

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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<b>Series:</b>	<b>The Psalms</b>		Pastor/Teacher
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### Joy Comes with the Morning

Introduction: Remember that in Psalm 29, David depicted God’s wrath coming like a flood of destruction and overwhelming all of the created world around Israel, while preserving his people through his judgment. In this next psalm, he depicts God’s awesome mercy and grace towards his saints, even when they sin and deserve retribution. Psalm 29 focuses mainly on the Law and God’s just judgment against the world, and Psalm 30 is mainly about the Gospel and God’s gracious salvation of his saints.<sup>1</sup>

Notice also that the superscription of Psalm 30 says David wrote this psalm for the dedication<sup>2</sup> of the Temple.<sup>3</sup> This prompts us to consider Psalm 30 in light of 2 Samuel 7, where David desires to build God a temple (in Hebrew, a “house”), and God declares instead that he will build David a dynasty (in Hebrew, the same word for “house”). It seems that David’s gratitude for this promise, which we see him express in 2 Samuel 7:18-29, also moved him to write Psalm 30 as a further expression of thanks for God’s grace over his life.

- I. Verses 1-5: God has delivered David and all his people ought to give thanks.
  - A. In verse 1 there is a play on words between “I will extol” and “you have drawn me up.” In Hebrew both of these words refer to some idea of lifting someone or something up. To “extol” or “exalt” God is to raise up his name in the estimation of all who will listen, and so it is a fitting response to God’s lifting up of David to rescue him like a drowning man.
  - B. It is not clear exactly what difficult situation prompted David to cry out for help in verse 2, but he compares it to being dragged down towards death.
    1. It could have had something to do with God’s punishments for David’s census (2 Samuel 24:10-17) or his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Samuel 12:16-17). Psalm 30:5 is particularly reminiscent of the way David mourned for his child and then rose and praised the Lord in 2 Samuel 12:20. Perhaps one of these events, or the civil war

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<sup>1</sup> James R. Hamilton, Jr. suggests in his commentary (pg 347) that there may even be a connection between the “floodwaters” of God’s wrath in Psalm 29, and David saying in Psalm 30:3 that God has brought up his soul from going down to Sheol, like a man being saved from drowning.

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word for “dedication” here is Hanukkah, the same name as the feast which is traditionally a celebration of the rededication of the Second Temple in the time of the Maccabees.

<sup>3</sup> Many scholars have claimed that this superscription is a problem for maintaining that David wrote all the psalms which are ascribed to him, because he was not, of course, alive when the Temple was consecrated in 1 Kings 8. I do not, however, see this as a serious problem because we know David desired to build the Temple himself and easily could have written Psalm 30 for singing on the day when his son would eventually complete that work.

with Absalom, for another example, prompted David to reflect on God's promises to him in 2 Samuel 7 and then write Psalm 30.

2. In any case, the main point is that God does not abandon those to whom he has committed himself. David was sinking down toward Hell, and God pulled him back like a lifeguard. He has been, as it were, preemptively resurrected. The rest of the psalm shows this was not because David deserved to be saved, but for the sake of God's own glory.

- C. Verse 5 declares that for those saints who truly belong to God, any suffering they experience in this life lasts only for a moment when compared with God's everlasting grace to them. It is fatherly discipline and correction, rather than retribution.<sup>4</sup> If God were to give us an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, there would be no possibility of deliverance. The Flood of Psalm 29 is what God's retribution looks like, and it is all-encompassing against the wicked. In Psalm 30, it is the grace of God towards believers which is ultimately all-encompassing.

## II. Verses 6-10: David cries out for help and the Lord answers.

- A. In these verses David reflects upon the events that moved him to write Psalm 30 in a bit more detail, although his words are still too broad to pinpoint conclusively.

- B. Verse 6 describes a moment in David's life when he was sinfully self-secure. He looked around at the relatively safe kingdom he had built and defended through many victories and arrogantly assumed he would never suffer again.<sup>5</sup>

1. For example, David certainly had something of this spirit in him when he was looking proudly out from the rooftop of his palace and felt he could simply take whatever was pleasing to him (in that case Bathsheba). In neither Psalm 30:6 nor 2 Samuel 11:2 does David explicitly take the glory for his kingdom, but he clearly felt a proud self-satisfaction which is offensive to the Lord. This proud self-confidence in turn leads to grave sin, and in a king it usually leads to horrific abuses of power, as it did with David.
2. It is greatly to be grieved that our culture today has turned self-confidence and pride into virtues! There may be no other sin which produces such a horrifying variety of evils and abuses as pride, and yet nearly all of our public institutions celebrate a particular kind of pride as admirable and even courageous! Depression and suicidality rates among young people strongly suggest that these celebrations are doing nothing to alleviate the despair of people who feel they are not normal. At some point, either in God's providence or when our Savior returns, those who proclaim pride as a virtue will be severely humbled.

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<sup>4</sup> Consider Hebrews 12:5-11, "And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.' ... For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

<sup>5</sup> John Calvin says in his commentary on this verse, "[it is] as if David had said, 'When fortune smiled upon me on every side, and no danger appeared to occasion fear, my mind sunk as it were into a deep sleep, and I flattered myself that my happy condition would continue, and that things would always go on in the same course.' This carnal confidence frequently creeps upon the saints when they indulge themselves in their prosperity, and so to speak, wallow upon their dunghill."

- C. Verse 7 reminds us that the real source of David's prosperity was the Lord strengthening him.
1. His "mountain," Zion, on which he had built his capital city, the seat of his kingly power, was really only upheld by the grace of God, not David's own brilliance and strength. Therefore for him to be so self-confident as he confesses he was in verse 6 was always absurd.
  2. David only realized this, however, when God hid his face from him. God withdrew some of that prosperity for a time to weaken David's self-reliance and teach him to lean upon his Lord again. It quickly had its desired effect and David was dismayed.
- D. In verse 8 David realizes he cannot rescue himself, despite his previous self-confidence, so he turns to the Lord and pleads for mercy.
1. One of the beautiful things we see again and again in the life of David in 1 and 2 Samuel is not that David never sins, but that he consistently recognizes the voice of his Master. When the Lord speaks to David through intermediaries such as the Prophet Nathan or Abigail, that word does not bounce off or go in one ear and out the other. He receives the message from his Lord and responds accordingly.
  2. In the case of Psalm 30, we see this pattern when David is dismayed and swiftly cries out for help from the Lord. Often the Lord likewise uses suffering to lead us back to him in prayer.<sup>6</sup> If we have believing hearts, it is not the case that we do not sin, even severely. But the Spirit will rebuke us for such transgressions, and if we have hearts alive to God we will heed that rebuke.
- E. In verse 9 David reveals the reason God saved him. It was not because David was worthy, but so that David would sing God's praises and make known his great salvation.
1. This verse implies that it is in God's own self-interest to save all those who belong to him. If he abandons those who trust him and they perish, he gets no glory. Instead, Satan would have some grounds for mocking and ridiculing the name of the Lord. But since God is not fickle like us and does not remove his favor from those to whom he has granted it, there is no possibility that he will abandon us to our enemies. He will save us and bring us into everlasting blessedness so that we will glorify him forever.
  2. This implies that the act of writing a psalm like Psalm 30 is part of God's purpose in saving David! We see how graciously God saved his servant and we sing his praises because of David's testimony. Similarly, we only know how God has saved us in Jesus Christ because of the Apostles' testimony.<sup>7</sup> He preserved them and their words through many dangers so that we might have life and gratefully worship him.

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<sup>6</sup> Again, Calvin draws a wise lesson from David's pleas in these verses. "True believers, when they rely upon God, are not on that account neglectful of prayer. On the contrary, looking carefully at the multitude of dangers by which they are beset, and the manifold instances of human frailty which pass before their eyes, they take warning from them, and pour out their hearts before God."

<sup>7</sup> As 1 John 1:1-3 says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

- III. Verses 11-12: David describes his everlasting gratitude for God's everlasting mercy to him.
- A. Verse 11 vividly describes God's response to David's pleas with a change of heart and a change of clothing. It is as though David has gone from a funeral to a wedding. God replaced his reasons for dismay and sorrow with reasons to rejoice and even dance!
  - B. Verse 12 reiterates the purpose of God's saving David: so that David will sing his praises forevermore. This beautifully mirrors the beginning of the psalm, where David says he will extol ("lift up" in the sense of glorifying) God because God has lifted him up from being dragged down to death.
  - C. Many Christian theologians have adopted some form of the Latin phrase, *exitus et reditus* ("exit and return") from neoplatonic philosophers to describe human relationships to God. Sometimes this phrase can be dangerous, if it is used to blur the lines between God and his creatures and make it seem as though they have the same essence. But in John Owen's *Communion with God*, he uses this idea as an analogy for the appropriateness of our worship toward God. Just as God has given us salvation from the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit, so we should return our worship to him in the reverse order.

We should lift up the triune name of our God because he has lifted us up out of despair and death into his marvelous light. God puts that name on believers in baptism and will not lose a single one who trusts him for salvation, just as he could not let David fall. And also like David, the first and most appropriate response to this wondrous news is falling down in grateful praise. We would do well to sound something like David in 2 Samuel 7:18-22, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. ... Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears."