

“Summer in the Psalms, Part 3: Thanksgiving--Psalm 30”

What are people for?

One thing that makes me so happy is when I talk to someone about their life, and they explain that they have the privilege of doing the kind of work that they believe they were *made* to do. So many people throughout human history have had to do work just to survive, and have never even had the chance to stop and ask themselves: “does this work fulfil me?” When someone can say, “not only am I surviving, but I get to do something wonderful,” it makes my heart sing.

What is it that these fulfilled people are experiencing? What’s the emotion that brings them joy when they marvel at what they’ve been able to be and do?

Know what they say?

I just feel ... Thankful!

I think we were built for thankfulness. Let’s look at Psalm 30 and see.

1. Made for Dependence and Thanksgiving

Have you noticed that the little inscription above verse 1? This is part of the holy Scripture, inspired by God. It tells us that the Psalm is a song of David for the dedication of the temple.

What is the temple? The temple is a miniature version of the entire creation. It’s a model of what the whole world is supposed to be. It’s a replica of the Garden of Eden.

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And what was the Garden? What was, what is, the entire creation meant to be? Why is there ultimately no more temple in the New Jerusalem, in the New Creation, as we read at the end of our Bibles? The whole creation was meant to be, and will one day be, the place where creatures are dependent on God, and thankful to God.

What do the happiest people say, even after they've accomplished so much? They are not just thankful. They say “Sure, I did this stuff. But it was all a gift. It's like someone or something else has given them me this chance, this calling, this opportunity, this energy.”

Thanksgiving---and dependence.

The Psalmist knows that that “something” outside him is God's creation and grace, and that that “someone” upon whom he's dependent is the LORD God himself.

So the temple that David dedicates with his song is meant to be the Thanksgiving Headquarters not only of Israel, but of the whole world, the entire creation. A new Eden, the Temple will help spread dependence and thankfulness everywhere.

Verse 12: “My heart,” David is singing, “*was meant* to praise you. And my heart will go on praising you forever. It's what I was made for.”

It's what *we* were made for. To realize that everything good depends on the Lord God, and to never stop voicing our thanksgiving for all he is, all he's done, all he's made us and our neighbors to be and to do.

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2. Sin is a Failure of Thanksgiving

It's stunning how simple the plan of God is: Make a world that enjoys giving me thanks.

Do we human creatures embrace our natural dependence on God? With thankfulness?

Just as the mission of God is stunningly simple, it is stunning how simple the rebellion of humanity is: We aren't thankful.

Instead of dedicating Eden as a theater of thankfulness, we dedicated ourselves in Adam and Eve to competing against God for knowledge and power.

Instead of dedicating the temple in Jerusalem to be a place where our dependence on God was celebrated---and a place where our determination to spread his thankfulness across creation was renewed---we dedicated ourselves, in and with Israel, to making a name for ourselves, to worshipping our independence.

Instead of dedicating our very *bodies* to our Creator, to move at the impulse of his love, we've dedicated our very bodies to the worship of ... our bodies---giving them all the junk food and pornography and cheap pleasures that they want on their worst days.

And in our lives today, sometimes we're thankful. Sometimes we say: “God can call us to do or to be anything he wants; he can forbid us from doing or being anything he wants. Cause he's Good.”

But much of the time, in our sin, like Adam and Israel, we say, “God must not love us. Is God just trying to keep us from good things that we'll enjoy?” We've stopped being thankful for who God is. We've stopped rejoicing in our dependence.

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David had accomplished a lot. Many times, he forgot it was the LORD energizing his work and calling him to thanksgiving. Verse 6: “When I felt secure, I said, ‘I will never be shaken.’”

How did this work out for him? The same way it’s worked out for all of us: really badly. Through the death of his sons, through the sorrows of his sins of wife-stealing and murder, the LORD finally got through to him. He realized that by making himself a temple to himself and his independent desires, he was running toward death and misery.

And he cried out to the LORD: (Verse 8ff) “How am I going to proclaim your goodness and faithfulness (9) if I’m *dead*? Who will hear me when I’m just a pile of dust? If you want me to be thankful, and to proclaim my thankfulness, you’re going to have to forgive me, renew me, restore me, and lift me up out of this pit, so that the people around me can hear how compassionate you are. So they can see my life change from arrogant independence and ingratitude, to thankful dependence on you for everything that I am. So that they can see not only a temple dedicated in Jerusalem, but a human body dedicated as a temple of thankfulness, even as that body sits on this throne in Jerusalem.”

3. Jesus Sings Psalm 30

Maybe you’re in that place with David this morning. Maybe you’ve realized that your temple to yourself is crumbling and that your life is a miserable mess of independence and ingratitude. How do we get from this mess to become who we’re made to be: dependent and thankful?

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Well, thankfully, Jesus sings Psalm 30. And when he sings it, it really comes to life. As he sings it with his own life, dead and wasted things come back to life. What do I mean?

The inscription at the beginning: Jesus dedicated the temple of his own body to the LORD. The Spirit filled him and energized his body. He made his body dependent on his Heavenly Father. He takes his own body into Jerusalem, fully dedicated to both his Father and his Father’s mission and offers it on the cross for us.

Verse 6: Jesus had been invincible for eternity. But he took a human body and soul and became dependent. And he never thought for a minute--despite all the temptations--to say “I am enough! I will never be shaken!” He depended on his Father. On the Spirit.

Verse 7: In order to make our bodies the temples they were meant to be, Jesus’ body was shaken. To show God’s love for us, he accepted God’s disfavor for our sins. Bearing our sin, he was pushed off Mt Zion, thrown down from the Holy Mountain, and could no longer see his Father’s face of love.

Verse 5: Jesus sang: “Be angry at me instead of them as I bear their sin, and be as kind and loving to them as you’ve always been to me---for a lifetime!”

Verse 1: He kept calling on the LORD. “I give you my body and spirit! Don’t let my enemies win! Raise me up out the depths!”

Verse 2: “Heal my body! Restore your temple!”

Verse 3: “Lift my body, your temple, out of the grave!”

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Verse 10: “I cannot be dependent on you and thankful to you if I’m *dead*. I can’t sing your praises from the grave. So raise me up!”

And then, finally, verse 11, on the third day, when he is raised from the dead: “You’ve turned all my sorrows into dancing! You’ve taken the funeral clothes off me and clothed me with radiant joy! I will never stop praising and thanking you!”

Friends, even though you and I dedicated the temples of our bodies to ourselves, to worship and serve ourselves, Jesus took a body, and then absolutely dedicated it to his Father, utterly dependent and utterly thankful, and sang Psalm 30 in our place.

Conclusion

Are you thankful yet? Dedicate your body again to the Lord. Make it the temple of God’s Spirit---utterly set apart and dependent on Jesus, and completely thankful.

You see what the Psalmist has done here? David always does this. He realizes that he is King of Israel, and that it’s everyone’s job---and especially his job!---to not only dedicate himself as a temple to the Lord, but to call everyone around him to do the same.

David says: “I was arrogant. I lost sight of my purpose. I fell into the pit of despair. But my LORD lifted me up and restored me.”

$\frac{3}{4}$ of the Psalm is David sharing his own failures and how the LORD was patient to renew and restore and redeem him. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Psalm is a call for others to experience the same thing.

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Do we want to be temples, leading people and creation in dependent thanksgiving like we were meant? Do we want our church to be a temple in this sense? Our families? Our home groups? Then the majority of our time should be spent speaking and living as restored, thankful, dependent people. And then, when we've got the chance, we can turn to one another and to our children and neighbors and friends and colleagues, and say (5) “Do you want to experience joy in the morning after a tough night of weeping? Then embrace his neverending favor, (4) and make your life and your words a song of thankful praise!

Let's erupt into thanksgiving---in our words, in our lives, in our songs, in our acts of mercy and justice. And along the way, let's call others to join us in dedicating their own lives as temples to the Lord---full of joyful dependence; full of thanksgiving. For Jesus has restored us to our place of joyful dependence and happy thanksgiving.

Amen?