Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

We are coming to the end of our sermon series on Psalms that point to the person and work of Jesus, indirectly. And today we turn our attention to the third and last category of these Psalms, the Psalms of REorientation. We have looked at Psalm of orientation and DISorientation, but now it is Psalms of REorientation. And there are two types of REorientation Psalm - Psalms of thanksgiving and Psalms of remembrance. And we will look at one of each of these to finish our series, beginning, today, with a Psalm of thanksgiving.

Now, there are thanksgiving Psalms also in the Psalms of orientation. They simply praise God for who He is and what He has done. But the thanksgiving Psalms of REorientation are about deliverance from **specific moments** of crisis in the life of the Psalmist or the Lord’s people. And Psalm 30, as we shall see, is a Psalm of thanksgiving following healing from a disease that had left David near death. And in this thanksgiving Psalm, **A Healed Psalmist Tells Believers that Joy Comes in the Morning**.

And brothers and sisters, there is much for us to learn as we consider this Psalm. There is instruction about God and sin and illness and healing and repentance and eternal life in heaven or hell. And we will have to ask ourselves if we are like the Psalmist, both in his good behaviour and his bad behaviour. But most importantly, we want to see how this Psalm points us to Christ. And to see all this, we will use the same sermon outline that has served us well in recent Psalm sermons, as we consider the **Setting** of the Psalm, the **Structure** of the Psalm, and the **Saviour** in the Psalm.

1. So, first of all, the **Setting** of the Psalm.
   1. The title of the Psalm says, “*A Psalm of David. A Song at the Dedication of the Temple*.” But boys and girls, did David build the temple? No. Who did? Solomon, David’s son. So, what are we to make of this title? Well, this is why we read **1 Chronicles 21** earlier in the service. For there we read about the time when King David conducted an illegal census. And a census, boys and girls, is when all the people of a nation are counted. And according to the law, the king was only allowed to count the people when God told him to. And God had not told David to count the people. This is why Joab, David’s general, tried to convince David not to do this. But David commanded him to do it anyway. Well, after it was done, a prophet came to tell David that this had displeased God. And he gave David three choices - three years of famine, three months of invasion, or three days of illness in the land. And David chose the three days of illness. And we are told that “*70,000 men of Israel fell*” during the three days. And it may well be that David himself was very ill at this time. And while the plague raged among the people, we read that “*David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces*,” and pleaded with the Lord to end the plague. And the Lord did end the plague. And if you look at verse 11 of our Psalm, David talks about the Lord having “*loosed [or removed his] … sackcloth and clothed [him] with gladness*.” But also, at the end of 1 Chronicles 21, David purchased the threshing floor of a man named Ornan and set up an altar and offered sacrifices. And David said that this location was where the temple of the Lord would be built. So, it may well be that Psalm 30 is the Psalm that David prayed that day to dedicate that site to the Lord. And that is the view of many Bible scholars.
   2. But of course, we cannot know this for certain. What we can know for certain is that Psalm 30 is a Psalm that David prayed after he had been near death because of illness. Verse 2 talks about healing and verse 3 about having been brought up from Sheol, which is how the Jews spoke about death. So, David had been close to death but now he was healed. And it was deliverance from this crisis that led him to write this Psalm of Thanksgiving.
   3. And it is worth us thinking about this for a moment before we press on. We here today know a lot more than David did about medicine and surgery. And many of us have benefited greatly from medicine and surgery. But one of the downsides of this technology and knowledge is that we can be quicker to speak about ‘the miracles of modern medicine’ than we are about God’s power to heal. Now, God uses medicine and surgery to heal us, and we should be thankful for doctors and medical technology. But when we are sick, let us first pray to God for healing, and when we are healed, let us first thank God for healing!
2. Well, that is the **Setting** of the Psalm. But let’s turn our attention next to the **Structure** of the Psalm.
   1. And thanksgiving Psalms of REorientation have a typical structure: They begin with the Psalmist **declaring his intention** to praise the Lord. And that is what we see in verses 1-3, where the Psalmist says that he will extol the Lord for having delivered him from death. And then thanksgiving Psalms provide the **details** of the specific crisis and deliverance that led to this thanksgiving. And in Psalm 30, that is verses 4-12a. And we will look at this section in more detail in a moment. But the last section of a thanksgiving REorientation Psalm is a **final declaration** of thanks and praise. And in Psalm 30, that is verse 12b, where the Psalmist says, “*O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever*.” So, **intent** to praise, **reasons** for praise, and a **declaration** of praise are the typical structure of a thanksgiving REorientation Psalm.
   2. But let’s take a closer look at the major section of this Psalm – verses 4-12a. And what the psalmist does here is to use a number of contrasts to highlight why the Lord is worthy of Praise and thanksgiving.
      1. The first one is in **verse 5** where we read of the Lord that “*His anger is but for a moment, and His favour is for a lifetime*.” So, David is contrasting God’s anger and God’s favour. And David is speaking here about who God is; about God’s character. And this is a most beautiful truth: “*His anger is but for a moment, and His favour is for a lifetime*.”
         1. So, tell me, **is God angry**? You could be forgiven for thinking that maybe God is not angry. After all, the message that much of the wider church preaches, today, exclusively, is that God is love. Right? You never hear anything about the anger or wrath of God.
            1. But what we have seen in our recent Catechism sermons is that God “is terribly angry about the sin we are born with as well as the sins we personally commit. As a just judge He punishes them now and in eternity.”
            2. Listento **Nahum 1:2**: “*The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries and keeps wrath for His enemies*.”
            3. So, God is angry. But did you notice the key words in that Nahum quote? “*The LORD takes vengeance on* ***His adversaries*** *and keeps wrath for* ***His enemies***.” It is the enemies of God that need to fear His anger. It is the enemies of God who will feel the anger of God for all eternity in hell.
            4. But that is not how it is for the **children of God**! Is God still angry with their sins? Yes. God cannot be indifferent towards sin. For example, we read about God being angry with Moses, and we saw God’s anger at sin I 1 Chronicles 21, and in 1 Corinthians 11 we read about members of the Corinthian church falling ill and even dying because the Lord’s Supper was being abused. But listen to **Exodus 34**, which is where God revealed Himself to Moses. He said, “*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to a thousand generations, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin*.” So, with His children, God is “*slow to anger*” and “*His anger is but for a moment*.” Why? Because Jesus endured the eternal anger and vengeance and wrath of God that God’s children deserved on the cross. And that leaves God free to be slow to anger and angry for just a short time with the sins of His children, rather than to be quickly and eternally angry with them, as He is with His enemies.
            5. Now, there is a lot more that we could say about this. I am sure you have questions about God’s anger and sickness and hardship, but we don’t have time today to go into all of that. The major point here, as one commentator puts it, is that God “judges sins with a holy anger, even in Christians. But for His people God’s judgments are short-lived. They pass quickly. What remains is His favour, which lasts for our lifetimes and indeed forever.”
            6. So, I hope that you are a child of God and not an enemy of God. And if you want to be a child of God, then repent of your sins and believe that Jesus died and rose again for the forgiveness of your sins. Do that today and tell one of us about it, so that we can help you begin to live as a child of God.
      2. And closely related to this truth is the next contrast in this section, which is from the **second half of verse 5**: “*Weeping may tarry (or remain) for the night, but joy comes with the morning*.” And this contrast has a parallel in the double contrast of verse 11: “*You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness*.”
         1. We are going to see in a moment that David’s sickness was a consequence of him having committed a particular sin. But I want us to be clear that is not the case with all sickness and hardship. Think of Job, for example; he suffered, terribly, even though he was a righteous man. And the Apostle Paul had “*a thorn in flesh*,” which he asked to have healed, three times, to no avail. So, sickness is not always because of a particular sin that we have committed. But it was in David’s case. And the major point of this contrast is that for the child of God, “*weeping may tarry for the night, joy comes in the morning*.” Mourning will turn into dancing and sackcloth will be replaced with clothes of gladness.
         2. Now, for David, this joy and dancing and gladness was because of being healed by the Lord. At other times, it was because of deliverance from an enemy or vindication from false accusers. And I can assure you that if the doctor tells Mrs H and I on Thursday that she is clear of cancer, you will hear our joy wherever you are in Auckland! But we all know that **healing is not guaranteed**. Even David eventually died. Some people can have lifelong or permanent disability or disease or dysfunction, and not every financial hardship is followed by riches, and not every job loss is followed by a better job or a promotion. So, was this just David being cute? Is verse 5b the first **Hallmark card slogan**? Have you heard that term before? A Hallmark card slogan means something written in a card that sounds cute but we all know it isn’t really or always true. So, does joy always follow weeping, and dancing always follow mourning, and gladness always follow sackcloth?
         3. Well, for the child of God, the answer is **Yeah. Definitely**! Why? Because even if illness or hardship or loss in life remains, when we die, we go to be with Jesus! And that is the best morning there is! So, whether it be healing or deliverance or restoration, in this life, or waking up to see Jesus, face to face, for the child of God, “*joy comes with the morning*”! It really does!
      3. But notice also the next contrast of this section; we see it in **verses 6-10** and it is the contrast between **sin and repentance**.
         1. **Verses 6-7 are the sin part**. David says, “*As for me, I said in my prosperity, ‘I shall never be moved.’ By your favour, O Lord, you made my mountain stand firm*.”
            1. And David is speaking here of the sin of self-confidence or self-worship, which is a type of idolatry. David was trusting in his wealth, health, and success. And what is worse is that he involved the Lord in this sin by excusing his idolatry as the Lord’s blessing.
            2. And again, this fits well with what we read in **1 Chronicles 21**. You see, you conduct a census to work out how much tax you can get or how big you could make your army. And that is the very reason why God did not allow the Israelite kings to conduct a census whenever they wanted. He wanted Israel’s kings to trust in Him, not how much tax they had or how big an army they had. So, you can picture David looking at the census results and thinking that life was good and that he had nothing to fear!
         2. But then, in walked the prophet to tell David that the Lord was angry with him. And so, in **verses 8-10**, we see **David’s repentance**. He pleaded to the Lord for mercy. And in verse 9, where David says, “*What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you?*” that is David committing himself to tell others about what he had learned through his sin and this illness and his recovery. He would tell others that despite his faithlessness, the Lord had been faithful!
      4. And that is the perfect segue way into the last contrast of this section, which we see in **verse 12a**: “*that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent*.”
         1. Can anyone here tell us what **the chief end of man** is? According to the Shorter Catechism, it is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” So, we were created to bring glory to God. And the fact is that in the ultimate sense, we all do this, believers and unbelievers alike. As part of God’s creation we bring Him glory. But **who is it that actually and literally sings God’s praises**? It is not unbelievers. It is the forgiven sinner. The one who knows that he or she is a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The one who knows that healing comes from God.
         2. After service, the hymn of response is Come People of the Risen King.

*Come, those whose joy is morning sun, and those weeping through the night … Over all the world His people sing; shore to shore we hear them call*

*the truth that cries through every age: ‘Our God is all in all.’*

And I hope that you will join and sing this song of praise!

1. Well, that brings us thirdly and lastly to the **Saviour** in the Psalm.
   1. And with each Psalm we have looked at, our main point has always been to think about the Psalms as the Psalms of Jesus. So, let’s do that with Psalm 30.
      1. David had been **near to death** and he was healed. But Jesus went all the way to death. To be the Saviour that we sinners need, He died and was buried, and His body lay in the tomb until the third day. And then He was resurrected! He truly was brought up from Sheol – the place of death; He truly was restored to life from among those who go down to the pit.
      2. And David spoke about **God’s anger lasting a moment** and His favour for a lifetime. Now, as I have said, we cannot be certain that Psalm 30 is linked to what we read in 1 Chronicles 21. But we read there that because of David’s sin, the people would have to endure 3 years of famine, 3 months of invasion, or three days of pestilence. But at the cross, Jesus enduring three hours of God’s eternal wrath because of the sins of His people. But having endued that wrath and died, He rose from the dead and is now ascended to heaven where He enjoys the favour of His Father. And what is even more wonderful is that because He endured God’s anger for a moment, by faith, we get to enjoy a life and an eternity of God’s favour!
      3. And finally, do you remember what the disciples and the women found when they arrived at Jesus’ tomb on resurrection Sunday? **Folded grave clothes**. So, He was well qualified to sing, “*You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth (grace clothes) and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent*.”

People of God, Psalm 30 is the Psalm of Jesus. It is even more about Jesus Christ than it is about David! And you know what, it may even have been the Psalm that He prayed and sung as He came out of the tomb!

So, look to Him as your Saviour. Give thanks that because of Him you are a dearly loved child of God. And when you are sick or in any kind of hardship, know that because you are a child of God, through faith in Christ, “*weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning*.” Amen.