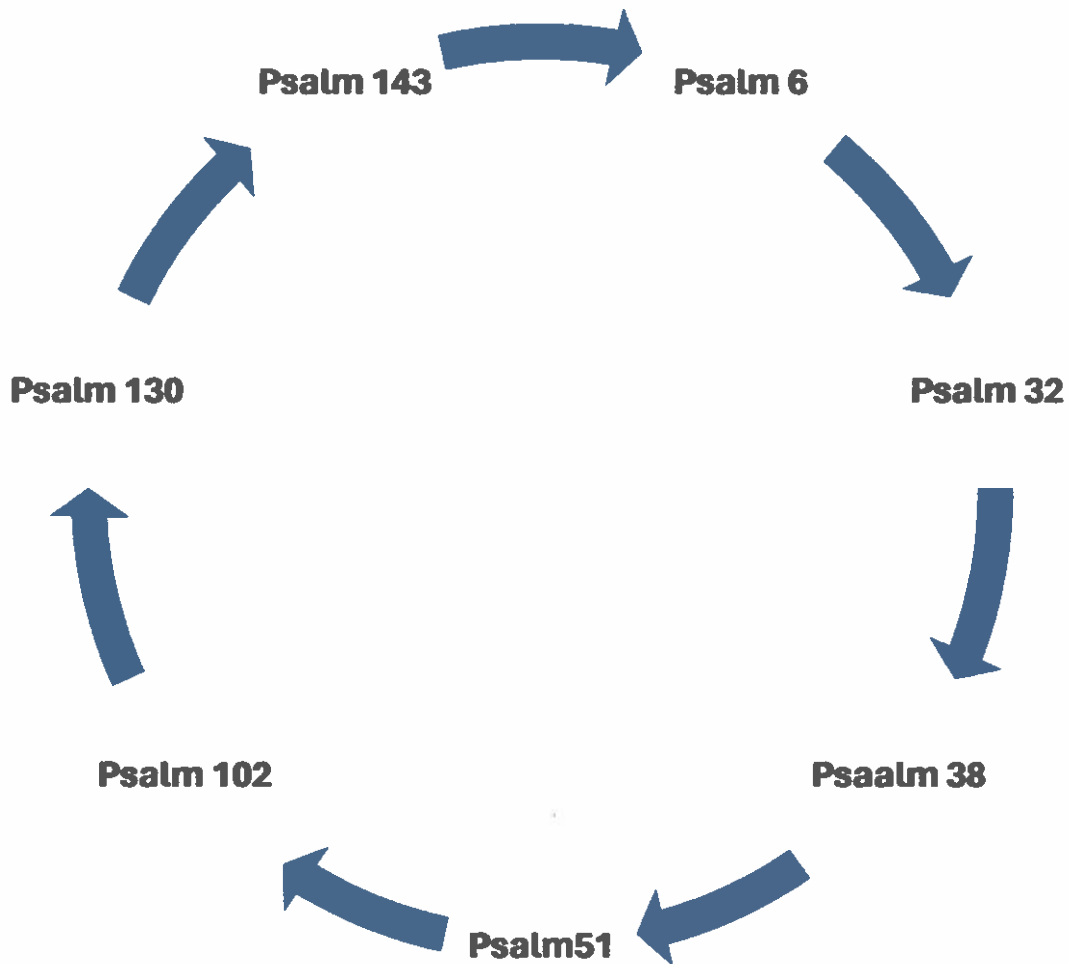


Penitential Psalms



Penitential Psalm- The Church has designated certain Psalms as penitential, that is, appropriate for prayer during a time of personal or communal repentance. These Psalms take the form of laments because their subject is lamenting over sin and the problems that arise for the sinner.

Christiani- a person who repents his sins and seeks forgiveness for them. The Penitential Psalms are a gift, reminding us of the need for sincerity and a serious acknowledgement of our frailty before God. The purpose of the

Penitential Psalms helps us to recognize our sinfulness, express our sorrow, and ask for God's forgiveness.

The Seven Penitential Psalms have been regarded as David's lamentations of repentance for his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah, and for his other sins. While the Seven Penitential Psalms are sometimes associated with the Seven Deadly Sins, they also form a kind of spiritual ladder.

Psalm 32 has long been classified as one of the seven "penitential Psalms" which are often read during the liturgical season of Lent.

The purpose of the Penitential Psalms will help us to recognize our sinfulness, express our sorrow and ask for God's forgiveness.

Penitential Psalms are characterized by expressions of individual lament that at times include a confession of sin on the part of the psalmist. They are Psalms where the author sees that his own sins have contributed to the problems that he is facing (illness, enemies, punishment, etc.).

Psalm 102

The prayer of an oppressed man, as he grows faint and pours out his lament before the Lord. O Lord, hear my prayer! Pay attention to my cry for help!

Do not ignore me in my time of trouble! Listen to me! When I call out to you, quickly answer me!

For my days go up in smoke, and my bones are charred like a fireplace.

My heart is parched and withered like grass, for I am unable to eat food.

Because of the anxiety that makes me groan, my bones protrude from my skin.

I am like an owl in the wilderness, I am like a screech owl among the ruins.

I stay awake; I am like a solitary bird on a roof.

All day long my enemies taunt me; those who mock me use my name in their curses.



Psalm 57

Message: David calls upon God to rescue him from his enemies. Confident that God will do so, David praises and thanks God.

- I. **David's Persecutors (57:4, 6): Vicious enemies have set a trap for David.**
- II. **David's Petition (57:1-2): He cries out for God's mercy,**
- III. **David's Protection (57:11)**
 - A. **His exaltation (57:5, 11): "Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens!"**
 - B. **His exuberance (57:7-8): David sings God's praises upon his harp and lyre.**
 - C. **His expression (57:9-10): David promise to tell everyone of God's love and faithfulness,**

For I eat ashes as if they were bread, and mix my drink with my tears,
Because of your anger and raging fury. Indeed, you pick me up and throw me
away.

My days are coming to an end, and I am withered like grass.

But you, O Lord, rule forever, and your reputation endures.

You will rise up and have compassion on Zion. For it is time to have mercy on
her, for the appointed time has come.

Indeed, your servants take delight in her stones, and feel compassion for the
dust of her ruins.

The nations will respect the reputation of the Lord, and all the kings of the
earth will respect his splendor,

When the Lord rebuilds Zion, and reveals his splendor,

When he responds to the prayer of the destitute, and does not reject their
request.

The account of his intervention will be recorded for future generations; people
yet to be born will praise the Lord.

For he will look down from his sanctuary above; from heaven the Lord will look
toward earth,

In order to hear the painful cries of the prisoners, and to set free those
condemned to die,

So, they may proclaim the name of the Lord in Zion, and praise him in
Jerusalem,

When the nations gather together, and the kingdoms pay tribute to the Lord.

He has taken away my strength in the middle of life; he has cut short my days.

I say, "O my God, please do not take me away in the middle of my life! you
endure through all generations.

In earlier times you established the earth; the skies are your handiwork.

They will perish, but you will endure. They will wear out like a garment; like clothes you will remove them and they will disappear.

But you remain; your years do not come to an end.

The children of your servants will settle down here, and their descendants will live securely in your presence.

Psalm 102 Afflicted but full of Trust.

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the LORD.

This Psalm describes Jerusalem (Zion) in a state of ruin.

A plea for the presence of God.

My days are consumed like smoke. The Psalmist described his agony. His day passed like meaningless smoke. Pain from deep inside his body made his bones feel as if they were burning. His heart ached and he had no appetite.

Ahab, smitten with one kind of grief, David with another, and Daniel with a third, all forgot or refused to eat their bread. (I Kings 21:4, 2 Samuel 12:16; Daniel 10:3).

My bones cling to my skin. He was so weak and thin that there seemed to be nothing between his bones and his skin. Job 19:20. He felt like a lonely and restless bird (pelican, owl, or sparrow). Pelican, owl are mournful birds. Are commonly used as emblems of gloom and wretchedness. Sparrows used to sit alone, watching and mourning upon house-tops.

The psalmist's affliction came from more than poor health, he had enemies set against him. They opposed him with constant disapproval and rejection. They added a tone of mocking and cursing.

1. The scoffs and reproaches of men are generally added to the chastisements of God; or rather perhaps are a part, and sometimes the bitterest part of them.
2. Swear an oath against me. Have sworn my death, or do swear and curse by me.
3. I have eaten ashes like bread. The life of the psalmist seemed to be constant mourning. The marks of mourning—ashes and weeping were as familiar to him as food and drink.
4. Because of Your indignation and Your wrath: the mourning was all the more bitter because of the sense that the affliction came as some kind of punishment from God.
5. You have lifted me up and cast me away. He felt that God was treating him as wrestlers treat one another, when a man deliberately lifts up his opponent in order that he may give him the worse fall.
6. I withered away like grass: overwhelmed with a sense of divine rejection, he felt that his life was short and had little meaning.
7. A shadow that lengthens never continued in one stay, but is still gliding imperceptibly on, lengthening as it goes, and at last vanishing into darkness.

Praising the LORD who built up Zion.

1. Recognizing the everlasting God.
2. The focus changes and is set on God.
3. This is the light which banishes darkness—the sense of the eternity of God.
4. The remembrance of Your name to all generations: not only would the Lord Himself endure, but His influence and greatness would be declared to all generations, never passing away.

Recognizing the favor of God to Jerusalem.

1. You will arise and have mercy on Zion: though in deep affliction, the psalmist had steadfast confidence that God would act and show mercy to Jerusalem once again.

2. The set time has come. God's appointed time, Jerusalem would be the object of God's favor. He had a set time for their restoration and would not forever leave them in ruin. The set time points to the 70 years set by God for Israel's captivity (Jeremiah 25:11-13 and 29:10).
3. There was an appointed time for the Jews in Babylon, and when the weeks were fulfilled, no bolts nor bars could longer imprison the ransomed of the Lord.
4. Your servants take pleasure in her stones. It is in our nature to reject that which is broken or torn down but God's servants have a love that goes beyond human nature. They see the ruined city, take pleasure in her stones and show favor to her dust.
 - a. The psalmist was overwhelmed by a sense of his own ruin and need.
 - b. When the people of God cease thinking about themselves so much and begin thinking about the state of things around them, particularly our cities and those who are suffering in them, then God may indeed hear our prayers and send a revival.
 - c. If every stone of God's city was precious to His servants, then by analogy, so is every stone representing the people of God in His great building (I Peter 2:5). The poorest church member, the most grievous backslider, the most ignorant convert, should be precious in our sight, because they form. . . a part, although possibly a very feeble part, of the new Jerusalem.

Recognizing the great deliverance God brings. This will be written for the generation to come. Registers of divine kindness ought to be made and preserved, we write down in history the calamities of nations—wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are recorded. Nothing is more tenacious than man's memory when he suffers an injury; nothing laxer if a benefit is conferred. For this reason, God desires lest his gifts should fall out of mind, to have them committed to writing. The ideas that God considers and plans for those yet to be created is an interesting revelation. We don't first enter into the consciousness of God when we are conceived in our mother's womb, but

when we are conceived in His heart and mind. He looked down from the height of His sanctuary: to see the earth. To hear the groaning of the prisoner. To act to release those appointed to death. To proclaim the name of the Lord in Zion. To gather when the people are gathered together. To receive service people are gathered. ... to serve the LORD.

The weakness of man and the strength of God. The psalmist began this song by recognizing his own weakness (1-11). Then he praised God for his deliverance and ultimate victory (12-22). Now in the last section of this Psalm, he confessed once again his weakness and frailty (shortened my days). He weakened. . .He shortened: in addition, the psalmist recognized that it was God who either caused or allowed his weakness and frailty. Here the psalmist wrote with a point much like that of the much later Apostle Paul, who saw God's plan and even glory in his present weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

(24-28) A prayer from the afflicted psalmist.