer life and praying boldly, where we ought to start is not with "Lord, take care of my physical problems," but let all of our prayer life begin with the heartbeat of the Christian life...which is repentance. Our sins, by all rights, should terrify us. Our sins, by all rights, should cause us the kind of anxiety and fear and worry that David is talking about here so that we are driven to the arms of our Lord, as we see how David is in this Psalm.

In the heading to Psalm 6, it just says "A psalm of David" and has some instructions for the people that would be accompanying the singing of the Psalm, but it doesn't tell us that this is in connection with what we looked at in Bible Study this morning with David and Bathsheba. Some of the other penitential psalms that David writes, Psalm 32 I believe one is, are identified as such. It could have been in connection with that. I don't know. But it certainly describes well what sin in general does to us. And when you start reading the Psalm and you look at how David is describing his sin as it causing him so much trouble and he's taking it to the Lord, it kind of sounds like someone who knows they are in trouble.

Maybe you've been there yourself where you've done something and you had to go talk to someone about it, or as a child you did exactly what mom told you not to do and you had to go talk to mom and you are worried and troubled...the only thing that is missing when you read Psalm 6 is the stuff that you and I probably shoveled out when we went and talked to mom. "I know we were playing catch in the living room and we weren't supposed to, but my brother started it." Right? We start with all the excuses, all the rationalizations, all the "It's not me. It's the dysfunctional family I grew up in" kind of stuff...trying to ease the guilt of our own sin, trying to push it off on someone else. "O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath, but it's his fault"...you don't hear that in Psalm 6, do you? He just says, "don't discipline me in your wrath. I know your anger should be on me. I know your wrath should be on me. And I know what your anger and your wrath is, LORD." That's kind of what David is saying. "I know what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah" that we read about this morning.

I know what God's wrath is like when it's poured out on people. I've seen it in Scripture. And I know I deserve it and you deserve it, the unending agony of hell. So instead of making excuses or rationalizing or pointing fingers or whatever else there is, David simply says, "Be merciful to me LORD for I'm faint. Heal me, my bones are in anguish. My soul is in anguish." And he leaves it up to God to act in his mercy, his grace and in his love. And he calls on God as the "LORD." "Yahweh," the name for the Lord that the Lord himself preached a sermon on in Exodus 34...*"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love"* ([Exodus 34:6](#)). He calls upon the God that is faithful to the covenant, the covenant that said "I will send the Messiah who will pay for your sins."

David says, "Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love." Again he doesn't point to anything but God as the source of his forgiveness. He doesn't say "I've always tried hard. I've always tried to be pretty good and I know I've screwed up here, but because I've done so much for you Lord and serve you faithfully, you should forgive me." There's none of that. His focus is entirely on God's unfailing love when he looks at himself and sees his sin.

The example that David sets for us I'm assuming would be the advice David would give to us when you and I are caught up in sin. That wouldn't fly well in 21st Century America, would it? We are so conditioned in our society to say guilt is not our fault...it's how I was raised; it's someone else's fault; the boss is a jerk, that's why I don't work faithfully...we're so predisposed to say it's someone else's fault that I screwed up. All the books you read on this from a secular viewpoint tell you the way to deal with guilt is just to ignore it because it's not your fault and you shouldn't feel guilty about it and deal with it because it's not that big of a deal. It's kind of interesting, but to use the words of a TV doctor, how's that working out for the United States? How's that working out for our society...ignoring guilt, blaming someone else for our guilt. We can get so good at it that we get callused, just like you get callused hands from working a lot. If I ignore my guilt often enough, my conscience gets a callus and it doesn't really speak up as much or as often. But still, in some way, shape or form, subconsciously that guilt eats away at people, doesn't it? That's why you see so many people not knowing how to deal with

life's bigger questions and trying to deal with them with alcohol or drugs or other obsessions or shopping or whatever the case may be instead of doing what David showed us to do. When we see our sin, acknowledge what it deserves and then turn to the Lord and say, "Lord, because you are unfailingly merciful, forgive me." And then believe that God, for the sake of Christ, forgives us. We just don't understand that well in our society.

I talked with someone recently and they said, "But why does God love me? Why would he love me?" I walked them through [1 John 4](#), that this is what God is, God is love. That's hard for us to understand at times, isn't it? God loves just because that is what he is. We're so used to thinking that if someone else is going to love us it's because we've been nice to them, we've done something for them, we've been a good friend, or we've done whatever. We kind of expect God to work that way. But God doesn't. He's just love.

That's why we have such confidence. And here's Satan's strength...he wants us to ignore our guilt or he wants to jump over the guilt and make us think God will love us anyhow so we can do whatever we want. Then we don't notice any longer when we keep doing things that are sinful against our God and we don't feel that terror at our sin, or the wrath of God is just something that was in the Old Testament but it's not there today. The truth is that God's wrath should be poured out on us. We'd do well to remember the full effect of the Law and see what God says in his Law so we don't take his grace for granted and we don't take the fact that he is love for granted.

It's an amazing thing to see that God is love. To be able to say it like David said, even though he is groaning and weeping and he's terrorized, at the end of the Psalm he says, "The LORD hears, the LORD accepts my prayer, away from me all my enemies." I don't think his enemies are just Saul or his own children that conspired against him or the enemies he fought in battle. I think he's probably also thinking about what it says in the New Testament...our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the authorities, the powers of this evil world ([Ephesians 6:12](#)), talking about Satan and all his evil angels. "Away from me. You've got nothing to use this guilt against me anymore because the LORD accepts my prayer. My enemy, Satan and the evil angels, may they be ashamed and dismayed. May they turn back in sudden disgrace because I'm covered in the grace of Jesus Christ. The grace of God and the love of God that they turned their backs on when they left heaven...it's mine. They can turn away because I am a forgiven child of God."

Think of what that means...you and I can plead with God in our prayers, "Lord forgive me." But you and I know that for the sake of Jesus Christ, who lived and died in our place, our sins are forgiven. So now we can say, "Praise the Lord" and mean it and rejoice in it. Think about that. That simple phrase. We just sang it six times. "Praise the Lord" six times in a row...three times and then we sang "These words are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and then three more

times we sang "Praise the Lord." And as I looked out over the congregation, it looked more like we were still weeping into our couch because we have sinned against our God.

Praise the Lord! He has forgiven us. He has written these words so that we know we are forgiven. Praise him. Make his praises known. We have the privilege in our prayers also of praising God. Know that his Spirit touches our hearts and moves us to action to repent of our sins and to rejoice in our forgiveness and then live in that newness of life and let it show through in how we live and how we treat one another. Quit trying to fix blame on who did what and who started what and just simply say, "I'm a sinner and I'm sorry." That's what our God has called us to do. Then we can live in that praise. And every once in awhile, we can even smile that we're forgiven.