

# PSALM 30

This is a psalm of thanksgiving for the great deliverances which God had wrought for David, penned upon occasion of the dedicating of his house of cedar, and sung in that pious solemnity, though there is not any thing in it that has particular reference to that occasion. Some collect from divers passages in the psalm itself that it was penned upon his recovery from a dangerous fit of sickness, which might happen to be about the time of the dedication of his house.

**I.** He here praises God for the deliverances he had wrought for him (v. 1-3).

**II.** He calls upon others to praise him too, and encourages them to trust in him (v. 4, 5).

**III.** He blames himself for his former security (v. 6, 7).

**IV.** He recollects the prayers and complaints he had made in his distress (v. 8-10). With them he stirs up himself to be very thankful to God for the present comfortable change (v. 11, 12). In singing this psalm we ought to remember with thankfulness any like deliverances wrought for us, for which we must stir up our selves to praise him and by which we must be engaged to depend upon him.

## ~~180~~ PSALM 30:1-5

### THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

*A psalm and song at the dedication of the house of David.*

It was the laudable practice of the pious Jews, and, though not expressly appointed, yet allowed and accepted, when they had built a new house, to *dedicate it to God*, <sup><180></sup>Deuteronomy 20:5. David did so when his house was built, and he took possession of it (<sup><181></sup>2 Samuel 5:11); for royal palaces do as much need God's protection, and are as much bound to be at his service, as ordinary houses. Note, The houses we dwell in should, at our first entrance upon them, be dedicated to God, as little sanctuaries. We must solemnly commit ourselves, our families, and all our family affairs,

to God's guidance and care, must pray for his presence and blessing, must devote ourselves and all ours to his glory, and must resolve both that we put away iniquity far from our tabernacles and that we and our houses will serve the Lord both in the duties of family worship and in all instances of gospel obedience. Some conjecture that this psalm was sung at the re-dedication of David's house, after he had been driven out of it by Absalom, who had defiled it with his incest, and that it is a thanksgiving for the crushing of that dangerous rebellion. In these verses,

**I.** David does himself give God thanks for the great deliverances he had wrought for him (v. 1): "*I will extol thee, O Lord! I will exalt thy name, will praise thee as one high and lifted up, I will do what I can to advance the interest of thy kingdom among men. I will extol thee, for thou hast lifted me up, not only up out of the pit in which I was sinking, but up to the throne of Israel.*" He *raiseth up the poor out of the dust.* In consideration of the great things God has done to exalt us, both by his providence and by his grace, we are bound, in gratitude, to do all we can to extol his name, though the most we can do is but little. Three things magnify David's deliverance: —

**1.** That it was the defeat of his enemies. They were not suffered to triumph over him, as they would have done (though it is a barbarous thing) if he had died of this sickness or perished in this distress: see <sup>Psalm</sup> Psalm 41:11.

**2.** That it was an answer to his prayers (v. 2): *I cried unto thee.* All the expressions of the sense we have of our troubles should be directed to God, and every cry be a cry to him; and giving way, in this manner, to our grief, will ease a burdened spirit. "*I cried to thee, and thou hast not only heard me, but healed me, healed the distempered body, healed the disturbed and disquieted mind, healed the disordered distracted affairs of the kingdom.*" This is what God glories in, *I am the Lord that healeth thee* (<sup>Exodus</sup> Exodus 15:26), and we must give him the glory of it.

**3.** That it was the saving of his life; for he was brought to the last extremity, dropping into the grave, and ready *to go down into the pit*, and yet rescued and kept alive, v. 3. The more imminent our dangers have been, the more eminent our deliverances have been, the more comfortable are they to ourselves and the more illustrious proofs of the power and goodness of God. A life from the dead ought to be spent in extolling the God of our life.

**II.** He calls upon others to join with him in praise, not only for the particular favours God has bestowed upon him, but for the general tokens of his good-will to all his saints (v. 4): *Sing unto the Lord, O you saints of his!* All that are truly saints he owns for his. There is a remnant of such in this world, and from them it is expected that they sing unto him; for they are created and sanctified, made and made saints, that they may be to him for a name and a praise. His saints in heaven sing to him; why should not those on earth be doing the same work, as well as they can, in concert with them?

**1.** They believe him to be a God of unspotted purity; and therefore let them sing to him; “Let them *give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness*; let them praise his holy name, for holiness is his memorial throughout all generations.” God is a holy God; his holiness is his glory; that is the attribute which the holy angels, in their praises, fasten most upon, <sup><236B></sup>Isaiah 6:3; <sup><60B></sup>Revelation 4:8. We ought to be much in the mention and remembrance of God's holiness. It is a matter of joy to the saints that God is a holy God; for then they hope he will make them holy, more holy. None of all God's perfections carries in it more terror to the wicked, nor more comfort to the godly, than his holiness. It is a good sign that we are in some measure partakers of his holiness if we can heartily rejoice and give thanks at the remembrance of it.

**2.** They have experienced him to be a God gracious and merciful; and therefore let them sing to him.

**(1.)** We have found his frowns very short. Though we have deserved that they should be everlasting, and that he should be angry with us till he had consumed us, and should never be reconciled, yet *his anger endureth but for a moment*, v. 5. When we offend him he is angry; but, as he is slow to anger and not soon provoked, so when he is angry, upon our repentance and humiliation his anger is soon turned away and he is willing to be at peace with us. If he hide his face from his own children, and suspend the wonted tokens of his favour, it is but *in a little wrath*, and *for a small moment*; but he will *gather them with everlasting kindness*, <sup><284D></sup>Isaiah 54:7, 8. If *weeping endureth for a night*, and it be a wearisome night, yet as sure as the light of the morning returns after the darkness of the night, so sure will joy and comfort return in a short time, in due time, to the people of God; for the covenant of grace is as firm as the covenant of the day. This word has often been fulfilled to us in the letter. Weeping has endured for a

night, but the grief has been soon over and the grievance gone. Observe, As long as God's anger continues so long the saints' weeping continues; but, if that be but for a moment, the affliction is but for a moment, and when the light of God's countenance is restored the affliction is easily pronounced light and momentary.

(2.) We have found his smiles very sweet; *In his favour is life*, that is, all good. The return of his favour to an afflicted soul is as life from the dead; nothing can be more reviving. Our happiness is bound up in God's favour; if we have that, we have enough, whatever else we want. It is the life of the soul, it is spiritual life, the earnest of life eternal.

## ~~1306~~ PSALM 30:6-12

### PRAYER AND PRAISE

We have, in these verses, an account of three several states that David was in successively, and of the workings of his heart towards God in each of those states — what he said and did, and how his heart stood affected; in the first of these we may see what we are too apt to be, and in the other two what we should be.

**I.** He had long enjoyed prosperity, and then he grew secure and over-confident of the continuance of it (v. 6, 7): “*In my prosperity*, when I was in health of body and God had *given me rest from all my enemies*, I said *I shall never be moved*; I never thought either of having my body distempered or my government disturbed, not had any apprehensions of danger upon any account.” Such complete victories had he obtained over those that opposed him, and such a confirmed interest had he in the hearts of his people, such a firmness of mind and such a strong constitution of body, that he thought his prosperity fixed like a mountain; yet this he ascribes, not to his own wisdom or fortitude, but to the divine goodness. *Thou, through thy favour, hast made my mountain to stand strong*, v. 7. He does not look upon it as his *heaven* (as worldly people do, who make their prosperity their felicity), only his *mountain*; it is earth still, only raised a little higher than the common level. This he thought, by the favour of God, would be perpetuated to him, imagining perhaps that, having had so many troubles in the beginning of his days, he had had his whole share and should have none in his latter end, or that God, who had given him

such tokens of his favour, would never frown upon him. Note, 1. We are very apt to dream, when things are well with us, that they will always be so, and never otherwise. *To-morrow shall be as this day.* As if we should think, when the weather is once fair, that it will be even fair; whereas nothing is more certain than that it will change.

2. When we see ourselves deceived in our expectations, it becomes us to reflect, with shame, upon our security, as our folly, as David does here, that we may be wiser another time and may rejoice in our prosperity as though we rejoiced not, because the fashion of it passes away.

**II.** On a sudden he fell into trouble, and then he prayed to God, and pleaded earnestly for relief and succour.

1. His mountain was shaken and he with it; it proved, when he grew secure, that he was least safe: "*Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled,* in mind, body, or estate." In every change of his condition he still kept his eye upon God, and, as he ascribed his prosperity to God's favour, so in his adversity he observed the hiding of God's face, to be the cause of it. If God hide his face, a good man is certainly troubled, though no other calamity befall him; when the sun sets night certainly follows, and the moon and all the stars cannot make day.

2. When his mountain was shaken he lifted up his eyes above the hills. Prayer is a salve for every sore; he made use of it accordingly. *Is any afflicted? Is any troubled? Let him pray.* Though God hid his face from him, yet he prayed. If God, in wisdom and justice, turn from us, yet it will be in us the greatest folly and injustice imaginable if we turn from him. No; let us learn to pray in the dark (v. 8): *I cried to thee, O Lord!* It seems God's withdrawings made his prayers the more vehement. We are here told, for it seems he kept account of it,

(1.) What he pleaded, v. 9.

[1.] That God would be no gainer by his death: *What profit is there in my blood?* implying that he would willingly die if he could thereby do any real service to God or his country (<sup>PHI</sup>Philippians 2:17), but he saw not what good could be done by his dying in the bed of sickness, as might be if he had died in the bed of honour. "Lord," says he, "wilt thou sell one of thy own people for nought and not increase thy wealth by the price?"

<sup>PSA</sup>Psalms 44:12. Nay

[2.] That, in his honour, God would seem to be a loser by his death: *Shall the dust praise thee?* The sanctified spirit, which returns to God, shall praise him, shall be still praising him; but the dust, which returns to the earth, shall not praise him, nor declare his truth. The services of God's house cannot be performed by the dust; it cannot praise him; there is none of that device or working in the grave, for it is the land of silence. The promises of God's covenant cannot be performed to the dust. "Lord," says David, "if I die now, what will become of the promise made to me? Who shall declare the truth of that?" The best pleas in prayer are those that are taken from God's honour; and then we ask aright for life when we have that in view, that we may live and praise him.

(2.) What he prayed for, v. 10. He prayed for mercy to pardon (*Have mercy upon me*), and for grace to help in time of need — *Lord, be thou my helper*. On these two errands we also may come boldly to the throne of grace, <sup><3046></sup> Hebrews 4:16.

**III.** In due time God delivered him out of his troubles and restored him to his former prosperity. His prayers were answered and his *mourning was turned into dancing*, v. 11. God's anger now endured but for a moment, and David's weeping but for a night. The sackcloth with which, in a humble compliance with the divine Providence, he had clad himself, was loosed; his griefs were balanced; his fears were silenced; his comforts returned; and he was girded with gladness: joy was made his ornament, was made his strength, and seemed to cleave to him, as the girdle cleaves to the loins of a man. As David's plunge into trouble from the height of prosperity, and then when he least expected it, teaches us to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, because we know not how near trouble may be, so his sudden return to a prosperous condition teaches us to weep as though we wept not, because we know not how soon the storm may become a calm and the formidable blast may become a favourable gale. But what temper of mind was he in upon this happy change of the face of his affairs? What does he say now? He tells us, v. 12.

**1.** His complaints were turned into praises. He looked upon it that God girded him with gladness to the end that he might be the *sweet psalmist of Israel* (<sup><1011></sup> 2 Samuel 23:1), that his *glory might sing praise to God*, that is, his tongue (for our tongue is our glory, and never more so than when it is employed in praising God) or his soul, for that is our glory above the beasts, that must be employed in blessing the Lord, and with that we must

make melody to him in singing psalms. Those that are kept from being silent in the pit must not be silent in the land of the living, but fervent, and constant, and public, in praising God.

**2.** These praises were likely to be everlasting: *I will give thanks unto thee for ever.* This bespeaks a gracious resolution that he would persevere to the end in praising God and a gracious hope that he should never want fresh matter for praise and that he should shortly be where this would be the everlasting work. *Blessed are those that dwell in God's house; they will be still praising him.* Thus must we learn to accommodate ourselves to the various providences of God that concern us, to want and to abound, to sing of mercy and judgment, and to sing unto God for both.