

Preacher: Pastor Twyla

Scripture: Psalm 30

¹ *I give you all the credit, God—
you got me out of that mess,
you didn't let my foes gloat.*
²⁻³ *God, my God, I yelled for help
and you put me together.
God, you pulled me out of the grave,
gave me another chance at life
when I was down-and-out.*
⁴⁻⁵ *All you saints! Sing your hearts out to God!
Thank him to his face!
He gets angry once in a while, but across
a lifetime there is only love.
The nights of crying your eyes out
give way to days of laughter.*
⁶⁻⁷ *When things were going great
I crowed, "I've got it made.
I'm God's favorite.
He made me king of the mountain."
Then you looked the other way
and I fell to pieces.*
⁸⁻¹⁰ *I called out to you, God;
I laid my case before you:
"Can you sell me for a profit when I'm dead?
auction me off at a cemetery yard sale?
When I'm 'dust to dust' my songs
and stories of you won't sell.
So listen! and be kind!
Help me out of this!"*
¹¹⁻¹² *You did it: you changed wild lament
into whirling dance;
You ripped off my black mourning band
and decked me with wildflowers.
I'm about to burst with song;
I can't keep quiet about you.
God, my God,
I can't thank you enough.*

I remember a time, probably somewhere around six years ago, I was babysitting our granddaughter, Felicity. I took her to the mall in Lancaster where she played for a while at an indoor playground. There were colorful objects that the children climbed all over. Felicity was having a blast when she noticed a boy older than her jump from one object to another. I guess it looked like fun to her because before I could say, "don't try it," she was air-borne.

She didn't quite succeed at making the jump. Instead, she did a face-plant on the side of the object she hoped to land on. I was waiting for the scream and tears to flow; but they never came. She simply got up and tried it again. That time she made it. I could not believe it. The distance between the two objects was large; so, it didn't look like something she could do, but she did it!

Our God, my brothers and sisters, can do anything! We shouldn't doubt this. And we can do more than we ever thought possible, even overcome trials and suffering with God's help. The psalm I read to you today is believed to be written by David, and David believed God could do anything; in fact, he said, "God, you did it, not just one time but many times over. Now we do not know exactly what was happening in David's life when he wrote Psalm 30. Perhaps he had been very ill. He asked God to make him well again and God did. Perhaps all his people, the Jews, were ill: and after they prayed, they all became well again.

In the psalm David reflects on the reality that there are challenges in life, and he concludes God has the ability to help overcome them. He acknowledges that trials sometimes left him feeling hopeless and helpless, but God did it! God did what felt like the impossible for the Psalmist, and he could not be silent in expressing his joy. We don't know exactly what God did, but we know whatever it was, the psalmist overcame his difficulty.

The Psalmist also invites all God's children to, "Sing your hearts out to God. Thank him to his face!" which essentially tells us to remember that what God did for him, God will do for us. As we read through this Psalm we can find tips that will help us realize God's work in our lives.

We learn that David was not uncomfortable with crying out to God for help. He did not hesitate to tell God when he was disappointed with God. For example, in verse 7, the Psalmist says, "He (meaning God) made me king of the mountain. Then you looked the other way and I fell to pieces." He openly challenged God by asking God, what good am I to you and your people if I am nothing, like "dust."

Throughout the bible we find many stories about people who took their cares to God, sometimes even expressing anger and frustration with God. Job is a good example of this. Here's a man who lost everything and suffered physically. He told God that he was not happy with what God was allowing to happen to him.

The prophet, Jeremiah, cried out to God in anger more than once. The prophet Jeremiah was carrying God's message to the Israelites. God was not very happy with the people because they were worshipping the idol Baal. The people were unhappy with Jeremiah's message and threatened to silence him. Jeremiah feared for his life, and he took it out on God. God did not strike down Jeremiah, but assured Jeremiah that he would be with Jeremiah as he weathered this storm. He wasn't going to take him out of it, but God would be with him in it.

We may get frustrated with God when we feel he is ignoring us. When trials and pain don't go away, we may wonder why God is doing something to save us. David assures us that we can take all of that emotion to God. In fact, we **should** take our cares to God. We also should not fear being honest with God when we are less than happy with God. If we try to ignore those feelings, we build a roadblock in the path to freedom from our troubles and we build a wall blocking the healing God seeks to give us. God will not strike us down, punish us, or abandon us when we are honest with him.

God's desire is to free us from our trials and heal us from our wounds. God's help, God's healing may not come through in the way of some magical occurrence, it may not come quickly or in a manner in which we think it should come, but it will come. God's presence, holding us,

sitting with us, guiding us or carrying us, if need be, is with us in an instant as we call on his name for help. God's presence gives us strength and confidence as we walk through the storms of life.

Now, this doesn't mean that God never gets angry. In fact, the Psalmist recognizes in verse five that, "God gets angry once in a while, but across a lifetime there is only love. The nights of crying your eyes out give way to days of laughter." This tells us that God may get angry with us, just as we get angry with God, but God is committed to us, so this God of grace and love does not hold a grudge.

The question for us then is, are we committed to God so that our anger and frustration with God does not end our relationship with God. God never turns his back on us, but it is possible for us to turn our back on God. If that happens, our circumstances can weigh on us more and our feelings of desperation becomes even more of a deep dark pit that we feel is impossible to overcome.

It's easy to stay committed to God while things are going well in our lives. The Psalmist's testifies to this reality in his own life. He testifies that this experience of suffering taught him some valuable lessons, the one lesson standing out most to him was that he realized he had begun to take God for granted in the good times of his life. Now, after having God's help in his time of desperation, he became more aware of his continual need for God's kindness and protection.

You may have had a similar awakening after making the journey through pain and suffering. Sometimes, however, the pain of one's experience and the frustration and anger one might feel towards God, can shroud the hope this truth provides the spirit, especially when troubles arise again. Unfortunately, when one is stuck in this kind of negativity, one is less prepared for the time when hardships arise again.

We find later in the Psalm, when David experiences God's power in his life, that he thanks and praises God for God's goodness to him, and he says he will not stop praising God. Think about that for a moment, this wasn't the last time the Psalmist was going to need God's help. The Psalmist knew that. He's telling us that he is committed to praising God through the next storm of life, and the next one, and the next one, and so on.

Let's face it, that's not always easy for us to do, but when we are in love with the Lord, and we put our trust in him, we will praise God even when life gets so hard and painful that we think we cannot go on. Praising God even at those most difficult times fills our souls with hope and gives us the will to go on.

A body is not crippled 'til its heart has ceased to praise. Louis Albert Banks tells of an elderly Christian man, a fine singer, who learned that he had cancer of the tongue and that surgery was required. In the hospital after everything was ready for the operation, the man said to the doctor, "Are you sure I will never sing again?" The surgeon found it difficult to answer his question. He simply shook his head no. The patient then asked if he could sit up for a moment. "I've had many good times singing the praises of God," he said. "And now you tell me I can never sing again. I have one song that will be my last. It will be of gratitude and praise to God." There in the doctor's presence the man sang softly the words of Isaac Watts' hymn, "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,/ And when my voice is lost in death,/ Praise shall employ my nobler power;/ My days of praise shall ne'er be past,/ While life, and thought, and being last,/ Or immortality endures."

The psalmists of long ago discovered a great truth that poured through in much of what they said and wrote. They discovered that things do not always stay the same, that where once there was trouble and sadness, something can happen that changes trial into triumph. They

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discovered that when they live in relationship with God, he can surprise us with a stroke of grace, a transformation of circumstances and attitudes that are beyond our ability to comprehend. They discovered that "weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning." May this be true for you also. Amen.