

Psalm Sundays

Text
Psalm 131

Topic
David is calm and quiet, more
like a weaned child than an anxious
and worried nursing infant

Title
***“Don’t Worry, Baby,
Being Weaned Will Turn Out Alright”***

He was a fearless shepherd. He said of himself that “[I] used to keep [my] father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it” (First Samuel 17:34-35).

He was a fierce warrior. His victories were celebrated in a song in which it was said that while King Saul had slain thousands, he had slain tens of thousands.

He was a phenomenal musical talent - inventing instruments and writing songs and psalms. We call him, “The Sweet Psalmist of Israel.”

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He was a faithful king, ruling over a united Israel.

He was in fellowship with the LORD, Who identified him as a “man after His own heart” (First Samuel 13:14).

Those are some of the ways we see King David of Israel. How did David see himself? Look in verse two: “Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child *is* my soul within me” (Psalm 131:2).

Didn’t expect that.

Psalm 131 is the third shortest psalm.¹ In many commentaries, it is taught along with Psalm 130. Not for thematic reasons, but because it is so brief.

It’s brevity should cause us to pay even closer attention. I’ll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Do You Want To Be Weaned Or Still Weaning?**, and **#2 Do You Wait Like You’re Weaned Or Still Weaning?**

#1 - Do You Want To Be Weaned Or Still Weaning? (v1&2)

Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Two-hundred seventy-two words; took two minutes to deliver.

Roosevelt’s “Day of Infamy” speech - seven and one-half minutes.

“I have a dream today” was delivered by Martin Luther King in seventeen minutes.

¹ Psalms 117 & 134



Some of the greatest speeches in history were the briefest. There is a saying in standup comedy that "a tight five is better than a sloppy fifteen."

Arguably the greatest talk ever given, the Sermon on the Mount, can be delivered in twenty minutes.

Charles Spurgeon related this story: "An old preacher used to say to a young man who preached an hour, 'My dear friend, I do not care what else you preach about, but I wish you would always preach *about forty minutes.*' "

He also said, "Brevity is a virtue which is within the reach of us all."

David was inspired by the image of a weaned child. It perfectly communicated what he wanted to say. It was powerful enough that it could almost stand alone, needing little more to drive it home to hearts. He showcased it using a few carefully inspired words.

Psa 131:1 A Song of Ascents. Of David. LORD, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.

Psa 131:2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child *is* my soul within me.

Here comes my disclaimer for today. **Psalm 131 is not a teaching on *how* or *when* to wean a child.** It's not addressing the breast vs. bottle debate. I am not going to give my advice. If you are a nursing mom with an opinion, do not approach me.

Four things to immediately note:

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1. In his comparison, David assumed that a nursing infant is fussy, anxious, determined to get his or her next meal, with strong cries.
2. It is a positive step of growth to be weaned. At least once in the Bible it was celebrated as an important passage in life. In Genesis 21:8, we read, "So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned."
3. You should rather be a weaned child of God rather than remain an infant.
4. Being weaned, in the spiritual sense, is something the child of God can do for himself or herself. David said, "I have calmed and quieted **my** soul."

Can we talk about those seven words for a moment? "I have calmed and quieted **my** soul." I cannot think of better counsel for the times in which we are living.

COVID19, the SCOTUS hearings, the November 3rd election... The anxiety & noise can definitely interfere with our walk with the Lord.

Law enforcement is under attack. Do you know who cops shoot more than anyone else? Themselves. In 2019, 228 current or former officers died by suicide, compared with 172 in 2018. New York and California top the list.

More firefighters die at their own hands than in the line of duty.

Military suicides are up more than 20% in the COVID19 era, and they were already very high.

COVID19 has brought an increase in cases of spousal abuse.

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Secular experts in many disciplines are warning of increased mental illness and suicides over the next several years as a toll from the government's extreme COVID19 mandates.

Can we really say, "Calm and quiet your soul?"

If David could say it... *We can say it.* Yes; absolutely.

We can say it because Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. His resurrection seals the deal. He is the Savior of all men potentially; and definitely for those who believe.

Believe in Him and you are justified by God. He sees you in Jesus, just-as-if-you'd never sinned. God the Holy Spirit comes and indwells you. The power that raised Jesus from the dead is on-board in order for you to live a transformed life. You become a new creation; old things pass away, and all things become new. Your life is no longer your own - and that's a very good thing.

You are set free to serve Jesus by discovering spiritual gifts He gives, and performing the good works that He has prepared ahead of time for you to discover.

When you sin (and you will), He is faithful and just to forgive you your sin, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Where sin abounds, His grace much more abounds.

You have the Word of God, the Bible, in which you receive instruction in righteousness. Everything you need to live a godly life is in it.

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Whatever you read you are enabled to do by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

So, yeah: You **can** have “calm” and “quiet” if your soul is right with God by receiving Jesus.

It starts there. You must be saved. If not, we can certainly talk about things that can contribute to mental wellness like diet and exercise and moderation. We can hold debriefings to mitigate PTSD. We want to maintain a relationship with those nonbelievers who are hurting.

But it’s all a bandaid on cancer without the Savior.

Let’s read verse two again:

Psa 131:2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child *is* my soul within me.

Our immediate response is, “Tell me how.” We want the steps.

It doesn’t matter how many steps there are so long as they are clearly marked out. Seven promises; forty-days of purpose. There are so many programs to choose from; so many suggested methods to implement and follow.

Christians are right when we say, “Christianity is not a religion; *it’s a relationship.*” **But we default to “religion” whenever we follow programs.**

If you want some sort of relational guidelines, I will suggest two things:

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1. One - The Book of Acts says this: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (2:42).
2. Two - Look at it from the point of view of what Christians seem to do naturally: Pray, attend church (fellowship), read the Bible, and tell others about Jesus.

David doesn't tell you *how* he calmed and quieted his soul. He tells you something far more important: He tells you that you CAN do it. Believe it and learn how from Jesus as you walk with Him, obeying Him, submitting to Him, trusting Him.

"Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child *is* my soul within me." In our parenting, Pam and I followed a pretty strict schedule, and that included nursing. The kids didn't like it at all. They let us know that they didn't like it.

They let the neighbors know they didn't like it. If you could hear their cries close to scheduled feedings, you'd think we were waterboarding them. A few times, we nearly cracked under the pressure.

I know what you're thinking. What kind of a monster lets a baby cry? I say, "**They** are the monsters!"

Little ones want that milk. As cuddly-cute as a nursing baby is, with its occasional oooing and goo-gooing, it only wants and wants and wants.

It seeks only its own satisfaction. The baby don't care you are exhausted to the point of being disoriented. Got milk? Gotta have milk. Gimme milk.

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The “weaned child with his mother” is a different creature altogether. It’s like night and day. There are no outbursts of tortured cryings in order to be fed. There is calm; there is quiet.

David was experiencing this calm, this quiet. It wasn’t because nothing was turmoiling around him. We don’t know when he penned this, but most of his life’s seasons are enough to cause anxiety just reading about them. He was letting you know it’s possible, spiritually, to live in the eye of the storm. He said it was your choice.

Verse two is the theme and inspiration of this psalm. From there we now reach back to the opening verse, and (of course) forward to verse three.

Psa 131:1 A Song of Ascents. Of David. LORD, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.

One of the fifteen songs sung on annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem, this one strongly encouraged Israelites to enjoy their visit as a time of rest and refreshing.

And that’s your decision. In your circumstances, you can act like a weaning child, crying, fussing, whining. Or you can realize you are a weaned child of God. You can know the calm and quiet rest in your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

David said, “My heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.”

These aren’t the steps you take in order to be weaned. These are *results*, not *responsibilities*.

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We can see them as four characteristics of the weaned child of God.

Typically we'd look at these one at a time, and take a stab at defining them. I think it would be better to see them in action. Since David was speaking, we can look back into his life for an example.

David certainly could act like he was still a baby. But there were times you see him as the weaned child of God.

Saul was the first king of Israel, chosen by the people mostly because he could dunk. He was "tall Saul," described this way: "As handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else" (First Samuel 9:2).

He quickly proved himself a poor choice. God sent the prophet, Samuel, to anoint a young David as the king. For about thirteen years, Saul treated David as a fugitive, seeking to murder him.

On one occasion, when Saul and his men were chasing-down David, the king stopped, and went into a cave to relieve himself. He was unaware that David was hiding deeper in the cave. David's men came to the conclusion I would have come to: "Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you' " (First Samuel 24:4).

Then this happened:

And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's *robe*.

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And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD." So David restrained his servants with *these* words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on *his* way (v4-7).

You can find all four of the characteristics from our psalm in that story. And a lot more. AND - It's not the only time David spared Saul's life.

Now, a 'baby' David might have demanded his own way, and killed Saul. A weaned David could not.

The answer to our question is, "Of course I want to be a weaned child of God." Then be one. **You** "calm and quiet *your* soul." It's a one-step program.

Seem too easy? It's admittedly easier said than done. Nevertheless, David did it; and that means you can, too.

#2 - Do You Wait Like You're Weaned Or Still Weaning? (v3)

What is called an hour, but only lasts 45-50 minutes, and usually takes place once a week? "The Therapeutic Hour."

It is pretty standard among psychiatrists, psychologists, marriage and family counselors, and the like. It seems to have carried over into the church when there is counseling.

One professional said, "There does not seem to be a consensus on exactly when the 'therapeutic hour' was established, but it has remained the industry standard."

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One reason has nothing to do with any empirical data. It has to do with your insurance. It is how they base their reimbursements.

You can read Psalm 131 in under 25 seconds. Let it 'read' you this way:

- 👤 Start, as we did, with verse two as a reminder you can be like the weaned child - calm and quiet.
- 👤 Next, judge your actions and reactions in your circumstances by the characteristics listed in verse one.
- 👤 Finally, go about your business focusing on hope.

A quick word about judging yourself. It's easy to convince ourselves we do not have a haughty heart, or lofty eyes; that we are not concerning ourselves with great matters, or with things too profound.

Jonah was absolutely, totally backslidden. Yet he was sound asleep in the storm that threatened to sink the boat he was on; that threatened to kill the captain and crew.

I suggest that you let the Lord lead you to a passage of Scripture, preferably a narrative story, and ask yourself, "Who am I in this story?"

Both Jonah and Jesus slept in storms. Which are you? You can be completely in the right, but be reacting like the brother of the prodigal son.

You get the idea. When I am asked to meet with folks, I ask them if the Lord has given them any verses. I try to listen for the Lord to give me something from the Word for them. It could take a therapeutic hour. It could take 20 seconds.

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After spending time with the LORD, David gave his counsel to Israel:

Psa 131:3 O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.

“Hope in the LORD” is the certainty that He will keep every promise; that He will never change; that He can never, not ever, forsake you. Little things like that.

It is the certainty that to live is Christ, and to die is gain. It is knowing that to be absent from your body is to be present with the Lord. It is knowing we shall not all die, but that we will be transformed in the rapture.

It is understanding that the wicked will be raised to a judgment followed by eternal, conscious punishment.

David said hope was “from this time forth.” Forget the things that are behind you.

If you’ve fallen, get up and get back in the race, looking to finish strong. Go and sin no more.

Be sober; be vigilant. Preach the Word in season and out of season.

“Forever” is the last word. It’s a great word to meditate upon.

Do you ever have problems with your computer, or tablet, or smart phone? A lot of the time all you have to do is restart.

If I’m injured, ill, afflicted, assaulted, discouraged, depressed, overcome, overwhelmed, and the like... The word “forever” is the restart. I’m gonna live forever, free from all that, and every other struggle and suffering. I’m going to a place where everybody knows my name. I won’t cry anymore.

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The Bible describes our lives as a vapor that appears for a moment, then is gone. But we've seen that brevity can be profound, as in the speeches of Lincoln, King, and FDR.

We don't have the luxury of remaining nursing infants. Let's go forward weaned, calm and quiet, waiting in hope for the Lord.

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