

Thanks and Praise

Psalm 30

After the death of Saul, David spent seven years consolidating the kingdom and warding off the Philistines. After the kingdom was united, he brought the ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and built his palace with materials given as a gift by a neighboring king, but David was embarrassed by the fact that he lived in a cedar palace while God's Ark sat in a tent. So he began plans to build a Temple.

He told Nathan the prophet his plans, and the prophet told him to go ahead. That night God came to Nathan in a dream and told him to stop David's plans.

As you probably know, David did not build the temple, his son Solomon did. That was because God ordained His house as a house of peace, and David was a man of bloodshed.

But David did plan the Temple. He gathered the materials for it and funded its construction. When God sent word to David that He was not to build a Temple he said:

I have never complained about living in a tent. You want to build me a house, but

instead I will build you a house.

It was at this point that God promised David that a king from his line would always sit on the throne in Jerusalem.

When we come to the title of Psalm 30 this word, “house” becomes very important. In the title of the Psalm we see that this was written by David as a dedication of a house. Some Bible’s translate the word “Temple” and the footnote of the NIV tells us that it could also mean “palace.”

The Old Testament word that is used here could be translated “house,” “palace,” or “Temple.” In fact it is the same word used by God when He promises David that a king from his line would always reign. We know this dynasty as “the House of David.”

Charles Spurgeon believed this Psalm was written prophetically in preparation for the Temple he knew would be built. Others believe it was written to dedicate the Palace. It is even possible that it was written to dedicate the dynasty. We don’t know for sure. But since all these things were important in David’s mind at the same time, we could attribute it to any of these events. For David I believe they were all bound together.

A Psalm of David.

A Song for the Dedication of the House.

I will exalt you, O LORD,
for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
O LORD my God, I called to you for help
and you healed me.

O LORD, you brought me up from the
grave;
you spared me from going down into the
pit.

Sing to the LORD, you saints of his;
praise his holy name.

For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may remain for a night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.

When I felt secure, I said,
“I will never be shaken.”

O LORD, when you favored me,
you made my mountain stand firm;
but when you hid your face,
I was dismayed.

To you, O LORD, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:
“What gain is there in my destruction,
in my going down into the pit?

Will the dust praise you?

Will it proclaim your faithfulness?

Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me;
O LORD, be my help.”

You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth
and clothed me with joy,
that my heart may sing to you and not be
silent.

O LORD my God, I will give you thanks
forever. (NIV)

It is easy to see how with the

- defeat of the Philistines
- consolidation of the kingdom
- acknowledgment of a neighboring king
- building of his palace

David became proud

When we look at this Psalm we see evidence of this condition.

Verse 7 says, “O LORD, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm.” God wanted David to be firmly established. He had been working with David for years, protecting him from Saul and his hatred. He had been working with David for 7 more years helping him to bring the Northern and Southern kingdoms back together after Saul’s death. Of course He favored David because David was a righteous man and God’s

chosen for the throne of Israel. But it had an unattractive result. We see that result in verse 6,

“When I felt secure,
I said, ‘I will never be shaken.’”

I remember a financial advisor telling about a man who said, “I will never be poor.” This is a foolish thing to say. One can never tell the future or the turn of events. David made this kind of statement.

David forgot himself. He allowed himself to see his position as unchangeable. In fact only one thing in the universe cannot change and that is God.

All his life David had to walk a fine balance.

- He was a chosen ruler of a blessed people.
- He was a divinely appointed king.
- He had to be fully aware of the importance of his position
- and yet remain humble about where it and the power to rule came from.

We sometimes walk a balance too.

- We are aware of the awful price that God paid to redeem us.
- He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ to

- come to this Earth,
- live as a human,
 - suffer temptation,
 - torture
 - and death for our sakes.

A high price has been placed on our redemption. We are loved beyond any obvious worth.

God has made us heirs with His own Son Jesus, and yet we must remember that we deserve none of this. We only obtain this great benefit by His grace. Nothing we can do can earn it for us.

That is the danger of the “King’s Kid” mentality. We are children of the greatest power of the universe. But none of that power is ours. We stand as much affected by His power as anybody else and of no more worth than the dirtiest, most degraded human we can think of. Apparently when David forgot that fact, God had to put him in his place.

God hid His face from David

This statement in verse 7 comes from a man who sought God about details. When he was being attacked by the Philistines, he checked with God before defending his territory. When he was attacked a second time by the same

nation, he did not take last week's word for today's command, he checked again. And God gave different instructions.

In verses 1-3 David suggests the problems that he was facing when he needed God. War, sickness, impending death. In the end God rescued David from these disasters, but David endured a time when God hid His face.

It's like running into a down stair case you didn't expect to find. Have you ever done that. You are moving along down stairs and you think you are on the bottom step, but oops! There is still one more.

Have you ever been sitting in a chair that gave way? Or have you ever pressed the gas pedal and the car stalled? Something you fully expected to be there, and it was not. It can throw you for a loop. In fact, depending on the size of the step, it can be fatal.

It must have been completely frustrating for David. He would have been facing a problem that he could normally look to God to find answers for. He prayed for an answer, but God was not to be found.

This can happen to anybody and it is not always the result of sin, but in this case for David, it was. And many times for us it is too.

David had become proud and self sufficient. And God took the opportunity to show him just how little he could accomplish on his own.

Sometimes we can go through periods where God hides his face to make us stronger. But sometimes He does it to remind us how weak we really are. When we become proud or begin thinking that we are no longer responsible to God to obey His commands, we must expect God to turn away.

This is, one of the reasons we believe that Jesus felt abandoned on the cross. When God looked at His Son He saw the sin that was by right our responsibility. God cannot stand in the presence of sin and He turns His face away.

If you are experiencing a time of spiritual dryness. One of the things you may need to do to come back into the warmth of God's presence is to repent. Find whatever it is in your life that puts a gap between you and God and take it to Him and confess. Get it right with Him.

That is what David did.

He repented.

To you, O LORD, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: “What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness? Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me; O LORD, be my help.”

Notice that there are three basic elements to David’s repentance:

- He asked for God’s mercy
- He determined to begin with a new attitude
- He requested the help he had not recently experienced

In our sin we are dependent upon God’s mercy. Without His patience and forgiveness we would be destroyed immediately. We start the repentance process by acknowledging our dependence on God’s mercy.

Repentance is a change of mind. We cannot fully repent if we don’t both change from a particular behavior and toward another. David has acknowledged his self importance and is now telling God that as a change of behavior he will sing of God’s importance instead. He does this by asking the question:

How can I praise you if you destroy me?

In this question David is vowing that he will

praise God for the mercy He shows and the help he gives.

Paul puts it this way in Ephesians 4:

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands ... Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up.

He shows us that in losing the tendencies of the flesh we must cultivate the tendencies of the spirit. We can only get rid of the weeds in our yard if we pull them up by the root and then plant good grass.

At last David feels like he can ask God for something. His help. You see when God hides His face it comes as a shock. We go to him to gain the help He has always given and we cannot find Him. Then finding God becomes the priority. After we have found Him then we can ask for His help again. In order to find Him though we must repent.

Then God grants deliverance

After this process David experienced God's favor. God lifted him out of the depths. He gave David victory in battle. God healed his

body of whatever ailment had overtaken him. He saved his life. Apparently whatever had afflicted David it was life threatening.

Look at the difference:

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.

He is making good on his promise. He said that if God would have mercy on him, he would praise God's name. When we come to verse 11 we see David lifting His voice to God once again. There is no more David feeling like he cannot be shaken. He has been shaken to the core of his being and now he is singing God's praises.

Not only that, if we look back at the beginning of the psalm we see that he encourages others to do the same. "Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name."

Sometimes we speak of making God promises when we are in need as bargaining with Him. There are some things that we should offer to God. Praise is one of them. Obedience is another. Devotion is something else. We can safely promise these things to God because they are His by right. We are

only restoring to Him that which we with-held wrongfully.

We cannot promise him great exploits of faith, because we don't know if God's will holds the capacity for those exploits in store for us. If we say, "God, get me through this and I'll tithe like I should." That's ok. We should be tithing anyway. If what we are going through is related to a chastisement because we have not been tithing that is totally appropriate.

On the other hand if we say, "God get me through this and I'll take the gospel to the jungles of South America." That may be different. If you are being punished because God wants you in the Amazon Jungle and you have disobeyed that is one thing. But if you are simply offering this because it seems like a great sacrifice to you, that is totally inappropriate. It is not for you to choose the gift you will exercise in God's service. It is not for you to choose the doors that will be open for you to walk through. A bargain like that boils down to offering something to God because we think He needs it.

- God doesn't need you.
- God doesn't need me either.
- The day before God created the Earth He

was perfectly content.

- The job He wants you to do He can accomplish another way.
- The Jungles of the Amazon basin are in His plan and you are not the towering hero that will make it all work - He is.

If you feel that God is trying to get your attention, by all means give it to him. But don't offer Him your valuable services as if He were going to be crippled without them.

- When we have wandered away from God
- When we have found Him missing as a result
- When we have sought Him out and repented
- When He has restored us to His fellowship

Then we are in a position to experience great joy and contentment.

This is the thankfulness that comes from seeing God work in your life. Thankfulness should be big. In this case, David wrote a new song, a song that would be used in public worship, so it could not be slipshod. He did his best to express thanks in words that would show what he felt in his heart.

What happens when God pulls you through? Are you simply relieved? Or do you give Him

thanks? Are your thanks as brief as the word "thanks?" or do they reflect the magnitude of the favor God did for you?

David expressed his relief

He told God his view of what had been done. He had been saved from death. That joy was put into thankful words. When you give God thanks, be very specific what you are thanking Him for, not because He needs that kind of reminder, but because it is good for us to recognize the scope of His goodness.

David invited others to give thanks

When David says "Sing to the Lord all you saints" He's inviting others to recognize the saving power of God. He is explaining to them something he's learned from his ordeal, that Joy comes in the morning after a night of darkness. He is reminding them of the times they too have experienced God's help. It is not enough to call our friends to give them the good news when something good comes our way, we must also declare to them that this is something God has done and He should be thanked. We receive congratulations from our friends when good things happen, but does God get praise from them? That is part of the point of the Praise

Place. It is an opportunity for us to express to others things in our lives that they may also give praise for.

David made his thanks last

He says he will praise God forever. You could say that he accomplished that goal in writing a psalm that we still read. Every time we read that psalm, David's thanks are expressed again ... 3000 years later. The point, though, is that David did not say thank you once and let it rest there. He made it a point to remember this specific episode of God's goodness and to repeat his thanks down the road.

Don't make your gratitude a "once-and-done" event. Keep a record of God's goodness. Every time you think God has done a favor for you, write it down in a list. Review it often as part of your prayers. Say thank you again today for things God did for you last year, and three years ago. This is a faith building exercise. It is no mistake that in the same breath David thanks God for deliverance and prays for it again. His faith is bolstered by his own experience.

God loves you and wants to do great things for you. He has done great things for you. We

should be like the one out of ten lepers that came back to give Jesus thanks for the healing He gave them all. We should let our gratitude become not an expression for immediate experience, but a life practice.