

Series: Summer Psalms

Campus: CW

Date: 05/14/2023

Text: Psalm 30:1-12

Homiletical Idea: **The Lord is not as interested in our pain-reduction as he is in our attention-redirection.**

Title: The Grace of Attention-Redirection

Hook: Self-orientation saturates our cultural vocabulary

Purpose: To call God's people to grow in our understanding and appreciation of the discipline of the Lord that leads to life.

Context of Reality: Our culture is saturated in self. Self-orientation offers the promise of fulfillment but leaves the emptiness of despair. Paradoxically, the discipline of the Lord, in ruining our self-orientation and highlighting our dependency on Him is an act of grace that magnifies the gospel. The Lord is not as much interested in our pain-reduction as he is in our attention-redirection. David came to realize that his sin of self-orientation led to the attention-redirecting discipline of the Lord. The gospel reveals that our pursuit of self-actualization leads to despair while the gospel of Christ leads to life.

Christ Trajectory: The Lord must turn his face from sin (v7b). Christ bore the full brunt of that agony for our deliverance and ultimate joy. The sinless one took our sin upon himself and was forsaken on the cross to bring healing and deliverance to sinners.

Call to Worship: Psalm 33:1-4

Benediction: Jude 24-25

OUTLINE: Psalm 30 is a remembrance of recent deliverance. The form is cyclical in praise and thanksgiving recounting past events. The sermon outline will flow through the text chronologically.

1) The error of self-orientation (v6)

- a) Self-orientation leads to misplaced confidence – the source of prosperity.
- b) Self-orientation leads to misplaced praise – the object of our prosperity.
- c) Self-orientation leads to misplaced trust – the means of our prosperity.

2) The grace of attention-redirection (v4-5, 7b, 8-10)

- a) His anger towards sin (4-5, 7b) is meant to lead us towards our repentance from sin (2, 8-10)
- b) Genuine repentance includes a concern for the name of the Lord so that all may know he is faithful. (4, 9)
- c) The attention-redirection anger of the Lord of the Lord is a gracious act of his lovingkindness (9 contrasting statements of his kindness and the blessing of his favor)

3) The joy of God-exaltation (v1-3, 7a, 11-12)

- a) The joy of deliverance (1,3), restoration (3,11) and renewed strength (7a)
- b) The call to public worship (4, 12)

INTRODUCTION:

We live in a culture saturated in the concept of “self”. I like to read Louis L’Amour western novels in my free time. A recurring theme in many of his novels is the lone and rugged “self-made man”. Think of names like John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Amelia Earhart, and my favorite of all time Dale Earnhardt. Self-made, independent, self-sufficient. Our whole culture seems to be oriented around the concept of self. Even our vocabulary is saturated with hyphenated words about self. Not all are bad. Many of these are good and even helpful but it’s interesting to stop and listen to what is saturating our culture. Here’s just a handful of the words in our own vocabulary that begin with self.

- Self-confidence
- Self-actualization
- Self-determination
- Self-motivated
- Self-sustaining
- Self-expression
- Self-supporting
- Self-justification
- Self-selecting
- Self-assured
- Self-sufficiency
- Self-image

- Self-identity
- Self-fulfillment
- Self-care
- Self-love

Our culture, and indeed our entire human experience, is self-oriented. Ever since the fall, we have been self-focused. It's the reality of the fall. This is who I am! This is what I have! This is my identity! This is where I am going! Accept me for what or who I am. Don't try to change me. I shall never be moved!

Genesis 2 tells the story of the shift in our attention from the One who created us toward our own fulfillment, to our own actualization, to our own attention. "You will be like God" is the clarion call of self-actualization. But herein lies the deception. Self-orientation offers the promise of fulfillment but only leave the emptiness of despair.

When we turn away from God's design and purpose for our lives, when our orientation is on self-fulfillment, when our aim is self-glorification instead of Christ-exaltation, the Lord acts. This morning we will see God acting in two contrasting ways – both for the blessing of his people. His act of discipline and his act of redemption.

Turn with me to Psalm 30 this morning. The title says that it's "a song at the dedication the temple". Scholars are mixed if that's a reference to David's palace or the cumulation of the supplies for the temple or "a later addition in which the psalm was nationalized as an expression of the suffering of the nation in exile and of the restoration from exile"¹ Either way it's best to view the Psalm as a song of praise because God acts on behalf of his own.

As we dig into this text, we are going to see that...

MI: The Lord is not as interested in our pain-reduction as he is in our attention-redirection.

¹ VanGemenen, Willem A. "[Psalms.](#)" *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Ed. Frank E. Gaebelain. Vol. 5. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991. 257. Print.

READ TEXT: Psalm 30:1-12

The Psalm is written in a cyclical rehearsal of past events. Praise for deliverance, praise for healing, praise for restoration is woven in the theme of God's anger and God's forgiveness. This morning we are going to break this down into a chronological order of events.

1) The error of self-orientation

Why is David praising God for deliverance? Why is he so thankful for restoration? Because he was graciously saved from the error of his sin. What sin brought him to the brink of ruin? What sin brought him right up to death's door? Look at verse six. The error of self-orientation.

Three things about self-orientation we need to learn here.

- a) Self-orientation leads to misplaced confidence – the source of our prosperity. Who is the true source of our prosperity? We live in the richest country in the world. We complain of first world problems like a grocery line that's too long or internet that's too slow. Where does our prosperity come from? Notice where he placed his confidence. Notice where he placed his hope? My prosperity. He lays claim of ownership. He lays claim of his confidence in his prosperity. We have to remember the true source of any of our prosperity.
- b) Self-orientation leads to misplaced praise – the object of our prosperity. Who's the object of his prosperity? I said in MY prosperity I shall never be moved. Any shift from the father above who's the giver every good and perfect gift, who by his great and precious promises have given us everything we need for life and godliness, to the one who gives us our very breath, any shift in praise from Yahweh God to ourselves is misplaced praise.
- c) Self-orientation leads to misplaced trust – the means of our prosperity. Our creator God has given us so many means and tools and methods of subduing the world in which he has placed us to experience his blessings of prosperity. He's given us strength, he's giving us ingenuity, he's given us creative ideas, he's given us raw materials, the list goes on. But our trust can never be in our own self-sufficiency. Our trust can never be in our own

training or skill set, the degree we hold, or the pedigree of our heritage. Self-orientation leads to misplaced trust. “I shall never be moved” is the expression of misplaced trust.

When we turn away from God’s design and purpose for our lives, when we no longer acknowledge the true source of our prosperity, the true means of our prosperity, and when we misplace trust because our orientation is on our own self-fulfillment, the Lord will act. And he acts for the good of his people. He acts on behalf of his own. Even when he acts in the form of loving discipline. This is what happened to David.

2) The grace of attention-redirection

The Lord brought about the grace of attention-redirection. All too often in our age of prosperity and comfort we have itching ears that are tuned to hear of the love of Jesus and the perpetual blessing in living your best life now. We’ve developed this idea of Christianity prosperity that the Lord is a doting grandfather who give out lollipops and has loads of cash in his pockets if we perform Christian tricks like a trained puppy.

The biblical truth is that the Lord is holy and will not tolerate sin his presence. His anger toward sin is itself an act of grace towards the believer. His judgment of sin is itself an act of grace in the life of the believer. His pruning of dead branches so that we may bear more fruit is an act of grace towards the believer. And because David became self-oriented in his prosperity, he too experienced the judgment of God against his sin. This is where we are reminded that...

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The Lord’s anger toward sin, the Lord’s judgement of sin is meant to lead us to repentance. David experienced this discipline in Psalm 30. Look at the second half of verse 7. You hid your face; I was dismayed. The Lord turned his face away from his sin and the text indicates David experienced several consequences of David’s sin of self-orientation.

- Verse 2 seems in indicate some kind of sickness – health consequences.
- Verse 3 says his soul was in Sheol – severe anguish of his soul.

- Verse 3 also says he was among those who go down to the pit – the place of the dead
- Verse 9 says he was on the brink of death

This is a hard text. We can look at this and think, dang, that's harsh. But here's the reality. Paradoxically, the discipline of the Lord, in ruining our self-orientation, is an act of grace that magnifies the gospel.

Romans 2:1-11 speaks to the reality that those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, will experience tribulation and distress and judgment. God shows no partiality. Verse four of Romans 2 cautions us to not presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. The judgment of God is designed as a gift to turn the hearts of his people away from self-orientation. It is designed as a gift to redirect our attention to the giver of life. His anger toward our sin is meant to help us see the righteousness and holiness and goodness of God. He is the giver and sustainer of life. In him is life. In Christ is the living water. In Christ is the bread of life. And our sin of self-orientation is an unspeakable disregard of his gifts of grace.

The Lord acts on behalf of his people...even when that act is one of discipline to redirect our attention to the giver and sustainer of all our prosperity.

Hebrews 12 speaks to the grace of attention-redirection. Read with me beginning in verse 3

READ: Hebrews 12:3-11

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Discipline is not fun! Discipline is not pleasant. I do not look forward to the Lord's discipline with happy thoughts. More of God's discipline is not on my bucket list. But it is an act of his love. The Lord acts on behalf of his people. Even when that act as one of discipline to redirect our attention to the giver and sustainer of life. But it is super important for us to recognize the

temporal nature of his anger towards his children. Look at verse 5 – “his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.”

John Calvin has a great quote in his commentary on this text. It’s a bit long but it’s worth taking it all in. He said,

“If we are prosperous, we devour God’s blessings without feeling that they are his, or, at least, we indolently allow them to slip away; but if anything sorrowful or adverse befall us, we immediately complain of his severity, as if he had never dealt kindly and mercifully with us. In short, our own fretfulness and impatience under affliction makes every minute an age; while, on the other hand, our repining and ingratitude lead us to imagine that God’s favour, however long it may be exercised towards us, is but for a moment. It is our own perversity, therefore, in reality, which hinders us from perceiving that God’s anger is but of short duration, while his favour is continued towards us during the whole course of our life.” (John Calvin)²

So, what does David do? How does he respond to the momentary anger, the loving discipline of the Lord? He repents. He responds to the grace of attention-redirection.

- V2 – O Lord, my God, I cried to you for help.
- V8 – To you, O Lord, I cry, and to the Lord I plead for mercy.
- V10 – Hear, oh Lord and be merciful to me. O Lord be my helper!

David cries out in humility and pleads for mercy. Humility always precedes repentance. Repentance and pride cannot go together. They are like oil and water. Humility, acknowledging our sin and acknowledging the one who is God and the one who is not, always precedes repentance. David humbled himself before the Lord and cried out for help and cried out for mercy. David repented of his sin of self-orientation.

² Calvin, John, and James Anderson. [Commentary on the Book of Psalms](#). Vol. 1. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010. Print.

The Lord acts on behalf of his people. It was the grace of the Lord to inflict pain, hardship, and discipline. The Lord turned his face from David, but David turned his face towards the Lord.

David responded to the grace of attention-redirection in humble repentance.

Not only must humility precede repentance but there's another element we see here that is a key essence of repentance. Genuine repentance always includes a concern for the name of the Lord. Genuine repentance is less interested in the restoration of my name and my reputation as it is restoration of the reputation and honor of the name of the Lord.

Listen to his David's heart in verse 9 – "If I go down to the pit with the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?" Look also at verse 4 – "Sing praises to the Lord O you his saints and give thanks to his holy name." Genuine repentance not only redirects our attention to the Lord but it redirects everyone's attention to the Lord in declaring his righteousness, his faithfulness, his kindness, his goodness, and the glory of his holy name.

David fell into the error of self-orientation. David responds to the grace of attention-redirecting discipline of the Lord in humble repentance and his self-orientation shifts to the joy of God-exaltation.

3) The joy of God-exaltation

This whole Psalm is a praise for deliverance. David explodes in praise because God has saved him! God has forgiven him! God has restored him! David even acknowledges in verse 1 that because God has saved him, his enemies have no reason to gloat. God's faithfulness is visible, God's faithfulness is public, and David calls for all the saints to publicly sing his praises. Look at how God acts on behalf of his people. Look at all the contrasting statements of God's faithfulness:

V2 - Depths of Sheol vs being drawn me up

V2 - Sickness vs. healing

V3 - The pit vs restored to life

V5 - Momentary anger vs favor for a lifetime

V5 - Weeping for the night vs joy in the morning

V7 - Utter dismay vs making my mountain stand strong

V11 - Mourning vs dancing

V11 - Sackcloth vs clothed with gladness

V12 - Silence vs singing your praise

As I said earlier, self-orientation offers the promise of fulfillment but only leave the emptiness of despair. You know this. You've felt the hollowed-out emptiness of trying to maximize all the self-hyphonated words in our modern vocabulary.

David breaks out in praise because he realized his true fulfillment, his true prosperity comes only by the grace and favor of the Lord. Only the Lord can deliver. Only the Lord can truly make glad. Only the Lord can truly fulfill! It is only in the Lord that we will find true life and true joy. David comes to realize this, and, by the grace of God, he pivots from lifeless self-orientation to joyful God-exaltation.

Christ-Trajectory:

The reason that we, today, can experience this joy is because David was not the only one who experienced the agony of the Lord turning his face away. Jesus, the very son of God, knew the agony of the Father turning his face away. But there is one significant distinction. The Lord turned his face away from David because of his sin. Jesus, the sinless son of God, experienced the Father turning his face away because he took our sin upon himself.

Matthew 27:45-46 - Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Why? Why did the Lord forsake and turn his face away from his son? Because Jesus willingly took our sins upon himself to bear our punishment.

1 Peter 2:24 - He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. Now, that's good news.

Conclusion:

What I don't want you to do is walk away from here this morning and think that every time you sneeze you're underneath the judgment of God. That's not what this text is talking about. We live in a fallen world and in this fallen world there is disease and allergies and paper cuts. But let's not forget what brought about the fall of this world. It was our sin. It was our turning away from God's eternal glory to seek our own self-fulfillment. It was our self-orientation that brought sin into this world and that is why we experience all the fallenness of this world and all the heartache and all the disappointment and ultimately...death. That is why in Romans chapter 8 it says that we, and indeed all of creation, wait eagerly longing for the day of redemption. Our hope is the gospel of Jesus Christ. He lived a sinless life in perfect obedience and yet took upon himself the penalty of our sin and rose again so that we might have life and life more abundantly.

It is the goodness of God that brings judgment for sin. His judgment, his kindness, his grace is meant to redirect our attention from our own self-orientation to the beauty and power of his name; to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Call on him this morning. Cry out for mercy this morning. Let us repent of our self-orientation and let us rejoice in his healing and restoration and hope and deliverance through the gospel Jesus Christ. Praise his name this morning. Let us sing and not be silent.

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Let's turn our attention to the giver of life and praise him that though his anger is but for a moment his favor, his grace, his lovingkindness, the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ is for a lifetime both now and for all eternity.