

June 27, 2021

Psalm 30

Children's message: Lets start off with a question. Does God actually hear me when I talk to Him in my prayers? Does He actually listen to what I say to Him? The short answer is a very strong YES. God hears and listens to all the things you say to Him. Either with your lips or in your heart.

The reason I say that so strongly is for a very odd reason. What about unanswered prayer? This is the reason why God hears it all. He has to filter the good prayers from the bad ones people share with Him. God knows what things, asked for in prayer, will harm us or others. So they go unanswered. He had to listen to it in order not to have it answered.

The problem many times is not whether God hears and listens to us. The issue is more often with us. We feel that He doesn't listen. Due to either unanswered prayer, or the time we seem to wait for an answer. We get too impatient with the Creator of the Universe. When I say it like that we seem to be so childish. Trust me God hears and listens to everything that is going on in our lives.

I'll try to give you a closer example. As pastors we often think that people hear us but don't listen to what we are saying. Do not take people's silence as being not listening. So then, don't take God's silence as not listening either. I have had parishioners come up to me weeks later and share thoughts and experiences. How they actually got value out of a sermon I preached weeks ago. When this happens, I scratch my head, and say I guess they were listening.

I will continue with a pointed question. Do you listen and hear what your parents say to you? Some parents are paddling in the same boat as us pastors. We wonder if you hear and are listening. I often think that if you listen and hear, you will be heard and listened to.

In the end, listen and hear what your parents are saying to you. I do not think they would give you bad advice. Remember that God who is our loving parent hears and listens to it all. God does not give bad advice either. Mind you God has a lot of filtering to do when it come to our conversations and prayers. Do not take His silence as not being heard.

Adult's message: This is a beautiful song that was written by David for the dedication of the temple. Ironically David would not live long enough to see the temple completed. That duty would fall to Solomon.

Sephardic Jews started using this Psalm as a Hanukah Psalm. Then slowly over time it became used among all the Jews as a Hanukah Psalm. Today it has become universally understood as a Hanukah Psalm. It only makes sense when you reference it to how the oil lasted and burned for several days. God blessed the Maccabees.

As time progressed, the Jews saw this Psalm as a dedication of the inner temple. It was not so much about the physical temple structure any more. It took on a new purpose with the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. Rabbis recite this Psalm daily in their personal prayers. Similar to our office of prayer for Christian clergy today. This Psalm has a new purpose and speaks to dedicating ourselves to the service of God. We are the new temples that are dedicated to God each day.

Psalm 30 is a challenge to each one of us. To dedicate ourselves, our thoughts, actions, doubts and fears to God. To borrow a phrase from Sergio Leone, All the Good, the Bad and the Ugly, that is in our hearts. This being honest with ourselves and God. To come to terms with our dark and light side. Yet, God tells us that He wants it all dedicated daily to Him. That is a very intimate relationship with God. That is what He wants from us though. It requires us to be truly honest with ourselves and God. See the challenge.

For us Christians this is a resurrection Psalm. Jesus is the lynch pin that is holding everything together. I often wondered if Jesus had just finished His daily prayers and recited this Psalm when He talked about the Temple. John 2:19, "Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up". After reading this Psalm, in the light of His resurrection, it certainly points to that. This Psalm reaches its completion in Our Lord's resurrection.

For us today, it reminds us that it is alright to be honest with God when we talk to Him. To share our good, bad and ugly things with Him. God understands our human nature. After all He is the one who created us. Sharing these things with God is important. The content is not so much as important as the act of sharing. When we share these things with God we are talking to Him. That is the important point, that we talk to Him. So dedicate a portion of your day to talk or pray openly and honestly with God. It is cheap therapy and it helps to give us perspective. Always open with thanksgiving before moving into the heavier issues.

Keep in mind that this Psalm will also have its completion in you and I. Just as it did in Our Lord's resurrection. There are so many layers to the

Psalms. I find it helpful to understand the original Hebrew interpretation of the Psalm and how it is used and understood in the light of the resurrection. I have yet to find a good Muslim interpretation of the Psalms. Take care and God Bless and we'll see you on Sunday. Thanks be to God, Pastor D