

ASH WEDNESDAY **Psalm 6 SAVE ME IN YOUR UNFAILING LOVE 3.2.22 F.OS.L**
SERIES OVERVIEW *This sermon introduces the series and sets the tone of the dual journey of Christ to the Cross and our own daily journey of faith through Confession & Absolution. It uses **Psalm 6** as the text and reflects on how God worked in/on David and how He works on each one of us through Law and Gospel.*

TEXT Our text for tonight is (the Psalm for AW) **Psalm 6**.

PSALM 6:1-10 **ESV** For the director of music. With stringed instruments. According to sheminith. A Psalm of David. **O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.** ² **Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.** ³ **My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O LORD - how long?** ⁴ **Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love.** ⁵ **For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?** ⁶ **I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.** ⁷ **My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes.** ⁸ **Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.** ⁹ **The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer.** ¹⁰ **All mine enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.**

SERIES INTRODUCTION **Lent in many ways is a journey.** We journey with our LORD to the Cross and deal with the forgiveness of our sins. Each week (starting *next* Wednesday) we will hear a portion of the reading of the **Passion History** of our LORD, and we will reflect upon our LORD's suffering and death and what that means to sinners like you and me. That reflection is a familiar part of Lent.

2 FOCI OF LENT It would be easy to make a journey like that as we do each year. (It's) A trip down memory lane. A stroll through the story of Jesus' death. But Lent in the Church really has **two focuses**: **First**, it is a time to reflect on Christ's Passion and death. **Second**, it is a time of learning and spiritual renewal through the Word of God. In the Early Church it was during Lent that **those preparing for Baptism received their final instructions** in the faith before being Baptized. So what we will be doing this Lent is hearing about Christ's Passion and death, and about what that has to do with who we are as Christians who need Confession and Absolution.

[WHAT IS] **PENITENTIAL?** Take a look once again at **Psalm 6**, which we prayed a few minutes ago. This is a Psalm of David belonging to a group we call the **Penitential** Psalms. The word *penitence* or *penitential* is related to another very Lutheran word: **repentance**. (But) What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from your sins and turning to

Christ for forgiveness. Repentance, then, is ultimately **a gift from God**, because only God can turn the sinners heart toward Him. It reminds me of Luther's words about **Baptism in the Small Catechism**:

*What does such **Baptizing with water** indicate?* **It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.**

RETURN TO BAPTISM This process of contrition and repentance is **daily, not once. Law and Gospel. Sin and forgiveness**. This is the cycle of the Christian life. That is why we continue to repent and receive Absolution. That is why we go to the LORD's Supper week after week. It is about **living the Christian life**, not simply knowing right answers.

TEACH US This is what God is going to teach us in the **Penitential Psalms**. In **Psalm 6** David begins by lamenting that it seems like God has abandoned him. **Law**. God is angry with David, and so David prays that God will have mercy on him because he is weak and troubled.

TEACH ME Where does this start for you? What does this tell you about God? Well, it first of all tells you that **God hates sin**, and that when you sin, God hates you. Does that sound harsh? You bet! God's Law is very harsh. As the psalmist writes in **Psalm 5**, "*You hate all evildoers*" [**Psalm 5:5**]. The Law doesn't wink at sin. **You and I may try to wink at sin.** [*Yes, our sin is bad, but let's just ignore it.*] This is like saying, "*My cancer isn't that bad; it's just on the top of my skin.*" You can't ignore sin. Sooner or later it will dig in and do it's work of destruction. But let's go on to **verse two of Psalm 6**. "*Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.*" David prays that the LORD is gracious to him and will heal him. Like **blind Bartimaeus**, or the **Canaanite woman**, David's not going to let God off the hook. God won't let David off the hook. You see, David knows God's true character. He hates for a time but **loves for eternity**.

CONCLUSION This Lent we are taking a journey together. We are taking a journey together to the Cross of Jesus Christ. On this journey we are going to learn about God's mercy for lost sinners like you and like me. We are going to hear about God's gift of forgiveness that He gives in Confession and Absolution. For some of you, this will be a journey that you've taken before many times. This may be a new journey, or a new path on the same journey. Confessing your sins, **not generically but specifically**, is a hard thing. So hard that many never even try it. But I am here today to hold up **God's gift of forgiveness to you**, and everything He has to give in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The LORD has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer.[6:9]