

Transcription of 18TM837

Psalm 131 "Like a Weaned Child" October 14, 2018

All right. Let's open our Bibles this morning to Psalm 131.

I think we mentioned to you last week that Psalms 120 through 135 are -- almost all of them are labeled songs of ascent or of degrees, because they were sang collectively as a nation, also individually as families, as the families would March up towards Jerusalem for Passover and Tabernacles and Pentecost feast weeks. So these are short Psalms. Most of them they're ones that the people would have easily known the tunes to. But they all kind of highlight the blessings or the goodness that the nation had in knowing the Lord. This morning we want to look at three verses, so we won't be long. Or maybe we'll be long. I don't know. But it was written by David just to highlight the fact that growth involves becoming simple in our faith or in our trust.

The central verse there in verse 2 uses the words, "Like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child so is my soul within me." The word "weaned" is the Hebrew word "gamal." It means and translates sometimes to yield, or to ripen as fruit, or to benefit another. David uses it as the successful process of moving a child from nursing to accepting and then being comfortable with solid foods on his own. And David saw it as a really good example from a poetic kind of standpoint, a good analogy for spiritual growth and contentment under God's care.

Weaning is not a fun chore for kids. It can be traumatic. It can be challenging. None of us like change. And the older you get, the worse it oftentimes becomes. But it starts off kind of that way too. Kids don't want to be changed either, so if they're used to nursing, why change, right? Now you have the foods which are different in taste and texture, and the requirements to feed yourself and eat on your own. And all of it doesn't sound very good to me. Why change? And yet you've got to grow up.

I saw a guy at the mall this last week, kid saying to his mom, "Pick me up, pick me up, pick me up." And he was way too big to pick up. I couldn't have picked him up. Don't know what his mother was going to do with him. I think he was 25, 26. I'm not sure. I mean, there's a time for just being carried and then, a time to walk on your own, and this kid needed to learn to walk on his own. But that's what we're up against. We don't like having to grow up when things are so easy. But look, if you're going to grow up physically, an essential part of life is you got to get beyond the nursing process. So we need to learn to do that as well.

It doesn't mean you're independent of your family, because a weaned child is really in no better condition to make judgment for himself as an unweaned child, but he gets expanded horizons. He gets some opportunity as well. That picture, by the way, is used constantly in the scriptures. It's not just found here in David's short little Psalm. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians who were not doing very well spiritually, he said, "I've had to feed you with milk, because you're not ready for meat. You weren't ready to bear it then, you're not ready to bear it now." Grow up basically, right? I Corinthians 32, grow up. When Paul wrote to the Hebrews in Chapter 5, he said, "You've come to a time when you ought to be teaching others, but instead of that, you are in a position to be taught again the basic premises of God's Word, so you have need of milk. You're not ready for strong meat. Milk is good for those who are unskillful in the Word of God, the Word of righteousness. You're just a baby. Strong meat belongs to those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to be able to discern between good and evil."

Peter wrote his first letter to the scattered saints, and he wrote to them and said, as newborn babies you should desire the pure milk or the sincere milk of the Word that you can grow by it. So it's good for a time, but then you have to kind of move along. You'll find the Lord carrying the lambs in His arms, but the sheep have to follow Him. So you get carried around for a while, but at some point, you get put down. Pick me up, pick me up, pick me up. Mommy, Mommy. No, it's not going to work. Doesn't work with God either.

So the weaned child, a big step forward in his development is this venture towards independence. And

like I said, his horizons expand. He's not in a position yet to run his own life, mind you. But he doesn't have to rely upon everyone for everything. Weaning brings freedom, but it also brings the danger of thinking too high of yourself.

I don't know if you've noticed about kids, but kids, once they get to eating on their own, now they'll eat anything. Now you have to say, don't put that in your mouth. That's not what we eat. Dirt is not good. I'm going to have ice cream for dinner and a couple Legos for desert, and then I'm going to swallow that nickel I found under the couch. All of a sudden, he knows everything. He's free all right, to be kind of dumb. So David chooses this beautiful picture of a weaned child, but adds in his short Psalm that the process of growing up also has to involve not getting too big for your own britches. Stand by faith, move beyond childhood, move beyond the formative days, but still grow up in faith and your dependence upon God that just gets stronger rather than weaker.

How are you doing in the wean department? Weaning or whining, those are usually the two. David saw himself as weaned, but very dependent upon the Lord. Spurgeon wrote of this Psalm, "It is a short Psalm to read and a really long Psalm to learn." Because it speaks about a child, a young child, with the experience in his heart of an old man. He was able to do both.

So in verse 1 and then the conclusion in verse 3, but in verse 1, David gives to us some of the criteria for becoming weaned from the Lord, so that he's able to say in verse 2 in past tense, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child. And he begins with these words: "Lord, my heart is not haughty." Or if you will, prideful. One way to be properly weaned and yet dependent is to be sure we're not prone to or governed by pride. It's an interesting thing when you read about someone saying to you, I'm not prideful. It's kind of like when someone says I am very humble. It's a hard sell. It is either a glorious truth, or it is wild self-deception.

We know from the Bible that David lived a very humble life; that his humility was genuine. He had rejected it and continued to reject pride. He seemed to know that God gives grace to the humble, but resists the proud, and

David finds himself oftentimes winning with that -- that four-letter enemy, self. When David came to the throne, one of the things you discover as you read through the historical books is that he never lost sight of where he came from. It was burned into his heart. Always he brings up this life of the shepherd boy that God raised up. He remained teachable. He was willing to confess his sin. He was usually totally dependent and depended - - and submitted, I should say, to the Lord. It was a necessary quality for a man who was after God's own heart.

When the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David to explain to him what God's plans for his life were, and how that he would be the king, and how that his descendants there would be found the Messiah, the Promised One that was coming to save, that His throne would be established forever, David just was blown away. He couldn't almost handle what he was hearing. He said in response, "I am your servant, Lord. And now You've taken me from the sheepfold. You've made me and are making a ruler over the people. Wherever I've gone, You've gone before me. Every enemy that stood in my way, You've been able to take out of my sight. You're making a great name for me in the earth, and now You're going to do this? What more can I say? And what of my house, what You have brought me to?" And David was left speechless. For an eloquent poet, he couldn't get a word out sideways. It humbled David that God would desire to take his life and make it his own. David remembered the lessons he had learned early in life as a shepherd in the hills of Bethlehem. He constantly applied them. Whenever things went well, he looked back to see how God had brought him this far. Spoke of them time and time again, writes Psalm 23 as he views the Lord as the Shepherd, but he learned that in the fields, letting God be his. He would write about green pastures and still waters and lying down to rest in His care, but he never forgot that he's the product that everything that God came to do in his life. So he's able to write here, Lord, I'm not haughty in my heart. I'm not prideful in my outlook. I've become like a weaned child. Calmed my soul, quieted my heart.

You want to grow up staying close to the Lord, then remember where God has brought you from. It's good that you remember your roots. I think we have communion so that we're reminded of our roots. The hard thing about communion is you can't show up at communion prideful.

You can show up here prideful this morning. No one -- we might not even notice. But when you have to take the bread and the cup and this is given for me, it's hard to be prideful. It does kind of level you, doesn't it? It's good to remember our roots.

I was reading an article a couple of weeks ago online that I thought was very interesting, and the guy -- his point was that a lot of these genealogical places where you pay money to find out where you came from, those search results, his determination was you get search results in direct proportion to how much money you spend looking for them. He said if you have a lot of money to spend, you might find yourself to be a distant relative of some French nobility, but if you don't have a lot of dough, you're probably going to trace yourself back to a pirate on the high seas. In reality, all of us are descendants of a gardening family who lost their jobs stealing fruit. That's us. So you go brag about that. Put that on your Facebook.

People who forget their roots are the easiest prey for pride. Historically the worst tyrants that the world has ever seen were oftentimes those that were most abused as children. You would think it would be the other way around. An alcoholic parent and you're their child, you would say of yourself, that's not going to be me. I've seen what that can do. And unfortunately, it's just the opposite. We forget our roots. We forget where we've come from. Those that are born in poverty and come to wealth are oftentimes very prone to gaudy kind of lavish purchases. They try to make up for lost time. They want to put on display their gain. It's a wise thing if we won't forget where we've come from, rather than trying to bury it. David wrote in Psalm 40, verse 2, "You brought me up out of a horrible pit, standing in the miry clay." That's us. You want to brag, that's you and me. He set our feet upon a Rock. He established our going. Don't forget where you've come from and you can rest in Him. You forgot where He brought you from, you're headed for pride.

When Amos was called by the Lord to go speak to the nation, he ran into King Amaziah, who didn't like what he was being told. In fact, in Amos Chapter 7, Amaziah comes to Amos and says, "Look, would you just knock it off? You're always a bummer anyway." I think that's the original Hebrew, you're a bummer anyway. "You're just

always bringing these words and just bringing us down. If you could just shut up, that'd be great." And Amos responded there and he said this: "Look, I'm not a prophet. My family, nobody in my family is a prophet. I grew up watching the cattle. Today I have a job gathering Sycamore fruit. But it's the Lord who came to me while I was following the flock and the Lord said to me, 'I want you to go and prophesize these words to Israel.' So you're telling me not to do it, but I'm telling you, I can't do anything else. But I didn't seek this position. It's not the word from me, and I don't want any glory. I'm just delivering the message, man. You're mad at the mailman. I've been just sent to deliver the mail."

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, who had a lot of trouble with this anyway, said in Chapter 4 to them, "Who makes you different from one another, and what do you have that you weren't given? If you were given it, why do you act as if you owned it, or it came from you?"

One of our big problems in being weaned is we think more highly of ourselves than we should. Paul made that clear. He said in Romans 12, "By the grace of God, given to every man, don't do that. Don't think of yourself more highly than you are. Think soberly. Take a good look at yourself." It's usually not a pretty picture. The dilemma is there is a real you, and then there's the you that you'd like to be or think you are that everyone knows you're not but you. I'm really kind, but my wife pushes me. My boss is an irritation; that's why I lose my temper, or else I would never lose my temper. I'm a very patient man.

It's the ego, what we are, and the superego -- what we think we are. I remember reading in college the greater disparity between the ego and the superego, the more mental illness you have, and I think that's probably right. David was only able to see himself for who he truly was. It's like counseling has a goal of bringing that superego, who I think I am, to become more reasonable, closer to the truth, see what I really am, accept myself. The problem is, sin won't allow that. And so rather than saying yes, you are an idiot, which you can't really tell people then charge them \$150, you say to them this: You're a really nice guy, but your environment has really messed you up. It's not really your fault, it's your brother's fault. It's not really

your fault, it's your parents' fault. It's not really your fault, it's society's fault. It's not really your fault, it's your diet. It's your economic background, it's your ethnicity, it's the suffering that you've gone through. You'd be all of the things you want to be, but you can't be because of the things around you. That's not what the Bible says. The Bible starts off with, you're an idiot. Spiritually, you're in big trouble. You need help.

So how do we bridge the gap? We don't. We just turn to the Lord. And as a Christian, I can look back to see what I was, and where God has brought me from. I can be honest with God about who I am now, what I once was, what He's brought me out of, and what He's taking me towards. I'm far better off. And I can grow up. I can be a weaned child, lacking the pride that so often holds me back.

Paul said in that famous Popeye verse -- that's the way I remember it -- 1 Corinthians 15:10, "By the grace of God I am what I am," and that's all that I am. No, that's not what the rest of it says. God works in me His grace. I don't have to strive to become what I am or somehow work harder to get ahead. It's His work in me. A weaned child does not think any more of himself. He's content with the work of God.

So David talks about, I'm not proud. I can be satisfied and grow up because of my trust and my dependence upon God. Image maintenance is difficult. It's the holier than thou, better than you. If I find someone that's excelling, I want to bring them down by criticizing them so I feel better about me. The man filled with pride cannot rest, but David could. Why? Because his status and his value and his worth and his potential all ran into dead to self and alive to God. He lost track of what the world might want to offer, but he never lost track of what he came from and what God has done. He was dependent still. He lacked pride. Lord, my heart isn't haughty.

Second of all, verse 1, "nor are my eyes lofty." The word "lofty" is a word for looking with ambition at something. Now, there's an ambition that you need in life, one without which you will be lazy and unproductive and accomplish absolutely nothing. Yet biblical ambition is clearly defined as the wholehearted desire to honor

God and to glorify His name, not yours. So how's your ambition? I know a lot of you are very ambitious to get ahead, to be successful, to gain the world and all that it has to offer. How much ambition do you have for your neighbor to get saved, for your coworkers to hear the gospel, or that Jesus would be honored? David said, "I don't have eyes that are ambitious when it comes to this world." If God isn't in your ambition, your ambition may accomplish much, but it won't accomplish anything spiritually.

There are many evil ambitions in self-driven accomplishments in the flesh. I had to take an English class in college where we had to read all of Shakespeare's plays. I started off hating it, ended up liking it. That Shakespeare, he had a way with words. But there's a line in Henry the VIII that says Cromwell, flee ambition, for by it the angels flail." It's true. The ambition to have it your way and then thank God for your success, and we see it a lot, that's a deluding outlook. I'll do what I want, I'll get ahead, and I'll go, look what the Lord did. But you can't really know whether the Lord did it or not, because the guy next to you did the same thing and he doesn't know the Lord at all.

To decide to do nothing because, well, the Lord will work it all out, that's deceptive. Ambition in the Lord is great. I'll give you the best comparison that I can think of at the moment. Take the promise that the Bible says "The Lord added daily to the church those that must be saved" with the verse that says "Go into the highways and the byways and compel them to come in." You stand on either one of those without the other, we're in trouble, but you listen to God's counsel, and you realize it's God's work, but you have to be busy.

Fleshly ambition can be found in those who have selfish goals that will not be denied. No compromise, no matter the cost. They push, they shove to get ahead. David distanced himself from that kind of ambition. My eyes aren't lofty. He was able to say that of himself. In his hard work and diligence in serving the Lord, David didn't seek glory for himself. Paul didn't either.

Take the case of David's encounter with Goliath as an example. I mean, when David showed up as a young guy, straight-away from the sheepfold, there was a giant

cursing God and threatening the children of Israel. David asked about it, and he was told that the king had offered ample reward for anyone foolish enough or daring enough to risk their life to take out this one giant. In fact, they said to David, "The king will give you great riches. He'll give you his daughter to marry. He'll let your family live in the land without taxes for the rest of your life." And David wasn't moved by any of that ambition, because that's what Saul appealed to. He wasn't motivated by Saul's rewards offered to anyone who would take the risk. David didn't show up there driven by self-interest. He wasn't interested in popularity or gain. In fact, when he asked about what was being done, his brothers got angry because they were convicted, but they said to David, "You know, you're just a little punk. You just watch the sheep. That's not exactly an honorable job." And David was angry with what they said. He said to them, "What have I done? You mean there's no cause here at all?" His response to the blasphemy coming out of the king's mouth while the whole army cowered was that it had to be dealt with. And David said this, "I'll deal with it." Saul said, "Well, put on my uniform." And David tried it on, and went, "Man, these are way too big for me. No idea about these." Saul says, "You're going to get killed out there by yourself." And David said, "I don't think so. When I was watching my Lord's sheep and the lion came, I killed the lion. When a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I chased him down and killed him. In fact, I grabbed him by the beard. Thy servant who has killed both lion and bear can certainly take out this uncircumcised Philistine who is mocking," if you will, "defying the armies of the living God. Let me go and honor God." And his ambition was totally the Lord's honor. His only concern was God, and his faith in risking his life was driven by that honor.

David never -- you won't find him in the Bible -- was ambitious for the throne. He was a young kid in his teens when the prophet Samuel showed up and said he was going to be God's choice and anointed him. He never went out to try to depose Saul. Hey, get out of my castle. He didn't lead some coup to take over. He waited for God to open the doors. He had twice the opportunities to slit Saul's throat. He had army guys with him that volunteered to do the dirty work for him. And he kept saying, "No way. I have a respect for God's choices. If He wanted me to be king, He'll make me king. I can't lay my hand on the Lord's anointed." He lived the truth that

God could work things out in His timing. He was content to let it be that way. He was a man without a lofty eye, a weaned child growing up ever dependent.

Even when his own son led a coup against him, Absalom, and they said to David, "Don't leave. Let's fight it out here. We can win." David said, "No. Let's leave town. I don't want anybody to get hurt." "Would you like to take the tabernacle with you, the presence of God, the ark?" He said, "No, no. God put His name here. If He wants me here, I'll come back here." And an older guy walks out of town brokenhearted, sure, but he knew that God would have His way. David didn't look for self-promotion. He had no heart for it. Wasn't filled with the stress of trying to hang on to something that didn't belong to him. Weaned child. Not prideful. I don't have selfish ambition.

Thirdly, verse 1, "Nor do I concern myself with great matters or things too profound for me." I don't strive. There's only one word in Hebrew for great matters. It is translated important or large or loud or high. I'm not concerned with those things that are too profound, over the head, out of reach, out of sight, difficult to comprehend, hidden. David said of his spiritual growth, "I don't concern myself with things I can't answer."

The Bible says the hidden things belong to the Lord, the things that are revealed to the sons of men. God doesn't explain everything. I can't give you an answer for everything. He didn't struggle with or spend much time with why did God or why doesn't God. The old adage -- it's a crude one, but it works -- keep it simple, stupid, and David did. He lived by that. How awesome that when you have no understanding of something, you just leave it with the Lord. That's none of your business. God doesn't see fit to explain Himself. You don't have to strive. You can be weaned, stand on your own two feet while heavily leaning upon Him at all times, never losing the dependency of being a child.

I've been pastoring for almost 40 years and, the big arguments theologically amongst church pastors and churches, they haven't changed much for hundreds of years. But there's always this big fight between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility to choose by man. And people take sides and churches are destroyed over it, and friendships as well. I am sure that the

Bible teaches both, and I can't reconcile them for you, any more than I can explain three persons in one God. I just know it's in the Bible. Well, have you thought about the egg? Yeah, yeah, I heard the story. Or the water and the -- yeah, yeah, I don't get it. Doesn't help me a bit. I don't get it. I just believe it because God said so. So when I teach through the Bible and we run into the sovereignties of God and God has chosen you before the foundation of the world, I can't help but be happy to tell you that's true of you and I. Chosen in Him. When I'm told that I need to choose to follow the Lord, I teach that like it's all upon you. And then I just leave it alone, because I don't have all the answers. In fact, the longer I've been a Christian, the bigger the file has gotten that says "I don't get it." When I get to heaven, I'm sure our first meeting's going to be, Lord, here. And I'll probably just not get it when He tells me. I don't know. So I'll just leave things with the Lord. He's wiser than I am. If I knew everything and had every answer, I'd be God, wouldn't I? Known to Him are all of His works, but not known to me.

So David said, "I'm not driven by pride. I don't have a worldly ambition, and I don't really have an understanding of everything. But because of that, I have been able to calm and quiet my soul." Those are both in verse 2 past tense. Past tense. "Like a child that is weaned with his mother, so is my soul within me." It's repeated twice, because like I said, poetry in Hebrew is repeated for emphasis. I'm just like a child that is -- has been weaned from being nursed, but I'm still a child. An unweaned child clings to his mother with only one thought: Feed me. Don't go too far away. I'm hungry in a minute. A weaned child clings to his mother for all kinds of reasons: Closeness and companionship and love.

So David desires to be close to the Lord, which is why he ends by saying, "So you can just hope in the Lord, Israel, from this time forward." Once you get to that position where you are free to stand, but greatly leaning upon the Lord, then you're going to be in a place of growth, then a place of hope. If God doesn't do it, it's not going to get done, so why struggle with worry? Why struggle with a lot of things? Let God run the show. Leave behind your frustration. He can manage your life. Growing up, but staying a child. Growing up in maturity, staying a child in devotion. And wonder. "Unless the Lord build the house," Psalm 127, verse 1, "the laborer

labors in vain. Unless the Lord walks the city, the watchman stays awake for nothing."

Weaned or whining, what are you doing? "Because there is a rest that remains," Paul to the Hebrews, "for those who will cease from their own works, like God has ceased from His." Nice verses, three of them. Check them out this week in your own life.