Psalm 30 (ESV): Mourning into Dancing

Main point: God has not forgotten you and will lift you up.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: A psalm of David, who wrote many of the Psalms with deep emotions. This particular psalm, or song, was sung at the dedication of the Jewish temple.

Focus of the study:

1 I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up
   and have not let my foes rejoice over me.
2 O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
   and you have healed me.
3 O Lord, you have brought up my soul from Sheol;
   you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.
4 Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints,
   and give thanks to his holy name.
5 For the Lord’s anger is but for a moment,
   and his favor is for a lifetime.
   Weeping may tarry for the night,
   but joy comes with the morning. …
7 By your favor, O Lord,
   you made my mountain stand strong;
   you hid your face;
   I was dismayed.
8 To you, O Lord, I cry,
   and to the Lord I plead for mercy:
9 “What profit is there in my death
   if I go down to the pit?
   Will the dust praise you?
   Will it tell of your faithfulness?
10 Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me!
   O Lord, be my helper!”
11 You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;
   you have loosed my sackcloth
   and clothed me with gladness,
12 that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.
   O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

Questions:

1. v. 1-3: who is David addressing? What does David say?
   a. David is talking to the Lord. “I extol you” – I wonder what “extol” means?
      i. praise you, honor you
   b. Why is David praising God? “for / because…”:
      i. v. 1: you have drawn me up
ii. v. 1: you have not let my foes win
iii. v. 2: you have healed me
iv. v. 3: you brought my soul up from the depths of hell (Sheol)
v. v. 4: you restored my life

2. Based on these praises, what kind of situation do you think David had been in?
   a. near death! very low, persecuted in mind and body, felt like he was going to die
3. v. 4: Then David turns his song toward his listeners - “oh you his saints.” What does David tell his listeners/readers to do?
   a. Sing praises to the Lord
   b. Give thanks to God’s holy name
4. Why are these good responses to God? What has God done/promised?
   a. v. 5: God’s anger (correction, judgment, discipline, like a good father) is only for a moment; God’s favor (love, mercy, forgiveness) lasts a lifetime
   b. weeping may last for a night, but the morning brings joy
      i. Describe those two feelings (weeping/joy, night/morning) more … for example, what does night feel like compared with the morning?
5. v. 7: David then sets up a comparison between having God’s favor and God’s face being hidden:
   a. with God: you made my mountain stand strong – what does this poetic language feel like?
      i. Wherever I am, I feel strong
   b. without God: I was dismayed – what does dismay feel like?
      i. Hopeless, empty
6. [optional:] v. 9-10: What questions does David ask God? Why do you think David asks these questions? How would you rephrase this part of David’s conversation with God?
   a. While I live, I can praise you! I can know and tell others of your faithfulness.
7. v. 11: What does David say the Lord has done?
   a. turned my mourning into dancing
   b. loosed my sackcloth – what is sackcloth? What was it for?
      i. Uncomfortable; rough clothing traditionally worn as a sign of grieving
   c. clothed me with gladness
      i. What are the images in this verse?
         1. God has turned David’s situation from sadness to joy, death to life
8. v. 12: Why does David say that the Lord has saved him in this way?
   a. In order that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent
   b. In order that I can give thanks forever
9. So when we’re sad, mourning, discouraged, feel defeated, abandoned – what does this song encourage us to do?
   a. stick with God and look for the morning – God will make all things right
   b. the Lord has not forgotten you – he can and will lift you up and make you strong
   c. give thanks for God’s steadfast, loving presence with you
10. That seems worth practicing! What would you like to give thanks for today?
    a. [“being alive, this group here, the bible, not alone, openings/things to do, mother, stepmother, sunshine, the world”]

   • Ask for any prayer requests for today.
   • Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
   • End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace
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