

**“Save Me for Your Mercies’ Sake!”**  
(Psalm 6 – Midweek Lent 1 – February 18, 2026)

Psalm 6 – <sup>1</sup>*O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.* <sup>2</sup>*Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.* <sup>3</sup>*My soul also is greatly troubled; but You, O LORD – how long?* <sup>4</sup>*Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies’ sake!* <sup>5</sup>*For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who will give You thanks?* <sup>6</sup>*I am weary with my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.* <sup>7</sup>*My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows old because of all my enemies.* <sup>8</sup>*Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; for the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.* <sup>9</sup>*The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.* <sup>10</sup>*Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled; let them turn back and be ashamed suddenly.*

Dear Redeemed, whose sins are all forgiven in Christ who was crucified for us:

In many ways, Lent is a journey. We journey with Jesus as He goes to the cross as the once for all sacrifice to save sinners. Each week, we will hear part of the Passion History and reflect on Jesus’ death and what it means to us sinners. This journey of reflection is a familiar part of Lent.

It would be easy to make a journey like this, in a way. It would be easy if we just thought of it as a passive trip down memory lane, a stroll through the story of Jesus’ death at arm’s length, joining in statements of faith with the group that say, “Yes, we Christians believe all that.”

But the season of Lent in the Church year invites us into a much more personal application of Jesus’ Passion and death to our individual lives. If you and I are truly to rejoice at Easter, in the personal victory that Jesus’ resurrection has won for us in eternal life, then we must first make Jesus’ passion and death for our sins just as personal.

In the Early Church, it was during Lent that new converts to the faith received their final instruction in God’s Word before being baptized. As they prepared to receive that washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5), they were taught to forsake their former way of life when they were ruled by sin and Satan. They were taught to die with Christ to sin through repentance, and to rise with Christ through faith to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).

So this Lent, not only will we hear about Christ's Passion and death. We will apply it to ourselves as Christians who are daily in need of confessing our sins, dying to sins with Christ, and rising with Him in the power of His baptism and forgiveness.

Look again at Psalm 6, which we just prayed together. This psalm of David belongs to a group called the penitential psalms. The word "penitence" is related to "repentance." It means "turning around." Repentance is turning away from our sins and turning to Christ for forgiveness. Therefore, repentance is a gift from God, because only God can turn the sinner's heart to Him in faith.

It reminds us of Luther's words about Baptism in the *Small Catechism*, which we recited earlier:

*What does such baptizing with water mean?*

Such baptizing with water means that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts; and that a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

This process of contrition and repentance is continuous; it is not just a one-time event. We live in our baptism daily, through the application of God's Law and Gospel. We confess our sins against His holy Law, and we receive His forgiveness proclaimed in His Gospel. This is the daily cycle of the Christian life, from beginning to end. That is why we continue to come in repentance before our Lord's altar, to hear His Word of Absolution. That is why we continue to come to the Lord's Supper often, to receive Jesus' true Body and Blood given and shed for our forgiveness. It is about living the Christian life – not just knowing right answers, but continually dying to sin and rising with Christ in the power of His forgiveness.

This is what is happening with David, in the psalm. First, he feels God's Law that condemns the sinner. He feels God's wrath and anger against his sin. As he writes, David seems to be very ill as a result of anguish over his personal sin. Not only has his ongoing burden of guilt brought anguish to his soul, but it has even affected his physical health. He prays: "*O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled*" (vs. 2-3). David knows that he deserves God's wrath and punishment for sin, and he cannot stand the thought. He prays: "*O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure*" (vs. 1).

What does this tell us about our condition as sinners before God? First, it tells us that God's anger burns hot against sin. As the sinless God, He hates sin. In His perfect justice, He should hate those covered in sin. Psalm 5:5 puts it point blank: "*You hate all workers of iniquity.*" As sinners by nature, this is hard for us to hear. For every time we sin, we work iniquity. We may try to excuse our sin and go soft on it, as if to say: "Yes, sin is bad; but let's just ignore it and get on with life!" But God's Law does not excuse sin or go soft on it. It declares that He hates sin and must punish it. If we got what we deserved, our sin would bring us down to eternal death and destruction.

This is why David, seeing the consequences of his sin, cries out: "*Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake! For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who will give You thanks?*" (vs. 4-5). David is afraid for his very life. In his guilt, he fears that surely God must abandon him, and he must fall under Satan's power. He fears that he may suddenly perish and go down to the grave – literally *Sheol*, the place beyond the grave where evildoers perish. In anguish over his sin, David cries: "*I am weary with my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears*" (vs. 6). Luther referred to such anguish as *anfechtung*, a term for the deep despair we feel when we realize the just judgment we deserve for breaking God's Law, and we can see no way out.

But where there is such heartfelt confession, God's Gospel gives true hope. For in His Gospel He promises nothing but grace, His undeserved love and forgiveness for even the worst sinner. From the midst of anguish, from the verge of despair, David remembers the Lord's promise and cries out: "*Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak; O LORD, heal me*" (vs. 2). Like blind Bartimaeus or the Canaanite woman, calling out after the Lord Jesus, "*have mercy on me!*" (Mark 10:47; Matthew 15:22), here David cries out after the Lord in his distress. Just as God's Law won't let David off the hook for his sin, David will not let God off the hook until he hears His Gospel of grace and forgiveness, promised to the sinner.

In the same way, God invites us to hold Him to His Gospel promises. Isn't this what faith is? Faith clings to God's unfailing Word, above all else, above even our feelings and experience. Like Abraham "*who, contrary to hope, in hope believed*" (Romans 4:18), so also we cling in faith to what God has promised in His Gospel. David remembers God's gracious promise and cries out: "*Save me for Your mercies' sake*" (vs. 4). We pray the same thing every time we confess our sins before the Lord, looking to Jesus to save us in His unfailing love. Where there is such contrition and repentance, God hears our cry and He answers in only one way

– with His Absolution, His declaration of full and unconditional forgiveness.

His Gospel tells us that no matter how messed up our life has become, no matter how far down the path of sin we have strayed, no matter what pain we have caused others and ourselves, no matter what nightmares of guilt trouble us, God is merciful and forgiving. He loved you and me so much that He sent His only Son to the cross to die for us. God hates the sinner, yes; but on the cross He channeled all His wrath against the sinner onto His own Son, and He took it out on Him instead of us. God made His eternal Son, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. And in exchange, He counts the pure righteousness of Jesus to us (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is how much God loves us. This is how seriously He forgives us all our sins.

In His gift of forgiveness, God heals us of all sin. In Christ, He makes us His new creation. In Baptism, He has drowned our old Adam and caused a new man to come forth and arise, to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

This Lent we are taking a personal journey to the cross of Jesus. We will hear about God's mercy and healing for us sinners. We will hear about God's gift of forgiveness that He gives us in Confession and Absolution. The way of the cross is not easy. Confessing our sins – not just corporately but individually, not just generally but specifically – is not easy. It is so hard that many will never try it. Yet, the way of the cross is the only way to life, the only way to share with Christ in the joy of Easter. The Law hurts and kills, but the Gospel heals and gives life. As we daily die to sin with Christ, we also rise with Him to the most blessed life as God's beloved children, in the peace of forgiveness and the joy of eternal salvation.

God's Word of Absolution gives us confidence to say with David: "*The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer*" (vs. 9).

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.