



7 Penitential Psalms:

Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

**Based off of St. Robert Bellarmine's
*Commentary on the Psalms***

Psalm 6: *Domine, Ne In Furore*

Psalm 6:1 O Lord, rebuke me not in thy anger, nor chasten me in thy wrath.

Punish me in this life, out of your mercy, so that I may live in the next life. But punish me not out of anger. Don't punish my sin with sin. Punish my sin with merciful suffering and healing. He goes on to argue for merciful punishment in this life rather than wrathful punishment, i.e. sin and hell.

Psalm 6:2 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled.

*In sorrow for his sin, the psalmist makes his **1st argument** to God: See how weak I am, punish me in this life so that I may be healed, my very bones need your mercy.*

Psalm 6:3 My soul also is sorely troubled. But thou, O Lord -- how long?

*In sorrow for his sin, the psalmist makes his **2nd argument** to God: I am not only wretched, but I acknowledge it; and therefore, my soul, looking in upon its wretchedness and deformity, is so horrified, confused, and filled with fear, that it becomes impatient: "but thou, O Lord, how long?" Why not pity me; why not heal me?*

Psalm 6:4 Turn, O Lord, save my life; deliver me for the sake of thy steadfast love.

*The writer makes another plea to God, his **3rd argument**, this time based on the Mercy & Love of God. I rely and abandon myself completely to your goodness and Mercy God. I have no good to offer you, I trust in you.*

Psalm 6:5 For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol who can give thee praise?

*The writer goes on to make a **4th argument** to God, this time based on God's glory. I ask, he says, not "to be rebuked in thy fury," because in such case I should undoubtedly be consigned to eternal death; and thus both your praise and your memory would be partly lost, for the damned have no recollection of God, so as to praise him; nor is there any one in hell to confess to God, that is, to praise him by confessing his prodigies and his goodness. The death spoken of here is not the death of the body but of the soul in hell [sheol].*

Psalm 6:6 I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.

The 5th argument speaks about the fruits of sorrow for our sin and penance. St. Paul says "If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged;" that is to say, if we would condemn and punish ourselves, God would not condemn nor punish us. For he spares those who do not spare themselves. Think of how our Lord who committed no sin wept all night with rock for a pillow in the agony of the garden.

Psalm 6:7 My eye wastes away because of grief, it grows weak because of all my foes.

This line speaks of the effect of such a profuse effusion of tears. So intense his tears in consequence, that his eyes grew dim and melted. I cannot but be highly indignant with myself for never having perfectly conquered any vice, never subdued any of my spiritual enemies, but have grown old among them all. By enemies, he means all who provoke one to sin, be they demons or men, or vice itself, and evil habits.

Psalm 6:8 Depart from me, all you workers of evil; for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.

Having taken to heart so much his having grown weak amid his enemies, he exclaims, "Depart from me;" that is to say, relying on the divine assistance, I will speak no more with you, I will not yield to your temptations. "For the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping;" that is to say, the Lord, moved to mercy by my tears, has not only forgiven them, but has given me greater grace to resist you my evil enemies and temptations.

Psalm 6:9 The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer.

An explanation of the former verse, and repeated two or three times, to show the certainty of his having been heard; and that thereby he may gather fresh courage to resist temptation.

Psalm 6:10 All my enemies shall be ashamed and sorely troubled; they shall turn back, and be put to shame in a moment

A final prayer for a total end to his spiritual difficulties. "Let my enemies [i.e. my bodily temptations, the demons that tempt me, or people that try to lead me into sin] be ashamed and very much troubled" for having effected nothing, but, on the contrary, having laboured in vain. "Let them be turned back" to their own place from whence they came, "And be ashamed very speedily." This conclusion may also be looked upon as a prayer for the conversion of those who, by their persecutions or their temptations, had been the cause of his sins.

Various Themes in Psalm 6

- *Admission of sinfulness. Admission that God has the right and authority to punish me*
- *That plague, famine, war have always been seen as God's just punishment*
- *The worse punishment from God is to be left in our sin. Because this leads to hell*
- *Punishment in this life can be from the Mercy of God*
- *The Goodness, Mercy, & Fatherly Love of God.*
- *Fathers punish. God punishes. Father protect and tenderly toughen us up. God protects and lovingly leads us to grow in virtue.*