

Psalm 13:1-6

¹ How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?

² How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

³ Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death;

⁴ Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him"; Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

⁵ But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

⁶ I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

"David's Prayer from Despair" **Psalm 13:1-6**

INTRO:

Depression and despair are difficult to overcome. When we fall into their grasp, these afflictions tend to work on our hearts and minds to drive us deeper and deeper into the darkness. It may surprise us to discover that David, the man after God's own heart, knew what it was to despair. **Psalm 13** is a surprisingly honest Psalm from David's pen. David wrote it to Yahweh. God told him to make it a song for the worship of God's people. Did you notice the note at the beginning of the Psalm? ***"For the choir director. A Psalm of David"***

We are not told the occasion which gave birth to this Psalm, but clearly this was a very difficult moment in David's existence. The old commentator Delitzsch characterized this Psalm in these words. *"The Psalm consists of ... three groups of decreasing magnitude. A long deep sigh is followed, as from a relieved breast, by an already much more gentle and half calm prayer; and this again by the believing joy which anticipates the certainty of being answered. This song as it were casts up constantly lessening waves, until it becomes still as the sea when smooth as a mirror, and the only motion discernible at last is that of the joyous ripple of calm repose."* Our study will follow the three divisions of this song.

I. Trouble (v. 1-2)

II. Prayer (v.3-4)

III. Peace (v. 5-6)

I. Trouble (v. 1-2)

"How long, O LORD? Will You forget me? Forever?

How long will You hide Your face from me?

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?" Psalm 13:1-2

A. David's problem is expressed in the four **"How Long O Lord"** statements in **verses 1-2**.
The first two are in **verse 1**.

"How long, O LORD will you forget me? Forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?"

This is parallelism.

1. David felt abandoned. This is more than David is feeling a little blue. He recalls a time like that of Job before God mysteriously (to Job) removed His blessing from him.

"And Job again took up his discourse and said, 'Oh that I were as in months gone by, as in the days when God watched over me; when His lamp shone over my head, and by His light I walked through darkness; as I was in the prime of my days, when the friendship of God was over my tent; when the Almighty was yet with me, And my children were around me.'" Job 29:1-5

2. In **Job 30**, Job describes the **"after"** picture when heaven seemed like brass and Job thought God forgot him.

***"I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me. I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. You have become cruel to me; with the might of Your hand You persecute me. You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride; and You dissolve me in a storm. For I know that You will bring me to death and to the house of meeting for all living."* Job 30:20–23**

This was Job crying out to God like David did. LORD, it looks like you have forgotten me. Your face no longer seems to shine upon me!

3. David and Job were spiritual giants before God and even God's choicest saints knew the horror of feeling abandoned by God. We live in a day when we Christians see ourselves as more sophisticated than the saints were in the Bible. We hear it preached that a believer should never feel abandoned by God. The fact is, many believers go through times in their walk with God in which the valley of the shadow of death seems to close in around them and God seems far away. Fellowship with God appears to be broken. From everything David could see and evaluate (at least from his perspective at the moment), God was not paying attention to him at all.

B. The second two **"How Longs"** are in **verse 2**.

"How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?"

1. Often when we feel abandoned by God we respond by having intense conversations with ourselves. Usually, we allow our thoughts to convince us God no longer cares about us and we are hopeless. David was not above this kind of thinking. In **1 Samuel 27:1** the LORD lets us listen to David's rumination in David's head.

"Then David said in his heart, 'Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand.'"

3. When we let this inner conversation go on unchallenged, usually we find ourselves in the second phrase of this verse. We ***“have sorrow in our hearts all the day.”***

4. We also come to believe as David did here that our lives will be one failure after another.

“How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?”

This is a statement of utter hopelessness. What do we do when we are in a place of utter hopelessness? We need to do what David did here. We need to pray.

II. Prayer (v.3-4)

“Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death;

Lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed against him”;

Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.”

A. This prayer is short and simple and yet powerful. The first part is a plea to be heard. Please see and hear me. Please answer me. Here is where the names of our God are important. Although God did not appear to hear, David still prayed because there was no other God. Ralph Dale Davis called this *lousy logic but great faith*.

1. Consider me and hear me Yahweh. This is God’s covenant name. It speaks of His faithfulness to the people of the covenant. David still claimed a covenant relationship with God. We have one also. God is our Father because of the New Covenant in the blood of His Son.

2. Not only is He the covenant keeping God, He is Elohim, the all powerful one. He is the One who is ***“able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or think.”*** (Ephesians 3:20) He is more than sufficient to solve the problem.

3. He is the Covenant-keeping, always faithful God. He is the all-powerful God to Whom nothing is too hard. But most important, He is David’s personal God.

“Consider and answer me, O LORD my God.”

In all of his difficulty and despair, David refused to let go of God. God is still his personal God. Nothing could change that!

4. His request is also simple, ***“Light up my eyes.”*** To best understand this phrase let me put it in another context. In **Ezra 9:6-8** we find Ezra praying about the sin of intermarriage in post-exilic Israel. He prays,

“O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today. But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant and to give

us a secure hold within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery.”

C. Since he is pleading here, David offers God three reasons why He needs to hear and respond to his hurting child. They are the three *“lests.”* *“Lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, ‘I have prevailed over him,’ lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.”* At first blush these appear to be self-centered requests, but in essence, David does not want God’s reputation to be smudged because of an apparent failure to keep His promise to His chosen King.

III. Peace (v. 5-6)

“But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.” Psalm 13:5-6

A. Suddenly, after the prayer comes peace and confidence in God. David’s peace is built on one foundation and out of that foundation flows two assurances.

B. First, notice the foundation for David’s peace. *“I have trusted in Your steadfast love.”* The word here is *“chesed.”* This is God’s ever faithful, unchanging, covenant love.

1. This is the love sung about in **Psalm 136**. *Chesed* is the faithful love that cheered Jeremiah in **Lamentations 3:21-24**,

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His (love seen in His) mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, therefore I will hope in Him.”

2. To put chesed into our words, it is Our Lord saying to us who trust Christ for our salvation, *“I am committed to you and I will never leave you.”* Where does the Bible say this in so many words? **Hebrews 13:5-6 (NASB)**

“Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,’ so that we confidently say,

“THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?”

C. Now notice the tributaries that flow from this fountainhead in David’s heart.

“My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me.”

First, I will rejoice in your deliverance. David knew that God would bring him through this valley. God’s faithful love demanded it. Second, David knew he would sing to the LORD. This psalm in the Old Testament hymnbook is evidence of this. Finally, David knew that he would look back on this time in the future, and with great joy acknowledge Yahweh dealt bountifully with Him. Do we have this kind of confidence in our God?

So, what do we learn?

1. Everyone has times of depression and despair.
2. In depression the first thing we need to do is pray.
3. Then we need to remind ourselves of the faithfulness of our God.

This almost sounds like **Philippians 4:6-8** doesn't it? ***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”***

Hymn #355 *Trusting Jesus*