

“I Can’t Thank You Enough, God!”

Psalm 30

We continue our journey through the Psalms and today we being our transition from “Help” to “Thanks” by taking a look at Psalm 30. It is not as familiar as some of the other psalms but it serves as a wonderful reminder that bottom line, as people of faith, our doxologies of thanksgiving and praise to God are fundamental indicators to all of creation, including ourselves, that wonders will not cease in the face of darkness, that possibilities not yet dreamt of will happen, and that hope should always be our authentic stance while proclaiming the Kingdom of God and living out our lives of faith here on earth.

I invite you now to turn into your pew bibles to Psalm 30.

(Read Text).

What strikes me about this psalm is that it celebrates the fact that we are real people living a very real world. It embraces the fact that as real people, in our lives, we can experience the greatest joy one minute and then experience the greatest pain the next. It understands that as real people, we can go from crying our eyes out one minute to hysterically laughing over something funny we just saw the next minute. This psalm picks up on and celebrates the ebb and flow of life with no pretenses, with no judgment, and with no call to expect life to be more than what it

really is- us, just living real lives the best we know how to do, lives that are filled with moments of joy, and moments of sorrow, lives that are filled with moments of us holding our own, and then us experiencing moments where we feel like we are in over our heads. Life, real life is real people, experiencing all the good, the bad, and the ugly throughout our daily existence

I'll be honest. There is a freedom to such honesty, the honesty that psalm 30 shares. It tells us that we don't have to be somebody else to be accepted as a child of God. It tells us that we don't have to hide our emotions or pretend to be perfect just because we go to church each Sunday. It celebrates that we can be real people with real emotions, with real problems, with real celebrations. It celebrates that we can even be real people who have real moments of doubt and can still be people of God.

That really is a wonderful life giving way of thinking. As we start to let it sink in, it begins to feel like a weight is being lifted off our shoulders. We can be who we are-warts and all with God and know that in spite of it all, the good, the bad, the ugly mornings without make-up, God loves us more than we could ever imagine. There really is something so freeing about that way of being, that way of living, to know that we don't have to fight the ebb and flow of life. We don't have to be something we are not just to be accepted. We don't have to struggle against the currents in life, currents that sometimes push us in the opposite direction of

which we wish to go. Truly as that knowledge begins to take residence in our hearts, a weight is being lifted off our shoulders as we continue to wonder at the amazing gift that we have been given by a God who loves us more than we could ever imagine..

So instead of telling us to fight the currents of life, Psalm 30 invites us to enjoy them, to celebrate them, to let them free us to do what we as people of faith are really called to do each and every day: Give praise and thanksgiving to God for all that God has done for us, to hold onto the hope that no matter what life brings our way, God will always love us. God will always be there for us.

Psalm 30 celebrates the fact that life moves from mourning to dancing, back and forth, time and time again. In this psalm, the psalmist celebrates that no matter what may come, the presence of God is the thing that centers us, is the thing that brings balance to our lives, is the one thing that will restore us to life each and every time.

As people of faith, In hearing such news, how can we not lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving? In receiving such a gift, how can our hearts not sing out with joy? We've been given an amazing gift. We celebrate that, just like the psalmist, we know that this promise of God's presence is ours. It is not a fleeting promise nor is it limited to only the times when we cry out for help. This promise, the promise of God's presence is for all times. It is a promise that will stand for a

lifetime. It is a promise made to us by God, and it is something that we can rely on for as long as we shall live.

That is why the psalmist gives thanks and praise to God. He can let go of his worries. He can let go of his fears. He can enjoy life, no matter what ups or downs he experiences along the way. He can enjoy life. And just like the psalmist, we are invited to do the same. We should give thanks and praise. We should enjoy life, knowing that we can let go of our worries. We can go along with the ebb and flow of life because we know that darkness will not have the last word. God does. So how can we not sing thanks and praise each and every day of our lives, knowing that we have such an amazing gift in our lives?

Now I will tell you, that what saves this psalm from being unrealistic or naïve is the psalmist's honesty. He doesn't deny that there is suffering in his life. He doesn't pretend that everything is sunshine and rainbows just because he is a child of God. And He also fully admits that there have been times that he has forgotten this promise either because he allowed the darkness to overtake him or because he thought he didn't need God. The psalmist is quick to say that when he knew he was in over his head, the first person he called out to was God. But surprisingly, this part of his admission gets very little mentioning beyond one or two lines. It is almost as if the psalmist knows that everyone has had an experience like that. It is almost as if he knows that we as people of faith talk about those

types of moments quite often, you know those moments when we cried out for help, and God came through for us. Yea, I think it is safe to say that those types of moments in our faith are easy to talk about for us and we share these stories pretty well along our faith journey. In fact, some of our favorite hymns talk about moments just like those. "I was lost but now I'm found, I was blind but now I see". All great moments of faith. I needed God. God came through for us. Yeah God!

But it is the other part of the situation, the overwhelming humbling part, that the psalmist spends most of his time dwelling on, the part where he had to swallow his pride, where he realized that he had gotten too big for his breeches, and suddenly, life didn't seem so secure anymore.

The psalmist knows that more often than not, there are times he has not heeded his own advice, that instead of giving thanks and praise to God, he gave thanks and praise to himself, that his own ego and inflated image of self importance got so big that it blocked out the light of God. And no matter what God did to try to break through to him, the psalmist kept on ignoring God. He kept on spinning his wheels without ever really going anywhere, all because he thought, I've got this. Who needs God?

By his own admission, the psalmist says that more times than he would like to admit, in his life, he thought he was a mountain, made by God's own hand, a mountain that would not be shaken. He knew he was strong and sure. And as soon

as he realized this, he began fooling himself into thinking that things were going good in his life because of what he was doing, not because of what God was doing. And not long after he started thinking this way, he would get so overconfident that no longer was he praising God for all that God had done. Instead, he was praising himself, relying only on what he could do, thinking only of himself. That is until he realized how scary the world can truly be without God by his side.

Now please hear me say, it wasn't that God left the psalmist. God was there all along. The psalmist wandered away because he thought he didn't need God. He thought he could do better on his own without God. And so off he went. It was only when he realized how terrifying life can be without God, it was only when he realized how alone he could feel without acknowledging God's presence in his life, that he came back home again.

One of the reasons that this psalmist gives thanks and praise is because he knows regardless of life's ebbs and flows, regardless of how big for our breeches we get, regardless of where we wander off to, God is always there for us. It is a humbling, a comforting, an amazing, and life giving thought. We can swallow our pride and God welcomes us back each and every time.

And for that, that promise of God's always constant presence, the psalmist and we as children of God can never thank God enough.

Because ultimately we know that it was not us who saved us from death. It was not us who saved us from the dark pit. It was not us who turned our mourning into dancing. It was not us who restored us to life. Nor will it ever be us who will do such things in our lives.

It was God. It is God. And it will be God who will do and can do all these things. And we can never thank God enough. But that doesn't mean we should try! Each and every day, our first words should be, "Thank you God!" because our God is so good to us. Throughout our day, God gives us signs of new life, signs of rebirth, signs of welcome just to let us know and reminds us that on God we can always rely. Whenever people gather around the table, God's presence is there. Whenever people work for justice, God's presence is there. Whenever people tend to one another, love one another, care for one another, God's presence is there.

God is there, in our crying, in our singing, in our pain, and in our joy. In our lives, there is and there will always be something that reminds us that regardless of the ebb and flow of life, God is there for us. God has not left us. God has turned our mourning into dancing, just like God has done before. And for that, the promise of God's presence and love, we cannot thank God enough.

As people free from worry, free from fear, as people who can enjoy life, all aspects of life, no matter where the currents of life take us or bring our way, we are aware of God's presence surrounding us each and every day. And it is this

awareness that makes our hearts leap for joy, our voices lift in praise, and our spirits soar with thanksgiving.

So we say today and always, God for all that you have done, we simply cannot thank you enough and we will never stop trying either. Amen.