

Psalm 30 – God Has Lifted Me Up!

The believer's life is filled with ups and downs. There are times of peace and tranquillity, and he thanks God for every moment of such times. However, he also knows that there are times of great difficulties and trials because of the sin-filled world that he is living in. This was king David's testimony. David's testimony is similar to the experiences of every believer in Christ who seeks to do God's will in his life!

David was a young shepherd contentedly serving God by looking after his father's flock. However, God had other plans for him. One bright sunny day, God sent the prophet Samuel to replace king Saul with another king. Young David's house was chosen. David's father brought his older brothers before Samuel but all of them were rejected. Young David was called home from the fields and God said to prophet Samuel that David was the one. From that point onwards, David's life turned from ignominy to notability. It was something that David did not seek after. After David killed Goliath the Philistine giant who insulted the LORD was killed by David, David's life was thrust into the limelight. King Saul realized that this young lad was a threat to his kingdom. From then on, Saul wanted David dead. He hunted David throughout the land of Israel until safety was found only outside of Israel. David hid with his men in Philistine territory until King Saul was killed by the Philistines in battle.

Soon after Saul's death, David was made the king of Judah for seven and one half years before he was finally made king of all Israel for the next thirty three years. David became king at thirty years of age. The Bible does not reveal how old David was when he killed Goliath. But the years of running and hiding from the wrath of king Saul were priceless years that honed a shepherd boy into a godly and Christ-dependent man who became the best and most godly king Israel ever had. King David became the yardstick for all future Israelite kings to be measured. After years of turmoil and uncertainty, and living the life of a fugitive, David arrived at the place where God had anointed him. David finally had a house where he could call home, a house of safety and comfort that he did not have until the time of trials was over. David did not dedicate his house but his life to the LORD.

I. The Need (30:1-3) – David made it very clear from the start of this psalm that the only Person he wanted to elevate was his God, the covenantal LORD. He deliberately cried to Him by the covenantal name "the LORD." It was the covenant that God made with Israel and David that was lifted up. There was nothing special or inherently good in David at all. It was totally God's covenant which God the faithful God will always keep. God had a plan for David that must be fulfilled. This is what a covenant means. For David, life on this earth will not be over until what the LORD had determined had come to pass. David extolled, i.e. elevated or magnified, the LORD in this psalm. He experienced the LORD lifting him up. The verb "to lift up" is used "to describe someone letting down a rope into a well to lift something up." This was David's experience when being pursued by king Saul. He felt like a

person trapped helplessly inside a well, who had no escape except by a rope let down from the top to lift him up. When all seemed lost, the LORD came to his rescue. Using synthetic parallelism, Added to the fact that the LORD had rescued him from the depths of despair, David said that the LORD did not allow his enemies to rejoice over him. If king Saul had captured him, he would have been killed for sure and Saul would have rejoiced. David acknowledged that the failures of his enemies were neither due to their incompetency, for king Saul had sent 3,000 of his elite soldiers, nor David's ingenuity in hiding. It was entirely the fact that the LORD had not made David's foes to capture him.

Verse 2 (synthetical parallelism) – David shared how the LORD lifted him up. He cried to the LORD his God. By using the name "God", David appealed to the power of God. Using both "the LORD" and "God" together emphasizes his cry to his covenantal LORD who is all powerful to help. The verb "cry" focuses on a cry for freedom, from someone who was in pursuit. It was a cry from external forces that wanted to capture him. David trusted in the LORD throughout his entire ordeal as a fugitive from king Saul. However, that did not stop him from crying to his LORD to use His power to deliver him so that the running could stop! The result of his cry for freedom was that the LORD heard him. David was healed, i.e. made whole, by the LORD. David penned this psalm at the dedication of his house when all pursuits were over.

Verse 3 (synonymous parallelism) – David felt so low; he felt like he had died and was in the grave and the LORD lifted him up from there. How can anyone forget such deliverance? The depths of David's sorrow and despondency can be seen in this verse. To flee and hide from not only king Saul but an entire nation that had been frightened into subjugation was like having died and gone to the grave. Saul had wiped out all the priests except for one, simply because it was rumored that they had helped David! There was no trial, only accusations, and no matter what the priests said to deny any guilt, they were all killed. David delivered a city from destruction. Yet after helping them, God warned him that when king Saul surrounded this city and threatened to wipe them out, David would be handed over to Saul by the city. David had to flee. Fleeing from the wrath of a king was like hell on earth for David. There was literally no escape except to look up to the LORD. David acknowledged that it was the LORD who had kept him alive after bringing his soul out of the grave! His safety was in the LORD hands alone such that he was not buried in the pit like a dead person!

II. The Gratitude (30:4-6) – Filled with the deepest sense of gratitude, David called out to all holy ones (referring to "pious ones") who belong to the LORD to sing unto the LORD with him. They must have experienced the deliverance of the LORD in like manner! Singing is one of the best ways to praise the LORD. Songs sung from the heart captures the emotions and all the feelings that spoken words cannot express. David was a singer from a child, for he played the harp to calm king Saul before he became a fugitive. David penned

many psalms which are basically songs! Singing solo is never better than singing together with others who have experienced deliverance from the LORD. There are choruses in heaven that reverberate the heavenly realms before God Almighty! However, God wants His children to sing on earth now and not wait until they arrive home in heaven to praise Him! This is the best mutual encouragement believers can experience - to sing as one body in Christ because of the same faith and experiences.

The theme of the song is the holiness of the LORD which was visible to Israel in days of old. The reason is the presence of the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant which represented the presence of the LORD. The holiness of the LORD is the standard that all believers can experience on earth and also the basis for the LORD's dealing with all men. If a child of God sins, God will deal with him justly. When an unbeliever sins, God will also be just! For the believer, it will always turn out for his good, even in times of trial and persecution like what David experienced under king Saul. Remembering the holiness of the LORD reminds the believer that the LORD is no respecter of persons in His dealing with man. The LORD expects from all His children the standard of holiness according to Scriptures. This means that to remember the LORD's holiness is to remember the believer's own life of holiness which is a life free from known sin.

Verse 5 (antithetical parallelism) – David brought in the anger of the LORD here and it seems to be out of place. Yet upon further consideration, it is fitting because the believer cannot be so confident to the point of presumption whereby he does not entertain the idea, even for the briefest moment, that he probably deserves the "persecution" that he is enduring. David was sure that he was not guilty of wrongdoing in this incident with king Saul. Yet like David, the believer should not shake off the idea that God could possibly be angry with him for whatever transgression he might have done. In this case then be assured that the anger of the LORD is for a moment, i.e. a very short space of time. Literally, it means "a wink of an eye." When the believer repents of his sin, the anger of the LORD is gone immediately and the restoration of fellowship is done. The believer's prayers will once again be heard. When that happens, the believer is in God's favour once more. The word "favour" means delight. The LORD is delighted with the believer's life of witness again as it has been restored by his repentance.

In times of trials it is not delightful. It is painful and sorrow to the soul. The emotional, mental and physical and above all else spiritual sufferings come at the same time. The weight of the trial can become overwhelming to the point of death, as was the case for David. The cry and desire is for it to end. For all believers, trusting in the LORD to see us through a time of trial does not mean that we have turned into unfeeling robots! We still feel the weight of injustice and will cry for deliverance. We know that when morning comes, joy will come forth from our lips! We were victorious and have passed the test. No matter how long the trial was and how painful and heavy, the LORD has seen us through and our

hearts are filled with the deepest sense of relief and joy that words cannot describe. The literal meaning of the word "joy" is "to shout a shrill sound of happiness."

Verse 6 (synthetical parallelism) – David assured his soul that in times of prosperity he would not be moved, not even in the slightest. The time when the believer is most prone to forget the LORD is not when everything is bleak and he constantly clings on to the LORD day and night. It is in times of prosperity. The word "prosperity" here means "to feel safe or secure." When there are no more struggles, complacency sets in. Prayer stops. Self-will takes over and the believer will do what is right in his own eyes. When that happens, he has sinned against God. David realized this danger. Here he declares that in times of safety and peace, he will never be moved from his nearness to the LORD. He must not forget his humble beginnings . . . the life of a fugitive and his position as king of Israel, living in a large and comfortable house, these were all by the grace and mercies of God Almighty, his LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ. He knew he did not deserve one bit of all that he was enjoying as king. This deep sense of gratitude and thanksgiving is the key to "never be moved."

III. The Basis (30:7-9) – David acknowledged that it was due to God's favour (same word as in verse 5) that his mountain stood strong. The word "mountain" was used figuratively to refer to David's dynasty or kingdom. David offered to build God a Temple which the LORD rejected because David was not the chosen one. He had shed too much blood. Instead, the LORD returned the favour and told David that He would build a house for David. David's dynasty was made strong by the LORD alone. It was not due to David's ability or ingenuity or his men. The LORD did it all. Using synthetical parallelism, David explained how the LORD made his mountain strong. The LORD had to strip away all of David's self confidence. The LORD had to hide His face from David. What it means is that David had to experience long moments of feeling as if the LORD did not hear his cry for help and there was no deliverance forthcoming. David had to be driven to the point of near death by the incessant obsession of king Saul to capture and kill him and to be driven toward the LORD. The LORD wanted to train and prepare David to become the best king Israel ever had.

David admitted that he was troubled, i.e. he trembled inwardly. This would surely include doubting his relationship with the LORD. His assurance in self and his own ability had to be stripped to a state of uselessness so that he would not cease to pray to the LORD for wisdom before any decisions were made. This was good for David in ways that he could not imagine. While it made him into a God-dependent king, the process was painful and most distressing to say the least.

Verse 8 (synonymous parallelism) – David then cried to the LORD. The word "cry" has the idea of calling out to someone by name for help. In this instance it was the Name of the LORD. David's focus was on the LORD. When we are in trouble, it is easy to cry to man for help. The best friend or someone who has the power or substance or connections to help has always been our first resort even after we became believers. As king, he would have

been surrounded by many counsellors to give him advice. This was usual for all kings in the old days. There is nothing wrong to have counsellors to give wise counsel. The temptation is to make the LORD the last resort when He is supposed to be the first resort all the time. Using synonymous parallelism, David emphasized this same understanding. The second "LORD" is actually "adonay" rather than Jehovah. But the KJV translators decided to translate it as "LORD" because the context argues for it since the word "Jehovah" appears in the first line of this verse. David was referring to the same LORD. This was done not to confuse. Having said that, the word "adonay" usually emphasizes that lordship. David wanted to emphasize that the LORD was his master; though a king has no one above him, Israel's king would always have the LORD above him. The king was not allowed to do whatever was right in his own eyes as absolute ruler but to always do what is right in the eyes of the LORD, according to Holy Scriptures.

Thus David made supplication to his LORD. The emphasis here is the LORD.

Verse 9 (synthetical parallelism) – What was the point of killing David? He thought he would be killed while he was fleeing from the wrath of king Saul. David asked the LORD what the profit was if he were to go down to the pit. The word "pit" here is not the same as the one in verse 3. Here, the meaning is a hole in the ground, like a trap. The trap was meant to catch and kill. The emphasis is on the many snares that king Saul had set for David with all his spies serving him all over Israel. David had nowhere to go but the thousands of caves strewn throughout the mountainous terrain of Israel. David said to the LORD that there was not benefit by his premature death. If he were to die, who would praise the LORD by his life of service? King Saul must not be allowed to succeed!

David desired to praise the LORD on the earth as well as to declare His truth! But he could not do that if he were to be captured by king Saul's traps! David did not argue for any personal gain or glory from the LORD. The basis for his deliverance was the glory of the LORD in praise and service. The dust will not praise the LORD but David would! What a biblical basis for deliverance!

IV. The Result (30:10-12) – Although anointed by the LORD to be the next king of Israel, David could have but did not claim this as the basis for being delivered. David understood that the only way for answered prayer was God's mercy. No one, not even the anointed David, could claim special favour from God. David understood clearly the difference between being anointed and making a request for deliverance. To be chosen is all of God's grace. To be delivered is all of God's mercy! Using synthetical parallelism, David pleaded with the LORD to be His helper, i.e. the One to protect him from his enemies. David did not deserve the LORD's help or protection. He realized this very well and so must all believers. We were born sinners and had also committed many sins before salvation. Therefore even when believers suffer persecution after salvation for Jesus' sake, and the persecution is unjust, we must understand that the basis for our cry for the LORD's help is

not one of right but of mercy. The word “mercy” here is the same as the word "supplication" in verse 8. It has the idea of pleading for help to protect in time of grave danger; to be the believer's personal help to deliver!

Verse 11 (synonymous parallelism) – The LORD heard the cry of David and the outcome was the uplifting from mourning and sackcloth to dancing and being girded with gladness. This was the final result of David's heartfelt experience as David dedicated his house to the LORD. His house was more than just a home to him. It was the end of a long and arduous journey of persecution with many moments of near death experiences. The word "mourning" comes from a root word which means "to tear the hair and beat the breast." The parallel description is of someone in sackcloth. This is the garment of great sorrow like the sorrow one feels at the death of a loved one. David was in the lowest ebb of despondency and then at the end of his trial he was lifted up to the height of safety and security. He was home and safe!

He felt like one who was dancing, i.e. jumping for joy with his whole being praising the LORD. This was Jewish culture like what David did when he and his people brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem for the first time. The parallel phrase to capture David's great delight is "girded with gladness." David felt like one who was dressed with the garment of gladness, i.e. greatest joy. Everywhere he went he was happy. That was what the garment represented. The external circumstance could not take this gladness from him. David acknowledged that this was given by the LORD. It was through the mercy of God that he received this. He admitted it openly in this verse!

Verse 12 (synthetical parallelism) – The final outcome was not to keep this experience of the LORD's deliverance to himself but to broadcast it out loud to all by praising Him. David wanted to exalt and magnify the LORD. He would not be bitter, for he experienced the hand of the LORD throughout his trial. He would not be silent, for to remain silent after such a great and gracious experience was unthinkable. If there was anything that David wanted to glorify, his anointing or his own "clever" devices in hiding from king Saul was not it. It was the LORD who did it all in lifting David up to where he was. Any new king of Israel would have had much to glorify about himself; but not a man of God like David. His painful experiences taught him the precious lesson that his whole life was the LORD's. Whatever his achievements, it was the LORD who had done them all, not David.

That is why David added by saying that he would keep on giving thanks to the LORD for the rest of his days. Thanksgiving is the best way to remember the LORD and not forget His goodness toward. David began with “O LORD my God” and he ended with “O LORD my God”. This was a personal and heartfelt psalm of praise at the end of a long and preparatory journey to prepare David to become a godly king. David wanted the whole world to know that without the LORD, he would be nothing, for he was nothing!

All believers must remember the same! Amen.