

## Sermon Script; St. Andrews Presbyterian Church June 27, 2021

1. My message for today is mainly based on Psalm 30, and as I looked up my NRSV study Bible for some information, I found that the heading says this Psalm can be used as a Thanksgiving for Recovery from Grave Illness even though originally this Psalm is a song performed at the dedication of the temple by King David. After some meditation on the passage, I decided to stick to the first topic today, which is “Thanksgiving for Recovery from Grave Illness,” as the topic somehow reflects well our current pandemic situation today.
2. So, with that main topic in mind, may I ask you all? Have you ever had any experience of joyful recovery from grave illness in your life time? I mean a time in your life when you almost felt all the hope of recovery is gone, but still miraculously came back to life? As I look back in my life, I remember a time when I just felt like that.
3. About 30 some years ago, I was a little child in a small hillside town in South Korea. I was a very playful and active boy who made all kinds of troubles in the family and around the town. Have you seen or are you now seeing any troubled boys in your family or around your community? Put them all together, and then you will get me as the most troubled boy! I’m not sure I’ve told you about this before, but I was the boy, indeed the only boy, who set my hometown’s little mountain on fire twice. Not even once, but twice! And one time, I almost set my parents’ house on fire as well. That was me; truly playful and active boy around the town. All the town’s people knew me as a truly active and even “fiery” boy who can do anything anytime; some 30 years ago; thankfully not now!
4. Then, a real trouble happened to me personally. One day, when I woke up from the bed, very strangely and devastatingly, I couldn’t walk. I couldn’t even move a step on the foot. I had no idea, and my family had no idea as well. It just happened. I just couldn’t use my knees. So, what did my parents do? They took me to a small local hospital to examine me. But, the doctor said he had no idea as well, and encouraged my parents to take me to a bigger hospital in a big city for a more comprehensive diagnosis. But they couldn’t do that that day; it was too late (already late afternoon), and the big city’s hospital was far away. And I’m sure my parents were not well off financially back then. So, they took me back home that evening in sadness and desperation not knowing really what to do with me.
5. Then that evening, a concerned neighbor stopped by my parents and told them to take me to the town’s acupuncture practitioner immediately. He said, the acupuncturist may know what’s going on with me, like the blood stream problem in my knees. So, that’s exactly what my parents did. By the way, my parents were devout Christians, so they

prayed with me, I believe fervently, before going to the acupuncturist's house. And then, off we went there, and had the acupuncture therapy on my knees.

6. Then, what happened? Was I able to walk and jump immediately? After the therapy? Or after some 30 minutes later? No. It really didn't happen. I couldn't really walk at all just like before. It was almost the same. Then, you can guess, my mother started crying in deep sorrow and devastation. There was no real hope, and nobody really could help me.
7. But then we had to go home and take rest. So, we went home and went to the bed, having no idea what's going to happen to me next day.
8. Then, guess what? The next morning, when the Sun was already arising on the horizon, when I woke up that morning, I knew I could stand. Sure, I couldn't jump around the house yet, but I could stand and I could walk at least. A miracle; a miracle happened. The healing and recovery I didn't really expect. That really happened. Seeing my recovery, my mother, who was perhaps praying for my recovery the entire night, she cried again, but she didn't forget to say, "Thank you, God. Thank you, God. This is your work. This miracle is your work."
9. I guess I spent too much time on my story today, but, if you don't mind, I hope that's OK because that's exactly what seems to be happening in the Psalm passage given for us today. In a couple of places, the Psalmist expresses her ultimate devastation in her very sorrowful situation—the sorrowful situation could be political, psychological, mental, or medical. We don't know exactly what is going on with the Psalmist. Yet, two things are so sure that; first, the Psalmist knows that she has no immediate solution for the situation. And the situation is just out of her control and her imagination. She does not have any power on it. Second, then, most importantly, the Psalmist realizes that God, the mysterious YHWH, the almighty Lord can make possible the healing and recovery she really needs. Simply put, she knows that God the almighty can be her unique, powerful source for recovery.
10. Well, you may not understand the situation very well at this point, as I didn't at first. So, let me break it down a little bit more since the interpretive process helped me a lot as well. As we read this Psalm passage, we must bear in mind the historical and sociological context of the Psalmist, especially the medical context of her day. As we could easily imagine, in the ancient world, when you get sick or gravely ill, you can't go to a doctor or a hospital. Why is that? Because simply there was no real doctor or modern hospital during the time. Besides, it was the time when people believed the pandemic or any grave illness was the wrath of God or at least caused by the evil power. Against God's wrath or evil power, there was nothing you could do really, except for prayer. Of course, there were some physicians available during the time, but guess what? Only the super-rich, like Kings and queens and other nobilities only could get a visit from real physicians. Otherwise, when you got sick, there was nothing you could do really. For common folks, all they could do was pray, pray, and pray to God, who gives and takes

away life. You simply rely on God's mercy and healing and miraculous recovery by the divine intervention. That is the real context of this Psalmist whom we meet today. The Psalmist is simply saying that God, I trust you, I believe you, I rely on you, so help me oh God, help me oh God! You are the only one who can save me!

11. So, when the eventual healing and recovery happens, all the Psalmist could do and should do was what? Praise(!), praise(!), and praise(!). Because it's not me, because it is not someone else who healed me, but because de facto it was God the Almighty, who truly healed me and saved me. That's why in this short passage, YHWH or Yahweh or the LORD (all capitalized) is used 10 times! The most holy name of God in ancient Israel, YHWH or Yahweh is invoked not one time, not twice, not three times, not five times, not even seven or eight times, but the perfect number 10 times! God, you did it! God, you made it! So, I praise, so I praise. So, I dance around; see verse 11! I know we Presbyterians never dance around in the church, but "come on," we can dance before God in great joy, like David who danced before the art of God with all his heart! (Pause)
12. It was just only a couple of months ago when I got the COVID vaccine second dose. I'm not sure about you, but when I got the first does, I felt really good; totally fine. No severe reaction I could feel. So, I was like, "Come on, people, get vaccinated; it's safe and no side effect! But, the second dose was a different story. I got the second dose with my wife in the morning around 11 o'clock. Even some hours after the second shot, we're totally fine. So I said to myself, "Maybe, I'm very healthy. My body's suppressing any reaction really well. I feel so good." It was around 7 o'clock the same evening, however, when I found my entire body shivering and aching, and I was feeling quite dizzy, shaking, and woozy. I was staggering literally. Then, my wife, she started crying a bit thanks to body aching and dehydration. She went to bed at around 8 o'clock and never got out it until the next morning 10 o'clock. So, I even called a 24 hour nurse assistant, saying "Is this really OK? Will we get better?" She said, "Yeah, most cases."
13. Thankfully it was Saturday; so my wife could rest fully.
14. Now, coming back to me, I was in the bed the whole night, again, shivering and aching, and was feeling quite dizzy, shaking, and woozy, tossing and turning the whole night. Literally, the whole night in the bed! To be honest, I complained a lot about the vaccine in the bed, saying "Come on, people out there, please produce a better vaccine. What is this, huh?" Then suddenly, in the midst of lots of grumbling and complaining, I found myself praying, "Oh Lord, would you save me? Would you take care of me and my wife? Nothing we could do at this point. Would you almighty Lord take care of us?"
15. Then, the next morning (indeed, two days later for my wife), I found myself totally fine. No more dizziness, no more shaking, and no more tossing and turning. What should I do in that moment? One thing, just one thing. "Thank you, God. Thank you, God. You really took care of us. You really saved us. And thank you God for the vaccine. The people who

produced it. Thank you for helping them do good work. Thank you, God! I praise you. I dance around your presence!

16. So, the Psalmist praises God for his healing and recovery in today's passage. Thank you, God, you did it. You did a good job; thank you, Lord.
17. Of course, we all know, and I believe, the Psalmist would know that sickness or illness can happen again, and God may not heal all diseases we may go through now. But still, I believe she knew, and I want to believe, God is still good, and God still takes care of us all, no matter what, and in all circumstances.
18. So, the Psalmist praises God, dances around before God, and give all the glory to God. And I believe that's exactly what we need to do this morning; praise God, dance around, and give glory to God alone and only. Praise God, God is so good. Amen!