



## Week 24: Psalms 21-30

### Study Guide for the week of June 8-14

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Ps 30, a psalm of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving psalms help us express what is at the core of being a child of God. In Rom 1:18-21, Paul argues that though most people know God, they do not honor him or give him thanks.

The NIV, NRSV, and King James translations of verse 1 use the imagery of a bucket being drawn out of a well: “I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up.” When have you felt like you were drowning because of circumstances or problems in life? The psalmist is facing a terrible illness; have you ever prayed for healing from an illness? When you were better, did you remember to thank God?

The psalmist gives testimony to the faithful ones in verse 4. Who are the faithful people around you lifting you in prayer and support when you need it? What important truth does the psalmist express in verse 5? Are you able to take the eternal view when faced with difficulties? Can you still thank God in the midst of difficulties when you consider the scope of eternity?

In verse 9, it seems the psalmist is trying to bargain with God – does this seem jarring to you? When you truly have no place else to go, do you try to convince God with flowery and poetic language? Or can you become brutally honest with God and strip away all the pious religious “good Christian” language?

In the final verses, the psalmist will not be silent in his gratitude. This week spend time each day thanking God for what he has done. If you aren’t feeling very thankful, start small. Thank God for air to breathe, food to eat, the sunrise or sunset. Keep the example of Ps 30 in front of you and let what Jesus has done on the cross for you be a starting point for your thankful heart.

#### Discussion starters

1. Are you surprised that Ps 22 with its cry of abandonment is immediately followed by Ps 23 and its scenes of tranquil peace? What does this say about the nature of faith? Is faith meant to give us all the answers or to teach us to trust a God who is beyond answers?
2. What does Ps 22 teach about our response to God delivering us (Ps 22:22-25)? Share a time when God answered your cry for help.
3. What is counter-cultural about Ps 23:1? What does Madison Avenue attempt to do every day? How is that different from the truth in Ps 23:1? How do God’s goodness and love pursue you? Ps 23 is an invitation to live under God’s rule and in solidarity with his people. What makes this invitation irresistible?
4. Reread Ps 24. Who is in control over all the earth? Because God reigns, who may enter his presence (24:4)? What might pure hands refer to? Pure hearts? Is it only outward actions that God expects (pure hands)? Is it only inner motivation that God expects (pure heart)?

5. In Ps 25, the psalmist speaks of enemies; enemies oppose us and also oppose God's way of living. What enemies (temptations) oppose God's way of living? Does the psalmist demand an answer or ask for guidance along the path (24:4)? What does it mean to fear the Lord (24:14)? How does fear of the Lord lead to friendship?
6. Underline or highlight the phrase "voice of the Lord" each time it appears in Ps 29. What does this convey about the power of God's words? What is the response of the people to the Lord's voice (29:9)?

## **Bible verse to memorize: Ps 27:1**