Sermon Manuscript

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Humble Yourself as a Child to the Lord
Psalm 131

I. **Point:** When I face things too difficult for me to understand I need to humble myself and trust God.

II. **Purpose:** Help believers turn to God with trust and contentment in situations too weighty to handle.

III. **Introduction -** Needs to be addressed/questions to be raised

A. Many of us have gone through situations that feel too difficult to handle.
   1. Report from the doctor's office of a life-threatening diagnosis.
   2. Eviction with months to figure out where to move your family next.
   3. Loved one suddenly passed away.
   4. Lost a significant amount of money in the stock market.
   5. Heartbreaking discovery that your partner has been unfaithful.
   6. Lost your job when you have a family to take care of and bills to pay.
   7. Life is filled with situations that weigh us down.

B. Questions we ask ourselves during these times:
   1. How do I respond to challenging situations that are beyond my control?
   2. Can I trust God with my weighty issues?

C. The Bible tells us about a man named David, who endured many situations he couldn't solve.
   1. He wrote a psalm that addresses how we can and should deal with weighty issues that we can't handle.
   2. The psalm we'll be exploring today is Psalm 131. Short psalm, but a powerful one. Charles Spurgeon called it "one of the shortest psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn."

IV. **Movements**

A. Explanation
   1. This Psalm is a "song of ascent." What is a "song of ascent"?
      a) A song traditionally sung by Hebrew pilgrims, who ascended the uphill road to Jerusalem for annual festivals in the Temple
      b) This uphill climb to the temple was *literally* physically draining
      c) The Hebrews would sing these "songs of ascent" as a way to worship and recenter themselves on God's goodness
      d) This imagery of walking uphill, fighting against gravity, taking in deep breaths of air to fill your lungs, and sweat dripping down your face – is a vivid description of what walking through life sometimes is like. It's hard, it's grueling, and sometimes, it's enough to bring you to your knees.

2. What does it say exactly about how to respond when faced with issues that are beyond our control and our ability?
    a) ***"My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty"*** Psalm 131:1
        (1) What is his heart posture? He's humble. And approaching God from a place of humility instead of pride and arrogance.
        (2) If there's anyone you might expect to be arrogant and prideful, it would be David. He was anointed King; he was brave in battle, a respected general in the military, and was also gifted in music
        (3) But his heart posture when writing Psalm 131 was one of humility. He was humble.
    b) ***"I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me"*** Psalm 131:1
        (1) "Great matters" or "things too wonderful" are not explicitly defined, but they're things that have caused David great stress. They're burdens that weigh heavily on him. His inner peace is disrupted and he's wondering, "Can I trust God with my weighty issues?"
    c) David describes what trust in God looks like. He says, ***"But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content"*** Psalm 131:2.
        (1) Here, David chooses to *calm* and *quiet* himself in the face of situations that are too difficult to handle
        (2) How does he do this? He adopts the posture of a weaned child.
            (a) And what exactly is a weaned child?
                (i) Infants cannot control their needs so they look for their mom. They're looking for immediate satisfaction.
                    (a) If they're hungry, they cry, because they want food.
                    (b) If they're sleepy, they cry, because they want to sleep.
                    (c) If their diapers are full, they cry, because they feel uncomfortable.
                (ii) A nursing child is completely dependent on its mother. A weaned child, on the other hand, is not a nursing child. They're children who have learned to be more independent and no longer rely on their mothers for breastfeeding. They've

experienced the world a bit apart from their mother and have left the protection of constantly being at their mother's side. A weaned child has also learned to return to his or her mother for comfort in the face of hurt or fear. They seek their mom because they want love, closeness, and companionship. They seek their mom, period. Not for what she can give, but for who she is.

(iii) For example, if a little boy accidentally cuts his finger, he knows to run to his mom for help and comfort. He knows his mom is a place of safety. He goes to his mom, not because he *has* to, but because he *wants* to

(iv) Quote from Alec Motyer: "Mum is no longer there to meet demand; it is enough that she is there; not now the breast to feed, but the hand to hold, the cuddle that assures, the kiss that makes it better."

(3) Before a child even gets to this point, the process of weaning is uncomfortable and oftentimes really strange and awful for a child – they're fussy, irritable, and needy – but it is key for the child's development. Only through weaning can a child learn to enjoy a mother's presence instead of her gifts. In the same way, David wants to adopt a similar posture. He wants to humble himself like a weaned child who draws near to God.

d) ***"Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore."*** Psalm 131:3

(1) Why hope in the Lord? The Lord – his good purposes and his perfect character – are the only constant and sure things in this world

(2) And this active choice to run after God is one David is calling Israel to make every single time, for the rest of their lives. David was one of the greatest kings of Israel and was even described by God as a man after his own heart. Yet, as a leader, David had his fair share of difficult issues to deal with:

(a) He hid out in caves and the wilderness to save his life from Saul who was trying to murder him

(b) He waited around 15 years to finally become King
(c) He committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband Uriah killed.

Becoming a leader means bigger responsibility and bigger responsibility often means weightier issues to deal with. David was not a perfect king by any stretch of the word and had many weaknesses. But, he was also a humble and repentant man who modeled for us how to chase after the Lord in the midst of failure and issues too big for us to handle.

(3) In this life, weighty issues will continue to come up, so what do we do? We humble ourselves like little children and turn to God who we can hope in and trust.

B. Application
1. What does this look like in practice? Earlier, I shared different examples of weighty issues we may be struggling with around health, loss, finances, or relational breakdowns. How can we possibly be humble and trust in God during really difficult times? What does it look like to turn to God like a weaned child instead of being self-sufficient and relying on myself for answers?
2. Pray for humility, and against a prideful spirit.
    a) Pray for reliance on God every morning and evening.
3. If a weaned child is with its mother, in practice, this means abiding in the Lord.
    a) Worship
    b) Reading the Word
    c) Meditation
    d) Prayer
    e) Support from community
    f) These disciplines make space for hearing from God and relying on the Spirit to guide and lead you through weighty issues, instead of instinctively jumping to solve the issues from a human perspective.
4. If your soul is disturbed, practice activities that allow you to rest, be still, and be quiet.
    a) Silence and solitude
    b) Retreat
    c) Walking in nature
5. Jesus himself demonstrated what it looks like to be weaned child in the midst of situations too weighty to handle in Matthew 26:36-46
    a) At this point, Jesus was preparing to die on the cross. He knew he had to obediently face death in the face so that we may be

saved. That is weighty. Death was on the horizon, and he felt so "sorrowful and troubled" to the point that he said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."

b) Retreated to a quiet place. And he not only sought after community, asking Peter, James, and John to join him in prayer, but he also went directly to the Father in his anguish. Scripture says, "He fell with his face to the ground and prayed."

c) Jesus, the King of Kings, the Son of God, the Messiah, humbly turned to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane and firmly trusted in His plans and goodness even when he would've gladly had that cup taken away from him. Jesus quieted his soul in the midst of prayer. Jesus adopted the posture of a weaned child.

V. Conclusion

A. How do I respond to challenging situations that are beyond my control or beyond my ability to handle? Can I trust God with my weighty issues?

B. The answer is yes. Just as the Israelites would make the grueling journey uphill to reach the temple, life will continue to be an uphill battle. We will feel restless, anxious, and tired.

C. But, the good news is that when we face things too difficult to understand, we *can* find peace and contentment. We *can* experience calm and quiet. How?

1. When we humbly turn to the Father and trust in Him. In His presence, there is peace, quiet, and contentment.
2. The only way up is to go down. When we let go of our pride and embrace a lowly posture, when we surrender our plans to the Lord, we are letting God be God. We are letting God comfort us and take care of our needs as a mother would with a weaned child.
3. Will all of our problems be solved? No, but entering into the presence of God like a child will expand your ability to trust and hope in a good, good Father who is fully aware and in control of your weighty issues.

D. For as long as we are alive, we will continue to face pain, brokenness, and suffering – oftentimes beyond what we can handle. There will be sweat, blood, and tears and many times this uphill battle will be more than we can endure.

1. But will you choose to rely on yourself, or will you choose to turn to God in the midst of your weighty issues? Do you want a quiet and restful soul? Choose humility. Choose trust. Choose to hope in the Lord.