

Special Focus

November 24

THE GOD WHO RESCUES

Psalms 30:1-12

There's an old saying, "When it rains...it pours."

How many times have we felt that way? It sure does seem that everything goes wrong at once. That's the feeling I get from David here in Psalm 30, as he bounces around from emotion to emotion, all of which seem negative! Even the positive solutions that God provided insinuate negative issues that David was facing. If a man after God's own heart went through difficult times, I think it's safe to assume that we will, too. Fortunately, the same God who rescued David is willing and able to rescue us. Three themes emerge from the psalm.

Lifted up (vv. 1-5). David was always quick to give God His due. Hence, he starts the psalm from the position of the delivered, then uses the remainder of the psalm to describe the many difficulties he had been facing, the strong emotions that came as a result, and the feeling of exuberance at being delivered. The word for "lifted up" in verse 1 is descriptive. The term applies to a bucket being drawn up from a well. Interestingly, the connotation is one of repetitive motion. David may well have been talking about a series of events that plunged him into despair over and over again. Here, he understands the importance of staying ahead of his enemies. Not only would defeat bring ruin, but even small victories would give the enemy opportunity to gloat. Verse 2 presents a challenge. If it attaches to verse 1, it likely indicates emotional turmoil associated with his enemies. But attached to verse 3, it more likely describes a physical ailment that may have proven deadly. In either case, God was faithful: David was "healed" and "spared" from among those headed to the grave. Because of the significant deliverance, David exalts the Lord (vs. 1) and sings praise to His name (v. 4). In my opinion, verse 5 is Davidic poetry at its very best. Notice the four sets of antithetical terms: anger versus favor; moment versus lifetime; weeping versus joy; and night versus morning. For reflection: *As you read verse 5, what imagery comes to mind? Do you think these statements are meant to convey separate thoughts, or should they all be considered as one overriding truth?*

Settled down (vv. 6-10). Here, David reflects on the contrasts in his life, and the contradictions in his emotions. Again, the notion of the bucket going up and down in the well (from v. 1) comes to mind. With security comes confidence. When the bucket is on solid ground (so to speak), there is the feeling of great stability. Rather than water being splashed, David felt as though he was a mountain immovable. But when God's presence was "hidden" from him (v. 7), he was "terrified." The word is also translated "disturbed;" "shaking;" or "troubled." Verses 8 through 10 are wonderful illustrations of bargaining with God. As though God needed convincing, David made his case for securing God's deliverance. The emotion is evident in the emphatic construction: both "called" and "sought favor" are strong verbs used back-to-back in the same verse (v. 8). For reflection: *If David was sure of God's continued deliverance, why do you think he continued to plead for it? Why do you think he tried to "convince" God that he needed His favor? Is there a lesson here?*

Singing out (vv. 11-12). David ends his entreaty with a flourish of both praise and poetry. In regard to praise, the "I will praise you forever" in verse 12, circles back to the "I will exalt You"

in verse 1. In terms of poetry, notice the three sets of antithetical terms that close the psalm: lament versus dancing; mourning (“sackcloth”) versus gladness; and singing versus silence. Notice, in the midst of all of his trouble, David turned to the “Lord my God” (v. 3), then found his deliverance in the “Lord my God” as well (v. 12). For reflection: *As we approach Thanksgiving, can you name some of the “deliverances” God has performed in your life? Maybe, like David, they can best be seen in your own, personal antitheses. Try saying, “God exchanged my ___ for ___.”*