

Psalm 30 (Jeff Banman, Nov 16, 2025 at KCC)

Titled this sermon “With God on the Rollercoaster” – 5 parts to a rollercoaster ride – slow steady climb – terrifying downs – thrilling ups – twists and turns – gliding into the station – throw in some motion sickness and you have a pretty good analogy for life in general and life with God – long, slow, steady climb, lots of ups and downs and twists and turns until we finally come into the station at the end of it all

a coaster has 5-6 big ups – maybe similar to the life of a Christian – we have some highs, baptism, a season of living passionately for the Lord, college, getting married or children, or a job you really loved, a close friend, time of healing – Ps 30 talks a lot about the high points – **I will exalt you, you lifted me, you healed me, brought me up, spared me, Sing the praises of the Lord, rejoicing, you favored me, dancing, clothed me with joy**

like a roller coaster, equal number of downs too – death of loved one, painful divorce in your family, physical sickness, mental health, loss of relationships, loss of job, financially hard times – Listen to these words or phrases all taken directly from Ps 30 – **the depths, the realm of the dead, down to the pit, anger, weeping, God hid His face, I was dismayed, cried for mercy, I am silenced, the dust, wailing, sackcloth**

Ps 30 speaks to the whole human experience of the highs and the lows and the twists and the turns and how God is with us and worth praising through it all – 12 verses – David writing

- ¹ **I will exalt you, Lord,
for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.**
- ² **Lord my God, I called to you for help,
and you healed me.**
- ³ **You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead;
you spared me from going down to the pit.**

King David is talking about one of the many low points in his life, we know he had many, like most of us – in a life of ups and downs this was one of his lowest points – David had lots of these – lived on the run for a while, his enemy was trying to kill him – Bathsheba, adultery and murder – horrible problems with his adult children, rebellion and immorality – many, many lows in his life – greatest king, man after God’s own heart – if you feel you’ve had more downs than ups, take heart you are in good company

David had lots of lows and whichever one this was, he is now writing on the other side of it – I was way down and you lifted me up – Hebrew word means to draw a bucket up from a well – David says my life fell down the well and you lowered a rope and pulled me up – you saved me and healed me from that low time – that’s his testimony and I hope that many of us, all of us, have a similar testimony of a time in your life, as long as you can remember, that felt like you were in the realm of the dead, felt like your life had fallen down the well and God pulled you up,

all at once or over several years – or maybe God is in the midst of it right now, for David it's done – Because of what God did for David, he invites us to praise God

**⁴ Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people;
praise his holy name.**

**⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.**

Again David puts together the low points of “anger and weeping” which he says are only temporary, with the high points of “favor and rejoicing” lasts a lifetime – this is the reality of walking with God, there will be times where you experience anger and weeping, it will not go well – Reminds me of 1 Pet 4:12 “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.”– don't be surprised by the downs on the roller coaster – low points and hard times are normal parts of walking with God – and they are normal parts of not walking with God too – it's part of the human experience, the highs and the lows – it's a package deal

Stephen Colbert, late-night talk show host (replaced Letterman) and devout Catholic – youngest of 11, when Colbert was 10 his father and two closest brothers died in a plane crash – in an interview with Anderson Cooper, both talking about losing their dads at age 10 and coping with grief – Cooper asks him about being thankful for all of life, even the lows – Colbert replies, “It's a gift to exist. It's a gift to exist, and with existence comes suffering. There's no escaping that. If you are grateful for your life then you have to be grateful for all of it, you can't pick and choose” – “[Loss] allows you to love more deeply and to understand what it's like to be a human being, if it's true that all humans suffer . . . What's the point of being here and being human if you can't be the most human you can be?” – part of being human means suffering, no suffering means no humanity – we don't run from suffering, but we embrace it, even the good in it, recognizing God is in it

Colbert gained this perspective from his mother, left with 9 kids on her own – she drew on her faith in God as the only way to not be swallowed by sorrow, she was able to recognize that our sorrow is inseparable from our joy – Our sorrow is inseparable from our joy, it's simply part of being human – in the rollercoaster analogy, it's the same track – the same track has both the highs and the lows, the joys and the sorrows – so low points in our lives are simply part of the gift of being human, but there is hope, as David says, in the sorrow, that weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning – back to Psalm 30 and now to a high point

**⁶ When I felt secure, I said,
“I will never be shaken.”**

⁷ Lord, when you favored me, you made my royal mountain stand firm;

David now looks back to a high point – I felt secure, I'll never be shaken – nothing can trip me up, I was on top of the world – we have probably had some of those moments in our lives too – things are going great and we assume they'll stay great forever – God's favor was on me, I was like a strong mountain, and then there was a twist, a turn in the track I didn't see coming

**but when you hid your face,
I was dismayed.**

David described this as God hiding his face from him – I don't think God actually hid His face from David, but from David's perspective it sure felt like it – just like in Psalm 22 where David cries out "my God, my God why have you forsaken me?" – did God actually forsake him or did it just feel like it? I think when we hit our low points on the roller coaster of life, when an unexpected twist or turn hits us, it often feels like God has forsaken us, like he has hidden his face from us – but I have learned that our feelings are not always the best judgement of reality – but when it felt like God was distant here's what David did

**⁸ To you, Lord, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:
⁹ "What is gained if I am silenced,
if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?
¹⁰ Hear, Lord, and be merciful to me;
Lord, be my help."**

He cried out to God for mercy – he even reasoned with God that it would be better for God if David stayed alive, that way he could still praise him – whether David's rational argument worked or not, God listened to his cry for mercy and God answered

**¹¹ You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
¹² that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.
Lord my God, I will praise you forever.**

For David God came through – he no longer felt forsaken, he no longer felt like God was hiding his face, he was for the time being back on top, dancing and clothed with joy – and if David is wise, he will know that being on top will not last forever, that he will face his low times again – and if he is equally wise in those low times, he will also know that those low times do not last forever either, that he will once again be back on top

Psalm 30 simply reflects the life of a follower of Jesus, of someone who walks with God – like David, our lives are full of ups and of downs and twists and turns – sometimes you feel like an immovable mountain, that nothing can trip you up now and sometimes you feel like you are living in the realm of the dead, like you have fallen down a well – but the great promise of Jesus

is that when we buckle into the rollercoaster of life, he buckles in right beside us – His final words to his followers at the end of Matthew are “I am with you until the end of the age” – until that rollercoaster glides into the station at the end, Jesus says I will be with you for every high and every low, every twist and turn

And as we ride the journey with Jesus we are encouraged that he has ridden this ride called life before – Jesus also experienced the whole human experience, the thrilling highs and the crushing lows – this morning we celebrated communion, which is so fitting, because we are remembering and proclaiming that our Jesus has walked through the lowest of lows, even death on a cross, his life fell down the well in the language of Psalm 30, so that he might become as Hebrews says, a faithful high priest, who knows what it is like to be human and to suffer

And so today, whether you feel on top of the world or that your life has fallen down the well, I invite you to remember the presence of Christ with you on this journey and to praise him in the midst of whatever you are facing, because he is worthy of our praise – a roller coaster always ends exactly where it begins – this psalm does the same thing, it begins with “I will exalt you LORD” as the opening line and then it goes through all kinds of ups and downs and twists and turns of life and then it ends exactly how it began with “I will praise you forever”

So we are invited, with David, on whichever part of the rollercoaster you find yourself this morning to embrace the whole journey, the good and the bad, as having meaning and purpose, even if we cannot see it now, and to choose to praise him through it all. Amen.