

“Mourning Into Dancing (Crisis of Confidence)”

Psalm 30

5.5.19

I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up, And have not let my enemies rejoice over me. ² O LORD my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me. ³ O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit. ⁴ Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, And give thanks to His holy name. ⁵ For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.

⁶ Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, "I will never be moved." ⁷ O LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong; You hid Your face, I was dismayed. ⁸ To You, O LORD, I called, And to the Lord I made supplication: ⁹ "What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your faithfulness?

¹⁰ "Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me; O LORD, be my helper." ¹¹ You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, ¹² That my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

We're between Sermon Series...and always hoping to sneak some Psalms into our diet ("vocabulary of the soul"), I thought we'd look at this Thirtieth Psalm today... It's about an episode in the spiritual-life of a man... a man who had his "ups and downs" – the man, David.

This episode is sometimes called a "crisis of confidence". And that's a big deal even in secular terms: it was a crisis in confidence that led to the economic decline of 2008 now widely called, "The Great Recession". Each month we hear about "consumer confidence index" (down in March, up in April).

This Psalm is about a crisis of confidence. Call it a crisis of misplaced confidence or presumption. What the writer expected from life...was NOT what came to pass. And this little poem can actually be a huge help to us in the face financial uncertainties or any other type of unforeseen difficulty in our lives. Whenever we find ourselves saying, "Phew! I never saw THAT coming!" THIS episode from David's Spiritual Journal can be a game-changer.

It HELPS us to see where the REAL DANGER IS when it comes to a crisis of confidence (not where we might think it is!) and it shows that there CAN BE a tremendous dividend that comes after the crisis.

So let's look at:

- 1. A Crisis of Confidence**
- 2. How the Crisis is Resolved (the person is reoriented)**
- 3. A New 3-D Impulse in the reoriented person**

The crisis is found in verse 6: "Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, 'I will never be moved.'"

This is a person who is in PROSPERITY (where we all WANT to be) but that success has not DONE ANY GOOD IN HIS SOUL ... In fact, somehow that wealth or well-being has been spiritually harmful to the man...

His success and his prosperity lead to a sense of invincibility. "I will not be moved". Crisis of confidence! (Not that he LOSES confidence but MISPLACES confidence!) He comes to expect that this success is permanent it's HIS to have and hold... There's a little whiff of his deserving... "God is blessing me...(God blesses MY kind of people)".

Now, we might pause here and simply ask, "Is this common? Does this happen frequently when people get a little in the bank or achieve a bit of applause or reputation or ...ease? Is it normal for people to get SORT-OF FIXATED on that success accomplishment?"

And btw this is pretty common. Think of John Steinbeck's little parable *The Pearl* ... that poor, young couple who get what they'd always dreamed of and it ruins their lives. OR people who win the lottery or come into big money or fame.

So, we have to answer, "Yeah... it's apparently very difficult to handle prosperity..." No one wants to be poor or unsuccessful...no one wants to be a loser ...AND YET, there are some very real dangers that come with success... appears to be extremely easy to get enamored with winning or with wealth.

And the words of Jesus Christ summarize the whole hazard: "Truly, truly I say to you it is easier for a camel to pass thru the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God"

AND YET...we ARE called to be fruitful and multiply...called to take what has been allotted to us and IMPROVE on it (Right? "Don't hide our silver in the ground")

So, that's our dilemma: called to flourish and yet... almost afraid to prosper because the danger of misplaced confidence is very real. "God is blessing me and will continue...if I keep doing what I do."

Look next at how the crisis of confidence is resolved (3 STAGES): First, it's exposed. It can easily go undetected and it did in this writer (David). Unwittingly he had separated the gift from the

Giver and had come to believe that the best thing in life was to succeed – to prosper! And then he came to believe that HE was responsible for his prosperity. “ I said, in my prosperity, ‘I WILL NOT BE MOVED!’” (6)

He’s clipping along. He’s winning. He’s feeling good about life; good about himself, FEELING LIKE HE CAN’T BE MOVED... And then...he gets MOVED.

He suffers a sudden crisis. He has some life trouble (sickness?) It seems like trouble was never too far from David – frequently David had to “walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”

He says, “YOU hid your face (presence) from me”- it’s like, “LORD, you withdrew Yourself: YOU left me!” But ...does God ever leave us?

Well...no...but sort of. Imagine a young toddler walking with her father in a very crowded city. The child keeps wriggling free, “I don’t WANT to hold hands! I’m a big girl!” So, as they approach the corner of a building, the father lets go and the toddler takes off and walks around the corner...gets a few steps then a loud truck-horn blows and a super loud hiss of air-breaks... and the little girl is terrified...and all alone.

But unbeknownst to her, the father is watching her through the windows (she’s too short to even see that there ARE windows). Did he leave her alone? Well, he let go of her hand... but she was always in his eyes and never outside his protection.

And when she screams in horror – he’s there...before the next teardrop falls!

It happens to all of us. All of a sudden you seem to skip right from prosperity to problem: “go directly to jail, do not pass ‘GO’ do not collect \$200!”

That sense of invincibility he had is now evaporated. He’s exposed. And 2nd: First HE HAS THIS Big revelation, and THEN HE PRAYS out of that realization.

“I thought that due to my own efforts I was prospering – like God owed me this. I thought winning was the main thing – now I see that GOD IS THE MAIN THING and to know His favor/grace is everything! (v. 7) LORD, YOUR favor has made my mountain strong... my standing depends on You!”

So this catastrophe leads to a realization in the once-prosperous believer... and he has a complete RE-ORIENTATION to his own prosperity: “I was only prospering because of YOU AND YOUR FAVOR... I was only walking on the water because YOU bid me come!”

Second, the awakened person prays ... and I don't mean a "now I lay me down to sleep" prayer. I mean he cries out. His prayers are urgent, intent and concentrated, "I CRIED to YOU for help... To YOU O Lord I called ...made my supplication..."

AND ...a kind of bold ...almost foolish reasoning with God ... (v.9) " LORD, You don't want this hardship to completely destroy me ...DO YOU??? Because that wouldn't be good FOR YOU??"

"Really, Lord: how is my destruction going to do any good for Your Kingdom? I won't be able to brag on You (evangelize) anyone IF I'M NOT HERE ON EARTH"

AND that may sound a little crazy, to speak that way to God... but here it is. And I think the least we can say about the pray-er: he does recognize that the goal of life is NOT his glory (as he once thought) but God's glory. And he sort of reminds God, "How will my destruction do anything to further 'man's chief end'? It sounds like he's bartering with God ...but maybe he's just getting his goals realigned.

AND then LAST, (he gets exposed then praying and finally he gets reoriented: "You have turned my mourning into dancing!")

He sees, in this, the PATTERN of God's ways: "This thing that humbled me was a good thing".

If it was some attack from an enemy or a huge (seemingly irreconcilable fight with my child) or a budget-buster car repair or a lay-off or a stock market crash... IF this bad thing exploded the myth that I am a self-made man and that lie that I am invincible and IF it put me back into reliance on grace alone – THEN it was definitely one of those "all things" that God works for good. (Rom 8.28)

The old writer Thomas Watson even went so far as to say "Better is the sin that humbles me than the virtue that makes me proud"

David here realizes "God wants me humble and depending on Him because when I am in that place/reality, He turns the mourning into dancing!"

The sadness that visits me in the collapse ... when it humbles me ...it leads to joy that comes in the morning... The sadness is a visitor but the joy is a RESIDENT... THIS is how the Gospel produces real, lasting authentic change in my character and motives! This is the pattern of God's working: this Psalm points to that great CENTER of God's pattern: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He's the One who goes down into the pit but is not abandoned. He is the One who says (v.3) "You, Father, have brought Me up from Sheol and kept Me alive that I should not go down to the pit".

Jesus Christ is the Source of this whole model, this “weeping-for-a-moment-but-joy-come-in-the-morning” model!

WHEN I’m fixed on the reality of the Cross and Resurrection to which this Psalm points then I can handle prosperity OR poverty with joy.

It’s exactly the mindset that enabled St Paul to say “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”: I can have a feast and it reminds me of God’s grace OR I can have a really hard time (be terrified) and it causes me to see again my dependence on the Gospel.

Now some applications - a “3-D impulse that comes out of this crisis of confidence and reorientation:

1st - It makes me want to praise and admire GOD. That’s how the psalm begins and ends. It’s not someone just doing religious duty. It’s someone who genuinely admires God and His grace. “My soul SINGS...!”(v.12) We join the song of Jesus in worship.

2nd It sends me to others with these words of BIG ENCOURAGEMENT and Good News. This is David the evangelist. He’s free (like the disciples) to talk about his own sin and FREE to call others to admire this grace that turned his mourning into dancing:

v. 4 “Sing praise to the Lord....” (Evangelism is inviting people into worship – “come admire the Source!”)

Last, it makes me think differently about my SELF... See David is very open about his failings. He was a proud person; he forgot that his success was due to God... AND that to have God without success is infinitely better than to have success with God... and David not only faces that but even tell US about it.

He sees God at work in his life both in the prosperity and in the pain (but maybe it’s clearer in the pain!)

When God brings you through this, and you see how it all culminates in Christ, it’ll leave you not self-obsessed but self-aware ...AND aware that God loves you, helps you, has adopted you ...and will never truly leave you. Sorrow is a visitor BUT JOY IS THE RESIDENT! And THAT TAKES THE STING EVEN OUT OF the worst pains even out of DEATH itself.