

David Rejoices in His Healing

Psalm 30

Psalm 30 - *"I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my foes rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me. O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave. You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*

Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name, for His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Now in my prosperity I said, "I shall never be moved." LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong;

You hid Your face, and I was troubled. I cried out to You, O LORD; and to the LORD I made supplication: "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth? Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me. LORD, be my helper!"

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing. You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever."

Background Notes

In this psalm, David rejoiced in the Lord because the Lord raised him up from an illness. He was determined to praise the Lord in this life, because he would not have praised the Lord from the grave if he had died.

The title reveals that this psalm was a song for the dedication of the Temple. That leads to a couple of questions. First, it's unlikely that this psalm, because the Temple was built and dedicated by his son, King Solomon, after David's death. However, it's possible David wrote the psalm ahead of time for the dedication of the future Temple. But when we look at the content of this psalm, it doesn't seem to have anything to do with the dedication of the Temple. Rather, it seems that it has to do with a time of healing in David's life.

So why would David write this psalm for the future dedication of the Temple? Or why would the Levites choose this psalm of David for the dedication of the Temple? Or would a later inspired writer possibly put this title on the psalm, and use it for liturgical purposes for the dedication of the Temple, even though it had to do with David's healing from an illness?

The second possibility is that the “house of the Lord” mentioned here was not the Temple, but the temporary tent that David set up in Jerusalem to house the Ark of the Covenant until the Temple was built. *“So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD” (2 Samuel 6:17).* But again, why would this psalm refer to David’s healing? We don’t have all the answers, but the following scenario is a good possibility - and it does fit the context.

In this possible scenario, the occasion was not the dedication of the Temple or the temporary tent that David set up, but it was the dedication of the **site** of the future Temple soon after David bought the threshing floor from Ornan, the Jebusite. Do you remember the occasion of that purchase? David had wrongly numbered the children of Israel out of pride, and he failed to trust the Lord completely for protection and direction. As a result, God disciplined Israel with three days of pestilence, or plague, through the land and 70,000 men of Israel became sick and died. It’s possible that David also became sick on this occasion, and was close to death, but God raised him up.

It was at this point that, through the prophet Gad, God told David to erect an altar of sacrifice to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite. David obeyed, the plague was stopped, and the site was designated as the future site of the Temple. *“David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place. And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering” (1 Chronicles 21:25-26).*

“Then David said, ‘This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel’. (1 Chronicles 22:1) So in this scenario then, Psalm 30 was written here for the dedication for the site of the future Temple. The plague was stopped and the land was healed, and David himself was healed and raised up from near death.

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers should praise the Lord when they are healed from sickness.

Believers should always ask the Lord for healing when they (or others) are sick. That is right and biblical. And when God chooses to heal us, we usually thank the Lord. But are our prayers for healing more fervent than our thanksgiving and praise when God heals us, and we’re well again? So this doctrinal point is good for all of us. Believers should praise the Lord when they are healed from sickness.

Notice from the first few verses of this psalm that David did not hold back in his praise to the Lord for his restoration to health, and he encouraged others to praise the Lord as well. *"I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my foes rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me. O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave. You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name."*

Verses 5-7 back up the possible occasion for this psalm that I presented earlier, when David proudly took the military census in Israel. We read about the anger of the Lord in 2 Samuel 24:1, and that is probably the anger of the Lord that is mentioned in Psalm 30:5, *"His anger is but for a moment..."*

In verse 6, David acknowledged that his pride and independence was the problem and led to God's disciplinary judgment of sickness. Verse 6: *"Now in my prosperity I said, 'I shall never be moved.'" And he realized that it was only by God's grace that his kingdom was secure and that without the attention of the Lord's face as it were, there was no blessing: "LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong. You hid Your face, and I was troubled (v7).*

So, without the attention of the Lord's face upon him, there was no blessing. But by God's grace, restoration had come. In David's case, it seems that it was disciplinary sickness from which he was healed, but this psalm can certainly be applied to any kind of sickness in the believer's life. Believers should praise the Lord when they are healed from sickness.

2. Believers should praise the Lord while they are still alive.

"What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth?" (v9).

In this verse David's said that if he were to die, he would not then be able to praise the Lord and tell others about the Lord's faithfulness. As believers, we know that when we die and go to heaven, we'll praise the Lord forever. David realized this too, as he wrote at the end of verse 12: *"O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever."*

But David was making the point that if he died, he would no longer be able to declare God's faithfulness to others. The Lord's faithfulness was key to his renewed health. This should be true for us, too. When the Lord raises us up from serious illness or injury, and turns our mourning into dancing, and sorrow into gladness (v11), we should not take healing for granted. And we should not be silent (v12). We should share our praise and thanks to God with others. We can be thankful for good medicine and good doctors, but the Lord's faithfulness is the key to our healing. So as long as we're alive, let us thank the Lord for health and strength, and healing from illness. Believers should praise the Lord while they are still alive.

Practical Applications

1. Are you ready for the Lord's answer to all your questions?

Suppose we were to ask the Lord the same question that David asked in verse 9: *"What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth?"* In other words, we would ask, 'Lord how could my death now be any profit, or gain, or blessing to You - or to anyone?' Are you ready for the Lord's answer to that question? (By the way, you may not want to pose that question to your fellow believers. They may give you a discouraging answer!) But suppose the Lord Himself were to answer you in the following way. "You ask me how could your death now be of any profit, or gain, or blessing? You don't serve me, or praise me, or thank me much in this life. You just take everything I give you for granted. And not only that, you often complain. And you don't read my Word much, and you don't teach My Word with your family, you lose your temper, and you hurt others. Why shouldn't I take you home to Heaven right now? Your death would be a real blessing to many of your fellow believers, and even your own family."

Are you ready for an answer like that from the Lord? I hope not. We love the Lord to answer our questions - but are you ready for the Lord's answer to all your questions?

2. Remember, night does not last forever.

"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (v5). Are you experiencing a "night of weeping"? Remember, sorrow doesn't last forever. That's David's point in verse 5.

So whether you're weeping because of sickness, or sorrow, or persecution, or loneliness, it will not last forever.

During the tribulation period, the small group of faithful believers will go through a long night of sorrow and persecution. Some will actually be martyred. But the night will not last forever. The morning will come with the Lord's return! The prophet Malachi writes of that glorious morning: *"The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2).* And that morning light will never end!

Are you a believer who is facing a "night of weeping" now? Remember, night does not last forever. *Weeping may endure for a night - but joy comes in the morning!*