

Scripture: Psalm 30

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Sing, all you who remain faithful!

*Pour out your hearts to the Eternal with praise and melodies;
let grateful music fill the air and bless His name.*

Reflection: There's a funny story of a United Church minister who met a man who attended a community dinner at the church, and after talking and praying with the man, the minister invited him back for Sunday service. The minister tried and tried to get a man to attend church, but he just would not attend.

So the minister of the church went to visit this man and said, "Is there a reason why you wouldn't attend church? I thought you said you were looking for a home congregation. We would love to have you in our congregation on Sundays. Why don't you come and attend our church?"

The man finally admitted he didn't have a nice suit to wear. So the minister took him to the shopping mall and he bought him a nice suit, a new shirt, tie, and an expensive pair of shoes. The next Sunday, the man still didn't attend the church; so the pastor decided to pay him another visit.

The pastor entered into a conversation with the man and finally he got around to asking him why he didn't attend their church. The man said, "When I got dressed up in my new suit, that pretty tie, and those comfortable new shoes, I looked in the mirror, and I looked so good that I decided that I was better suited to attend the Anglican church instead."

Psalm 30 is a psalm in the form of a song that was used at a dedication service of the Temple in Jerusalem in 164 BC. It's a song of praise and worship! The psalms in general are very much a beloved part of Scripture.

For the most part, these short writings do not deal with intense theological matters, but instead, they deal with matters of day-to-day

life. The kind of life that you and I most identify with. This is what makes the Psalms special. They deal with the practical side of life that confronts us both in times of deepest sorrow and times of great joy.

We don't know for sure when, or why, this particular psalm was written, but we do know who wrote it, but it is believed that it was written by King David.

Perhaps he had been sick and God raised him up and healed him. Perhaps he had been in deep despair, and God lifted him up out of the pit of life. Perhaps this psalm was written by King David after he had been consumed by guilt after doing something reprehensible. He was kinda known for that, wasn't he?

One thing is sure! God healed David's affliction, whatever that affliction was. I like this psalm because I believe everyone here can identify with it; for God has done the same for you and I many times.

Often, when we consider God acting in our lives, we think of God in terms of working in extraordinary ways like working some miraculous healing in our lives.

Perhaps you have suffered from some disease that was impossible to come back from, and you have experienced healing through God's grace and nurturing.

Perhaps you have been in the deep pit of despair financially, and God lifted you up from the stress and worry your financial troubles brought to your life.

Perhaps you've had some trouble with a family member or a personal friend, and God's gift of forgiveness and mercy has helped you to mend the relationship.

Perhaps you have felt God moving in your heart with a message of renewal after you yourself has done something reprehensible, you feel forgiven and now you can move forward in your life, knowing in your heart that you've been reset by God and the slate has been wiped clean by God's forgiving grace.

God does work in all of these events in our lives, but God also works in the not-so-spectacular ways. The Spirit is at work helping us to see things differently, to re-examine our lives and our actions, or whether it is those moments when the spirit urges us to say hello to someone who might have been looking for a friendly face and greeting. God works in spectacular and not so spectacular things.

I don't know about you, but I could sing this psalm because it has a great meaning to me. Today I can Sing the praises of the Lord, For his love, faithfulness and grace lasts a lifetime; I can sing praises to God because of all the times I have called to him for help, and God was there in one way or another.

I can sing praises to God because when I was broken, broken heart, wounded body, broken spirit, God healed me, and brought me all the way back. I can sing praises to God because I know firsthand that weeping may stay for the night, sadness and hopelessness may linger for hours, but my God brings rejoicing with the sun. Can you say praise the lord with me?

God hasn't lifted me out of the many pits I have been in during my life because I'm some special little pet of His. God hasn't healed my circumstances because I'm a pastor or a person who works for the church, or because I am passionate in my work for the oppressed.... Or because I'm a mother, or a person of colour...

Instead, He has always lifted me up because God is a holy God. God's goodness towards me pushes past all the little things and labels and actions that mean something to us as humans, which makes us believe that we deserve God's grace and providence. God's deeds towards us supersedes all those little things.

God recognizes me for who I am, God knows my sins and my knows my sorrows, imperfections, and my downfalls. And God looks past all of that, picks me up and embraces me. Calls me into partnership with him.....

That's why I can praise God today with you, because I can testify that God loves me. And just because I am me! No strings attached, no conditions. God loves me. God loves you....

This is why we really should be praising God all the time. I think that sometimes we only remember God when we feel like we need God's favour.

Reverend Jimmy Davis, a South Carolina Baptist minister once said that "We use God like we would use a spare tire in the trunk of our cars. That we don't even regularly check the air pressure in the spare tire, and we just assume that our spare tire will be properly inflated and ready for use the moment we get in a jam and need to use it."

Do you find that your relationship with God is like that? That's kind of the way we use God, sometimes isn't it? When sickness, bad luck, or tragedy shatters our life, we suddenly and humbly pray to God for a quick fix. When we're in the deepest pit of our inner wars, we cry out to God to help us find peace with ourselves.

Today's Psalm is an invitation to worship and praise as regular practice, the way you eat or drink. And praising God doesn't have to be like the rituals we undertake in worship together. Praising God is as simple as acknowledging that God is there. Praising God is as simple as doing a kind gesture, smiling at a stranger, letting someone in traffic, taking time in nature to witness God's creation. Praising God requires little action. But praising God requires intentionality. Be aware of God in your life and surroundings. God is found everywhere, even in the most unexpected of places.

I think Psalm 30 was written for us today, so we could remember that one of our lived purposes should be to praise God. If God has done something great for us, and certainly each one of us can claim that God has done something great and wonderful for us, then there should be in our hearts an expression which naturally flows out of our hearts back to God.

Some of us have probably received some healing from a serious illness or some great difficulty in life. Certainly, we have all had our

sins forgiven. Then wouldn't it be the normal and the right thing to do if we would have the wisdom to recognize that fact, and be thankful to God who has dealt with us in mercy and grace

We could all identify with the words of the Psalmist in our scripture today: You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy. O let my heart sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever. May these be our words of praise as we seek a closer relationship with the God of resurrection, Amen.