

Psalm 30

Written by K B Napier
Wednesday, 18 May 2011 14:04

This Psalm was written for the dedication of the cedar-built house of David. He had a lovely home built of the strongest wood in the Lebanon. Yet, even at that time of personal gain and joy he remembered the Lord. This is because riches and plenty do not give us the Lord; they are only a temporary, earthly accomplishment.

I would say that few Christians dedicate their homes to God. This is because a home dedicated to God must have residents who honour the Lord, and do not continually sin. When we dedicate our home to God, we are saying "This house belongs to Him, and so I will live in it as one who is His servant." Is this how you see your home? Does it truly belong to God? Or, do you see it as your private place to commit your own pleasures and sins, forgetting God, and even making it grubby and tainted by your selfishness and evils?

Verses 1-3

1.

I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

2.

O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

3.

O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

David says he will glorify God "for thou hast lifted me up". Does this mean he only did so because God did something for him? No, it does not. David is merely saying that on this occasion he thanks God for what He did for him. In other places David praises God simply for being God. And this should be our own position... to thank God for being Who He is, and not just because He helps us or does anything for us. That God helps us is a bonus, but is not the main reason to praise him. The main reason is that He is our Creator, we are His creatures, and we owe Him praise as our Lord.

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Note why David is joyous – God did not allow his enemies to kill him. I have spoken of this about my own life, elsewhere, when enemies tried time and again to ruin me. My only thought was that they should not finish me off, because they would glorify themselves and their wickedness, and scorn God. David called to God when he was in trouble, and God healed him. In this context ‘healing’ is used to describe God snatching David out of his distress, and the nation out of its dire need.

God had “brought up (his) soul from the grave”. Does this mean David had died? No, it is a figure of speech, meaning that God had prevented David from dying at the hands of his enemies, though he was very close to it. God kept David alive and away from the grave and the pit. In this text “grave” is she’owl. The word can vary in meaning depending on the context. Here it simply means what it says – the grave or death; the dark place inhabited by the dead. By “pit”, bowr, David refers to a dungeon or old water cistern used to imprison someone.

In this context the grave would be like a prison to David. Note that in Hebrew thinking she’owl was a place of activity, though darkened by the doom of the place. David thanks God for keeping him from both death and the shadowy place he would thereafter stay in. Hebrews thought that this awful place had a section in it reserved for men and women later to go to Heaven. But, the time spent in the pit or shadows would be miserable. Hence David’s relief at not being bound by death and giving his enemies reason to rejoice. Many today only praise God if He gives them something. But, David is not like that – He praises God because He IS God. This is a love for God that is selfless, and such a love is rewarded by the Lord.

Verses 4-6

1.

Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

2.

For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

3.

And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

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David calls on all saints to “Sing unto the LORD”. Do not think of a saint as one specially exalted by the Roman Catholic ‘church’! Such is heresy! According to scripture, every believer is a saint. A saint, chaciyd, is a person who is faithful, godly, holy. It should be the mark of a saint that he or she praises God for being Who He is, and not just because He does something for them.

Sadly, it is true that most Christians only speak to, or think of, God when they are in trouble, or when they want something. But, the genuine person will sing praises to God for being Himself, without thought of having anything in return. When we do this we transcend our circumstances, fears and distress, and God sends us His glory as a healing balm. Very often, He gives gifts to us when we do not ask, for He knows what is in our hearts and minds, and knows what is happening to us. So, let us “give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” We must always bear in mind His holiness and His mercies towards us, though we deserve nothing. Yet, many Christians do not commune with God daily. Such is their sad lives.

All humans suffer, though the reasons can be many. Even when God is angry with us, it is for but a short time. During that time of anger life seems in darkness, but God then allows His light to shine upon us, again giving us joy. The same happens when we enter a time of distress and immense sadness. We pass through the valley of the shadow of death (see Psalm 23), knowing only tears and distress, but God waits at the end of the valley and the sun will again shine upon us. It is our task to walk through that valley with eyes fixed only on God. His steady holy gaze will then guide us through those awful times until we come to the warmth of His light.

Christians today say that when we sin we can never again expect God’s presence. This is a lie. If we repent, God will immediately forgive and restore us. We CAN expect this mercy from God. Not good enough? Then join the clan! None of us is good enough – only Christ’s righteousness makes us acceptable to God.

David also says he will never be moved in his prosperity. When you read David’s life you will see he had times of peace and prosperity, and times of war and need. When David knew peace, quiet and prosperity, he said he would not be moved or overthrown. We know from his incident with Bathsheba that his grave sin occurred at a time of peace, between wars, when his guard was down. Prosperity and peace have a knack of disabling us at times, giving us a false sense of security in our sinfulness. So, David is saying that though he might know prosperity

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and peace, he will also be on his guard against sin. But, what if we do this and still sin? Then, we repent. That is God's way.

Verses 7-10

1.

LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.

2.

I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.

3.

What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

4.

Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

God made David's mountain strong by His "favour". That is, God acted on David's behalf just because He wanted to. David did not contribute towards his own wealth, success or military expertise. It was all done by God. "Favour", ratsown, is God's good-will or desire. He helps because that is His prerogative, not because we are worthy. There is comfort in this, because if we had to wait until we were worthy to receive His help, we would never receive it!

The "mountain", harar, David refers to, is Zion and/or the country itself. It did not fall to the enemy in his day, but was strong, defended, and God's holy place. It was "strong", 'oz – politically, socially, legally, materially, militarily. When any country gives itself to God, it prospers and is protected by God. But, it withers and dies when God is removed from its mind and heart. Hence the fall of Jerusalem and the exile.

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Then, God “didst hide (His) face” and this troubled David. When God does not make His presence manifest in our lives, it is like removing the heart from our chest, and we die. David cried out in real grief when God did so, and pleaded that the Lord would return. But, God removes Himself when we sin continually, so David may indeed have been sinning at that time. Or, it was rhetoric.

Though aware of his own sinfulness, David still pleaded with God. Do you do this? You should, for it proves your Godward aim, even when you have wronged the Lord and others. David was “troubled”, *bahal* – disturbed, anxious, even afraid, because the cause of his strength, as both a man and king, was given by God. To be without God’s active presence is to be alone and prey to the enemy and our own sins. David, knowing this, was inwardly terrified.

Then, David shouted out to God – what’s the point of my death at the hands of my enemy? If I die, my body returns to the dust it was made from – but if it is dust and I am dead, how can it speak the truth of the Lord? This is another way of saying: “Don’t let my enemy boast they have finished me off – let me live to glorify You!” There are times when we must pray to the Lord for life, so that we can spread His word. If we are dead we cannot do this. This is David’s plea. David wanted God to hear him and give him mercy and help. Whenever God helps us it is always on His terms, not ours. He helps because He wishes to, not because we pray for it. The prayer is merely something we are commanded to utter, but it is God’s will that brings help and success.

Verses 11&12

1.

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

2.

To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

And then God answered David – his grief and fear was turned into dancing. This is literal

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dancing; David used to dance, play music, sing and be joyous. He was not like so many modern Christians who try their best to be grim-faced, with little joy. David was clothed in gladness. Are you? No matter what goes on around you, you should live in joy and thankfulness, that God is your Saviour and Lord.

It was custom at that time to dress in sackcloth when in grief, or when pleading sincerely with God. Then, when He answered, the person would wash and dress in fine clothes, happy. So, David received his help, and he was glad. He wrote his psalms in recognition of God's help, and sang praises to the Lord... David's glory was as nothing compared to God's glory! And David could not stay silent in the light of God's amazing mercy. Rather, David said he would praise God forever.

Remember – whatever circumstance you are in, you must praise God, because this is His due and command. When He sees us committing ourselves to Him, He comes to us with the required help and strength. We are nothing to God, except through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Do not forget it.

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