

Up and down, *c'est la vie* ***Some thoughts based on Psalm 30***

Sometimes we feel as if we sit in the bottom of a deep well. All seems dark around us.

If only the timeline of our life was a straight line. But it is not. It is much more mountainous: with moutaintops and deep valleys.

The writer of Psalm 30 has an experience of really feeling down. It seems he was sick and he feared to die. But then, he cries to God, and he exclaims with joy: "You have drawn me up". This is the language of the bucket that is lowered deep in the well, but then it goes up filled with water.

Sometimes when we feel so miserable we have no power to pray. We cannot find the words. But God hears the whispers of your heart, even if words do not come easily. What are your problems these days? Try God.

The Psalmist reminds himself that before his troubles, he had been overconfident. He told himself, in his prosperity, "I shall never be moved".

In our day and age, we are told to be confident. Trust in yourself. You can do it. Your life is in your hands. You are able. You can reach your goal. Your want happiness, have it. Take it. You are entitled to a perfect life, so do it.

The Psalm-writer had that attitude, somehow, and had to learn a painful lesson. As we might learn it presently, with an unknown disease that upsets our life and our society.

In his need, the Psalmist learned the lesson. It was only God's favour that made him strong. As we realise that our life, health and sickness, is in God's hands

As the psalm-writer cried to God, the bucket from the bottom of the well was drawn up. He left the darkness below, and stood in the light of life again. Full of joy. God had healed him.

And I am sure, after a while, the man faced problems again. Another virus, or an economic crisis, or just an unexpected depression. And he had to cry to God from the darkness again.

That is our life. Up and down. Good days and bad days. Days when it feels that God is nearby, and days that we feel left alone.

But even in our darkness, He is nearby. You never have to cry very loud. A whisper is enough. "The LORD is near to all who call on him." (Psalm 145:18)

Rev Dr Jos Strengholt