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CD601: Proclamation and Communication

Sermon Manuscript

Good morning church. Today's scripture comes from Psalm 131. Now before we jump in to the passage, I actually want to ask everyone to close their eyes. There are a few questions that I'm going to ask us this morning, and I want the Holy Spirit to guide us in to honesty and transparency before Him and ourselves. FYI These will all be rhetorical so please do not need to respond out loud. Everyone please close your eyes.

Have you ever been faced with a situation that had you at an absolute loss on what to do? Or even what to say or how to respond? I'm going to pause for a bit to give you time to reflect.

For some, this situation may have been tragedy such as the sudden loss of a loved one, or deep horrific injustice done to you or your family. For others, this situation may be a heavy burden; a large responsibility that a parent, a husband, wife, employee, manager, leader, student, or even a pastor carries. Whatever the situation was, or whatever the situation is even right now, what is your response? How did you respond in that moment of pressure? As I ask these questions, I want you to be honest with yourself and let the Holy Spirit reveal what needs to be revealed. When you feel overwhelmed by life, how do you respond?

You can open your eyes.

As we dive into the passage, I want you to reflect and hold on to what that situation was, whether it was a memory or a current reality. The Psalmist, who in this case is King David, models for us how to respond in these moments.

Psalm 131; this is from the NIV.

My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty.

I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

This Psalm is actually a Psalm of Ascent. The Psalms of Ascent are Psalms 120-134. Traditionally, these Psalms of Ascent, also called Pilgrim songs, were sung by Jewish worshippers who were journeying UP to Jerusalem for the annual feasts. These pilgrim songs reflect what a spiritual pilgrimage in His presence looks like; AKA there are lessons in these songs about how to navigate the journey of life with the Lord.

Now if there was anyone who understood what walking with the Lord through the craziness of life looks like, it was King David. He was the youngest son of Jesse, a shepherd boy who killed Goliath the Philistine champion, was hunted down by King Saul, but eventually became the King of Israel. Later he would bring the ark of the covenant back, plan to build the temple, fall in to sexual sin and murder, and nearly get killed by his own son, Absalom. But in spite of all the craziness, what does God remember? Acts 13:22, that he was a “man after my own heart”.

Now with this in mind, let’s look more closely at the text.

My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

- Now if there was anyone who had any right to be prideful, it was probably King David. This man was God-appointed King of Israel who had really never lost a battle. He had united the Kingdom of Israel under his rule and clearly had the favor over his life.
- But we see David approaching God with humility. What is humility? Humility is trusting in God instead of yourself.
- If we’re going to talk competency of any sorts, it would seem King David has a good resume. However, his posture is “my heart is not proud”. All that I have done and can do means nothing before you, Lord. I need you.
- Humility is trusting God instead of yourself.

Let’s keep reading along.

But I have calmed and quieted myself.

Pause. King David is saying here that he had to calm and quiet himself down. As King, David held massive responsibility. His leadership and decisions would impact the direction and lives of millions of people. He also had several adversaries who wanted his life. In nearly every season of his life, his life was in grave danger. Worse, it was his father-in-law and his son that ended up coming closest to killing him. If there are reasons to stress, King David probably had one.

King David is literally saying he needs to calm and quiet himself while in this situation. How does he do it? By bringing his burden to the Lord.

Let's look at the passage.

I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

What does this mean? A weaned child is a child that no longer breastfeeds for food. The mother no longer picks up the child, holds it close, and has the child drink. This is the difference between an infant and a weaned child. The mother brings the infant towards her breast. The weaned child is making a choice. The weaned child in the passage goes toward the mother to be comforted, and like a weaned child, David says he finds content.

How does David find content, calm, and quiet in spite of the weight of his circumstances? He draws close to the Lord. He makes the choice, like a weaned child, more mature than the infant, to draw near to God, and recognize that in His presence, we find peace. Peace that surpasses understanding. Peace like a river.

Israel, put your hope in the Lord, both now and forevermore.

We have a hope that cannot be shaken. We have a hope that promised us to cast our burdens on Him. Jesus said to cast our burdens on Him for His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

We see all throughout the scriptures that the greater the responsibility, the more important it was to go to the Lord. The greater the situation, the more urgent His presence.

All throughout the Psalms, King David writes of drawing near to the Lord, that His soul yearns and thirsts for Him. Often times these Psalms were written while King David was under life-threatening circumstances.

We see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, the night where He was to be betrayed by Judas, abandoned by his friends, beaten, whipped, and crucified, crying out to the Father for comfort, peace, and contentment in spite of all that He knew was to come.

When life has us beyond ourself, we have a choice to humble ourselves, set aside our ego, our sense of control, and come to God and just say I need you.

When I was 22 years old, I walked away from the Lord. Life's circumstances, poor decisions all overwhelmed me, and instead of bringing it to the Lord, I ran away from God to alcohol and drug addictions, wild living, all of it. I lived in denial of my brokenness and fought hard to be my own man. I wanted to act "strong" and "tough", and not admit I was overwhelmed by life. I pushed God away for close to three years. But in January of 2019, after being up all night in drunkenness, I kneeled before the Lord and admitted to Him that "I need you". "Lord I can't do this without you. Help me. It's even hard to trust you; help me trust you".

It's been a redemptive journey since then and the Lord has been teaching me what this looks like season after season. But it always starts with making that choice, like a weaned child, to go to Him. To bring ourself, our worries, and our burdens to Him; to learn to trust Him. This principle becomes more important as we mature, as we assume more responsibilities in life; this is a lifelong discipline.

In the beginning I asked each of you a series of questions. "Have you ever been faced with a situation that had you at an absolute loss on what to do? Or even what to say or how to respond?"

Whatever came up, I want to encourage you, especially those of you who are feeling burdened under the pressures of life right now, to choose Him. Trust Him. He's safe.

If you could bow your head with me and just open your hands to Him.

Lord, we repent for the times that we chose our own strength and did not humble ourselves before you. Teach us to trust you, Lord. Teach us to choose to trust you and bring our heaviest burdens before you. It is a fact that we will face difficulties in life that will be beyond us. Some of us are facing them right now. But I pray for the boldness, humility, wisdom, and maturity to choose to come to you in these moments. For in the Kingdom, maturity is being like children.

And children understand that they can trust the Father, and be content in you. Thank you Lord, in Jesus name we pray, amen.