

Transcription of 18TM807

Psalm 30 "His Favor is for Life" February 25, 2018

All right. Let's open our Bibles this morning to Psalm 30.

You'll notice that at the top there's a superscription that said, "This is a song of the dedication of the house of David." The term "House of David" is always used in the scripture to speak of the temple that David longed to build. The king was not able to build it, wasn't allowed to build it, because he was a man of war, he'd shed a lot of blood. So the Lord allowed David to prepare for this temple being built, but He wouldn't allow him to build it. His son Solomon would build it, really with the things his dad left behind. David wasn't alive to see it, if you will, but he certainly had a part in it. As such, this Psalm was written with a desire to have it read when the temple was finished. So David not only got his hands in all of the materials, he put his hands all over the ceremony as well. Make sure you sing this song. And he passes it along to us.

It is an interesting Psalm. We can get the background of it, and I would say to you that the lesson for this morning is in the setup. It's in the context in which it is written, because that's where it makes obviously the most sense. But we find early on in these verses that David is very sick, that he longs for the Lord to heal him, and that the Lord does. The key verse is verse 5. Verse 5 says, "God's anger will just last for a moment, but in His favor there's life. And weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning." And then David describes his sins in verses 6 and 7, tells us his prayer in verses 8, 9, and 10, and then the result of that repentance that came to his heart in the last couple of verses.

The context for this Psalm can be found in two places: II Samuel chapter 24, I Chronicles chapter 21. And they are the later years in David's life. David was tempted to number his army. When he did, he would eventually run into the judgment of God. God's judgment would fall upon the nation, and David would find himself on his knees.

If you go back and you read 1 Chronicles 21, verse 1, it said that Satan was standing next to Israel, moving David, tempting him to number the people. If you read I Samuel 24, you will

read that the Lord's anger was aroused against Israel and He moved against David to number the people. Put the two together and we learn that God was angry with both David and Israel's self-confidence; that they had come this far by the goodness of God, the Grace of God, the mercy of God, and yet at some point in their prosperity they had decided they could go without Him. And so the Lord allowed the enemy to come in and to begin to lead, if you will, the nation and their leader in particular down a path that would lead to God being able to deal with them very severely, and He did. But it was really God's desire to deal with David's pride, self-confidence, dependency, as well as the nation itself.

The scriptures tell us that David in his later years of life enjoyed a relative peace throughout the land. What he didn't have early on he certainly had later on. There weren't any enemies that were stronger than he was. The prosperity of the nation had gone through the roof. They were at a zenith, if you will, as far as their rulership. David's mighty men were mightier than ever.

And it always is a problem when God's blessings come to you in such a way that they are so overwhelming that you forget where you got them, right? In other words, when you are in need, God is always first. You're out of a job, you're praying. You don't have any food, you're praying. You're sick, you're praying. There's a whole lot of things we don't have to do to get you to church, because you're just going to come because you have need. The hard thing is to get you out here when things are fine; when you don't really see an outward need for the Lord at all. And unless you consciously say I depend upon the Lord for everything, you begin to depend upon your bank account or upon your position or upon your status or upon your possessions, and it can become a real issue for you. And your relationship with the Lord suffers, but that's the temptation; that we begin to rely upon what God has given us. It becomes our bane almost. And we forget that He's our ever-present strength.

Spurgeon wrote of this Psalm, "God's children, when He prospers them one way, are usually tried in another way, because no one is very good at unmingled prosperity." And that's a problem. We lose our dependency. It's kind of like a kid growing up. For a while he needs you for everything; and then for a little while he does need you for everything, but he thinks he needs you for nothing; and then he spends a lot of his life just living as if he doesn't need you at all. None of those are true.

Moses warned the nation of Israel when he was ready to hand them off to Joshua. The book of Deuteronomy is a 30-day long sermon of Moses to tell the people that he's speaking to, here's everything that God brought us through. Now don't forget the lessons. But he said to them chapter 8 of Deuteronomy, "Be careful that you don't begin to forget the law of God and not any longer keep His commandments or judgments or the statutes which I'm commanding you this day. When you go into the land and you've eaten and you're full, when you've built beautiful houses and you're living in them, when you have sheeps and herds and flocks that multiply, when your gold and silver multiplies as well, be careful that your heart isn't lifted up and you forget the Lord that brought you out of the land of Egypt, brought you through the wilderness, through that terrible wasteland, fed you from manna from the sky, if you will, gave you water from the rock. Be careful, because the Lord brought you through to test you, to humble you, so you would not say in your heart at the end 'my power in my hand and my strength have gotten me this wealth.'" Be careful that the goodness of God and the blessings of God don't allow you to stumble and then God has to bring you back to reality, which is really what this Psalm is all about.

The motivation for David in numbering the people, as you read the two historical chapters that I mentioned to you, was so that he might get a sense of his worth, his power, his ability. He was driven by this desire to just count, his possessions, if you will. And it is always wicked to become self-reliant. It is always a problem that we have to deal with.

Joab, who was the head of David's army, was for the most part a wicked guy. Now, he did all right from time to time, but I think if you read about his life in the Old Testament, you'll go, I don't know. Kind of a shady guy. But yet when David said to Joab, I'd like to have an accurate count of our military strength, it was Joab who goes, that's not right. He was appalled. He said to David, we don't do that. That's not us. That's not our strength. And he was lecturing the king. David unfortunately played the "who's the boss" card, and Joab begrudgingly went out to take count. Now, he didn't do it fast. He dragged his feet. In fact, he would take 10 months to make all the count. 10 months. He would leave out the Benjamites, he would leave out the Levites. He came back with an insufficient or incomplete number, if you will. But he wasn't happy about it. And it gave David 10 months to repent of his request; 10 months where he could have said, I realize this is

sinful, to think that somehow that's my strength. God's brought us this far. But he doesn't do it, at all. By the time that the number comes to David, according to the first three verses here of our text, David is a pretty sick guy. Might very well have died. In fact, you can read in II Samuel chapter 24, verse 9, that when Joab came back after 10 months, he said to the king, "Israel has 800,000 valiant men who can draw the sword, and Judah has 500,000 more." And then you read, "And David's own heart condemned him." When he finally got the number and he realized this is not us. And he said under his breath, or out loud, I don't know, "I've sinned greatly in what I've done. Lord, take away the iniquity of your servant. I have done very foolishly." And David, before he ever found any joy in his numbering of his strength, found great condemnation.

We are told that as David cried out, that God sent a prophet named Gad to him, who gave him really three choices. David, God's going to punish you. You've got three choices. You pick which one you like. You can either for yourself choose three years of famine in the land; or you can take three months being defeated by your enemy's sword, who will overtake you; or you can have three days of the sword of the Lord, a plague in the land, and the angel of the Lord will destroy throughout the territories. What do you want to do? And David said, "I am in tremendous distress, but I want to fall into the hands of the Lord. I don't know about the plague and certainly the enemies aren't going to be my friends. I know with God there's mercy, so I'm going to throw myself into the hands of God. Oh Lord, don't let me fall into the hands of men." In one day 70,000 people died, roughly 5 percent of the number that he'd been given by Joab after 10 months of inaccurate counting. And yet David made the right choice. If you're going to find judgment, you really do want to find it with the Lord. There's no mercy in the world. There's great mercy with God. And he was right. The three days of judgment that God had pronounced stopped in one day, but man, the loss of life was horrific. And David had now found himself at a place where his own health was poor.

The prophet Gad said to David, The Lord wants you to buy the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, and build there an altar to the Lord and sacrifice there, and as you make sacrifice, the judgment of God will be stayed. You will find the mercy of God. And so he went to Mount Moriah, where Araunah owned the land, and he said to him, well, here's what I've done and here's what happened and here's what the Lord is doing, and man, I got to -- let's get this thing going, because I got to build this altar or we could die.

And Araunah says the thing that you would expect for him. He said, Well, just take it. I'll give it to you. Build, man. Let's go now. And David said, I can't give God what costs me nothing. I want to pay full price. And he did, and they built the place of sacrifice on the same mountain that 850 years earlier Abraham had been directed to take his son Isaac; on the same mountain that a little over 1,040 years or so down the road our Savior would die for the sins of the world, hang on a cross. Same place. This mark that God has made upon this land. And the same place where David now builds what would become the temple, where Solomon would build, right there on that spot.

In the process David is led to repentance. His body is healed. God turns His anger away. He learns about the goodness of God. He purchases the land upon which the temple would be built. And after that experience, sometime between then and when he dies, he writes this song so that it could be presented at the dedication of that temple, realizing how he got there and what he experienced and what he understood. God's dealings that led harshly or were harsh, but they led to his repentance

When Paul wrote to the Hebrews in chapter 12, he said, "My children," or sons is actually the word that he used, "don't forget the exhortation which is given to sons. Don't despise the chastening of the Lord, don't be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for if the Lord loves you, He'll chasten you, and He'll scourge every son whom He receives. If you endure it, God will deal with you as children. If not, then you really don't belong to Him."

I grew up in a generation where my dad beat me sometimes. I know now you go to jail for 400 years, but it helped me. In fact, he was good at beating me. He practiced a lot. I gave him plenty of reasons. I think the Lord does that sometimes too. He doesn't want to leave you where you are. He can't. He's for you. And the destructive paths that you can take, God will not just stand idly by and watch you rot.

So here's David's lessons. And he begins with this worship of the Lord for His healing upon his life and inviting in verse 4 the choir to join, the saints to join. "I will extol You," he says, "O Lord, because You've lifted me up. You've not let my foes rejoice over me. Oh Lord, my God, I cry to You. You healed me. You brought my soul up from the grave. You've kept me alive, that I shouldn't go down to the pit. So sing praises to the Lord, you saints of His. Be thankful at the remembrance of His holy name." I will lift you up. The word "extol" means

lift up. So he literally writes, "I'll lift you up because you've lifted me up. I was at the point of death due to my sin." It was fatal maybe. We really don't know. But he certainly felt that way.

David mentions in verse 1 at the end there that he was so thankful that the Lord didn't allow his enemies to rejoice. He could just see them pushing out his coffin with glee. But instead of going down to death, David was brought up. The word in Hebrew means to bring up a bucket out of a well. David acknowledged that the Lord had healed him. Notice, in fact, in these four verses David uses the words "You have" four times. You have lifted me up, You have healed me, You have brought my soul up from the grave, You've kept me alive. You've done that. But you see, David had fallen into this problem because he'd forgotten that God had done all of those things, though God had blessed him so. Be careful when your blessings become a curse and a stumbling block. You've done that.

David didn't want the choir to be filled with unbelievers, but notice he invites the singers to sing. Let's thank God for His holiness. Let's thank God every time we remember what He's done. Well, here's the key: A chastisement of God, His anger is but just for a moment, and yet in His favor you will find life. "Weeping will endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

It's important, I think, that you understand that verse in the context for which it is delivered, because you can certainly beat it to death incorrectly applying it outside of the context of what it is given. I've heard guys use this and say, "Well, what the Lord is saying is in every life a little rain must fall." Not what it says. Or every cloud has a silver lining, or you got to take the bad with the good, or cheer up; things are going to get better. Now, those platitudes might or might not have some truth in them, but that's not what this verse says.

This verse is the king saying, the Lord had to deal severely with me. You can read about it in II Samuel 24 or 1 Chronicles 21. 70,000 people were dead. The lives of the people were on the line. The decision had been made by David and by the people to try to go it alone. David here is specifically talking about the effects of God's chastisement and the experience it brought to his life when he found himself in disfavor with God. Or he found -- and he understood that God was angry, and he's here to tell you that the anger of God is short-lived; that the

intention of God is to give you life forever. If the anger of God lasted too long, you wouldn't get through it at all, and neither would I. The thing is, God is holy, and because He is holy, He doesn't just stand indifferently by. He will judge His own. And when His purposes are accomplished, He will leave behind eternal favor and blessing. David got that looking back. It was the understanding, you know, the old 20/20 hindsight. It's hard to look forward sometimes, but it's easy to look back. In light of the story and in the context in which it is set, David saw firsthand -- go back and read the account -- the angel of death stopping before he got to Jerusalem. These deaths were just in the peripheral. The main body of people were still to be affected. And the plague was halted by the sacrifices offered on Mount Moriah on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the future place where the Lord would bring salvation to us.

The end result of a night of chastisement for sin, from the brink of death, from sickness and suffering, was joy in the morning. God measures His judgments, but know this: God won't leave you in sin. Can't. You wouldn't do it for your children; God won't do that for you. So David's greatest lesson is to realize that God's anger is worthwhile when it accomplishes the purposes for which He sent Him. My dad used to say when he spanked me, "This is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you," and I thought, that is just a lie. That's a dad lie. Until you have kids, and then you realize not such a lie at all. Same thing with God.

Well, here's David's awareness of his sin. He realized what had caused this. Notice in verse 6 it says this: "I said in my prosperity, I shall not be moved. Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong; and You hid Your face, and I was troubled." There's the lesson. David understands now that his pride and his self-confidence had led him to this request to account for the troop size that he could depend upon. That wasn't God's will. It had never been about numbers. They would always fight outnumbered. God would always give victory looking to Him. But David now, in his prosperity, found himself looking at life differently. And he links the judgment of God and his sickness to what he had now been delivered from. He recalls the blessings that allowed him to become self-reliant. And then he said this to the Lord: "I realize now that my mountain stood, my kingdom, my throne, whatever word you like to put in there, it stood strong without any help from me. You did this. You go back and read those chapters and you find that Israel had no national threat to their existence at all at this time. There

was no one stronger than they were. They were at the zenith of their history. But David said, in my prosperity I began to say, I can make this work. I can stand fast. I'm going to be just fine on my own. And then he wrote in verse 7, so Lord, You hid Your face from me, and I began to realize that's not a good idea to live that way. I was troubled.

How often do you suppose we find ourselves angering the holiness of God when we relent of our faith and we forget His work, and we begin to trust in ourselves, in our wealth, in our intelligence, in our authority, as the confidence for our life? The businessman who relies on his wit; the church who relies on fundraising or marketing; a nation that relies solely on its military. How much shaking do we need before we are humbled and say, Lord, we stand because you help us to stand? David realized where it had all come from. "I said in my prosperity." I'll tell you when he stopped saying it: When God hid His face, when the blessings stopped flowing, when the ease of life abated, when David had to now face life without God and the angel of death hovered over the people that he was sent to watch over. In my prosperity, oh, I was fine; now, not so much. 70,000 people lay dead. And David had had 10 months to rebel in his heart while he waited for the count. And even a questionable, army general who questioned the wisdom of the request couldn't dissuade him from his demands. He was just sure he was going to be just fine. He wasn't.

And so David, realizing it now, turned to pray. In fact, verses 8, 9 and 10 are David's prayer at that time when he made that realization. He says in verse 8, "I cried out to you, Lord; and the Lord -- to the Lord I made supplication; what profit is there in my blood if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you and declare your truth? Hear, O Lord, have mercy upon me Lord; be my helper." Spurgeon wrote of this verse, "When the earthquakes make your mountain tremble, the Grace of God still stands firm." So David got it. Now, he looks at death in the typical Old Testament understanding of death. I'm going down to the grave. What good is it going to do for you if I'm dead? But notice the request in verse 10, I need your mercy. I need You to be my helper. It seems to me God has answered that prayer for me more than once. How about you?

The result follows. In two verses David writes down what changed once he realized that the wrath of God was deserved and the lesson needed to be learned, and the humility kicked back in. "You've turned my mourning into dancing. You have put off my sackcloth. You've clothed me with gladness." Words of



contrast by which these poetic books make their living. You turn back to God, you cry out to Him, and your mourning becomes mambo. I don't know. They're both M's. Or you get to have happy clothes, not a veil over your face and wearing black all the time. The clothes of public, shameful, humiliation, and sorrow are now turned into clothes that would say I'm happy, I'm blessed. In fellowship with God and out from under the hand of His chastening love, David again joyful in the things of God.

That's really the path you have to walk if you allow what God has given you to become your God rather than the One who gave it to you. And it's a danger. It doesn't just happen. It happens to all of us. The temptation is always there, which is why I think sometimes we have so little, because you can't be trusted with much. You will quickly turn away, and so God keeps us hungry. Always in that place of dependence. It's not easy to handle blessing.

Verse 12 David says, "To this end, my glory will be to sing praise to You and not be silent." My life will be filled with a declaration of Your goodness and I can't keep it to myself, you're my Lord. I'll thank You forever. Out of a good heart, a good man brings forth good treasure. Jesus said of Mary Magdalene, "Her sins, which are many, have been forgiven her. That's why she loves much." If you are forgiven for little, you'll just love little. David realized what he had been off the hook here. God got me off the hook. I haven't any, reasonable demand that would ask Him to give that to me, but He has.

God's love will chastise His people, because He doesn't want us to lose track of who He is. In fact, all that you have and all that God has given you and everything you might depend upon you're going to leave here. Not going to take it with you. And when you leave here, you're only going to have one thing left: Your relationship with God. So He doesn't really care whether He has to shake those trees around your life, as long as He keeps you close, where the life is found.

But notice the contrast. That's how Hebrew poetry works. There is a sickness, and there's healing. There's anger from God, and then the finding of His favor. There's sin that needs repentance, and then there's restoration. There's great grief, giving way to great joy; a kind of joy that can't be stifled, that has to be announced to everyone. Clear lines. And certainly verses 4 and 5 are really -- and especially verse 5, are only able to be applied to the believer. There's no promise

to an unbeliever who is out of fellowship with God and doesn't know Him and still lost in his sin that joy will return in the morning. There's only one thing God does for sinners: He saves them. And there's only one message: Get saved and find the joy of the Lord. But to you and I as Christians, understand that you are dealing with a God who is holy, but He's merciful. He's gracious, but He's still holy. And we can't push the envelope all the time and expect Him to just continue to bless us. His greatest blessing is fellowship with you. To those who would walk with Him, that's His promise.

And maybe God is putting you through the fire and you wonder why. Maybe here's why: In all of the goodness and the mercy of God, you find yourself relying on things that He's given you and no longer upon Him. That's a problem. It's a problem for king David. Apparently it can affect all of us. So be careful, stay close, and don't forget Him, ever.