

A weaned Child

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm 131 where David says, Lord my heart is not haughty nor my eyes lofty neither do I exercise myself in great matters or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother. My soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever. At the end of verse 2 the psalmist says, my soul is even as a weaned child. My soul is like a weaned child. Let us then look at this lovely little Psalm of David and it's one of the songs of ascents sung by the Israelites as they went to worship in the temple at Jerusalem. Now way back in Psalm 24 David asks, who will ascend into the hill of the Lord and who will stand in his holy place? That's his question and he answers his own question by saying, as we were singing there at the opening of the service, he who has a pure heart and clean hands and who has not lifted up his soul to vanity or to an idol that has sworn or sworn deceitfully. Now that was his stipulation in order to ascend in a proper way to the hill of God and to stand in God's holy place.

And here in Psalm 131 he has fulfilled his own stipulation. He says, Lord my heart is not haughty, my eyes are not lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters or in things too high for me and so on. Now this is one of the shortest psalms in the book but it's perhaps one of the longest psalms to learn experimentally. Its contents require that we go on learning until travelling days are done.

And the psalm speaks about a child, a little wean child and yet at the same time it reflects spiritual maturity. It describes a man, the maturity of a man in Christ. It describes a Christian believer and marks him out as such. Now the second verse and the second part, the second part of the second verse lies at the root of all that's expressed in this little psalm. The text is the hub from which the rest of the psalm proceeds just as the spokes of a wheel proceed outwards from its hub. And here's what the psalmist says, my soul is even as a wean child. And with that as the text, then the rest of the psalm proceeds from that, these words. So we notice first of all the meaning of this testimony of our text.

My soul is like a wean child, the meaning of it. But it is a testimony. Here David testifies to his being weaned. Let us then see what this means for ourselves in a spiritual sense. My soul, he says, has been weaned. Now to weaned is to detach from, to take away from, to separate from. And to be weaned, to be weaned is to be detached from something for something better. When a young person is taken off or comes off drugs or alcohol, and alcohol is the most common drug of all, then it could be said that he is weaned from his drugs or from his alcohol. But when the word is applied to infants, then it comes into its own. Because this has universal application. A child is weaned when it's taken from being fed by its mother and on its mother's milk to being fed on solids. And this is universal. It happens to every child.

Now the idea here therefore is that of spiritual weaning, spiritual detachment. And this is what David testifies to in this simile. My soul is like a weaned child. Yes, but so far as we are concerned, weaned from what? What is the food from which we all need to be weaned? Now the answer to this question brings us into the very heart of the gospel and to these two doctrines of the gospel, these two doctrines of the Christian faith, conversion and sanctification. One is initial and the other is continuing. And both have to do with our being weaned. First of all then, there is the initial weaning weaning or detachment from something in order to be joined to something better.

[5 : 44] Dr. Moody Stewart, who was many years ago a pre-church minister in this city, says that the first weaning, the initial weaning, is the grand event of a man's history.

And what is that event? What is that grand event? It is when he is weaned from all that condemns his soul to die.

From all that has brought spiritual death and will bring eternal death from him. He is weaned when he is taken from all that is detrimental to the well-being of his soul.

And that weaning is in fact his conversion. Weaning is the work of conversion and that's the first work.

That's the initial weaning, the work of conversion. That's how a person becomes detached from that trinity of evil, the world, the world, the flesh, and the devil. And to escape from and be delivered from their perilous influences is the initial weaning that is the work of conversion to Christ and the beginning of the life of faith.

[7 : 06] Take for example the world, that first part of the trinity of evil, the world. Well, the world, or the things of the world, is our first and only food. The only food we know of, apart from physical food.

It's the natural food for those in a state of nature. And that's what every one of us is. We all, we are all in a state of nature. We have come into this world and we are in a state of nature and we take food that is in accordance with that state. The world and the things of the world.

And that means that we are living by bread alone. And Jesus said we mustn't do that. Man cannot live by bread alone. If he does, he's in a state of nature and he's laying hold upon the food that belongs to that lost estate. It's living according to the world's standards.

It's being in agreement with the world's outlook. It's feeding on ashes. It's also drinking. Not at the fountainhead where the water is clear as crystal proceeding from the throne of God.

But drinking at the world's stagnant pools and taking into our spiritual nature the muddy and polluted water of this peasant evil world.

[8 : 30] From that we need to be weaned. And the weaning work is the work of conversion. For it's what Jeremiah calls turning to and drinking from cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord, but ah, the waters failed. Even as I stooped to drink they fled and mocked me as I wailed. Now that's the testimony of the man who has learned his lesson and who has been weaned from the world.

From food that is but ashes and from drink that is but mud or muddy and polluted. And as surely as a child has to be weaned and given food other than its mother's milk, so the sinner has to be detached from and separated from all that not only stunts his growth, but all that accelerates his death.

And until we are weaned from the world, then our death is being accelerated by the very food we eat, the things of this world that not just stunt our growth but accelerate, our ultimate death.

And that weaning is the work of conversion. And what is true of the first part of the trinity of evil is also true of the other two parts.

[10 : 06] Not only the world but the flesh and the devil. Now to be weaned from the flesh means that we are no longer living after the flesh.

For as we read there in Romans 8, if we live after the flesh we shall die. It means we are no longer living according to our sinful human nature and are no longer controlled by our sinful human nature but are controlled by the Holy Spirit.

And as Paul says again in Romans 8, those who live after the flesh mind the things of the flesh. That is their chief interest.

That those who live by the Holy Spirit and pattern their lives according to the Holy Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. They have been weaned.

They have been weaned. They have been weaned from the mind of the flesh to the mind of the Spirit. And have been detached from that which condemns their soul to die. Now to be weaned from the devil.

[11 : 15] That third part of the trinity of evil. Means that we are no, that he is no longer our father. And that we are no longer in his family.

Because we are weaned it means that we are in another family. of whom God is the father. Now the actual work of weaning.

Of separating us. Of detaching us. From that which is detrimental to us. That is not our work. It is the work of God. And if he does not do it.

It will never be done at all. And we will remain to the end of the day. Unweaned. Still dependent on the food that is not for us.

And that can only destroy us. And the work of initial weaning. Is nothing more or less. Than that of radical conversion.

[12 : 18] To the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the initial weaning. David could say. My soul is like a weaned child. Can we say that?

If we can. It's because we've been converted. And if we haven't been converted. We can't say that. Because our soul is not like a weaned child. Until it's weaned.

And taken away. From that. Which is destructive. And destroying. And detrimental. And the other thing is this. That not only is the weaning initial.

But there's a continuing weaning. A continuing weaning. In fact. A daily weaning. For as long as life lasts. And that concerns our sanctification.

The second doctrine I mentioned. An old Christian minister. Said. When I read here. My soul is even as a weaned child.

[13 : 17] I feel like changing the last syllable. And say. My soul is like a weaning child. For I am not yet weaned.

I'm in the process of it. Now of course. We won't be completely weaned. And detached. From the world. And the things of the world. Until the moment of death.

When our soul has been perfect in holiness. But if our conversant. The initial weaning. Is a genuine thing. Then we have already.

Passed from death unto life. And yet. That is only the beginning. For what conversant. Initiates. Sanctification carries on.

Sanctification is a lifelong work. It is not a crisis. Sanctification is a process. In which as our catechism says. We die more and more unto sin.

[14 : 15] And live more and more unto righteousness. It's a process. And not a crisis. And it's something that goes on. Until the end of the road.

Now if conversant. Conversant. Initiates the work. Of weaning. Then sanctification. Makes that work. More obviously so. So that we are seen to die.

More and more unto sin. And to live. And to righteousness. And if conversant. And if conversant. Puts us. For the first time.

In the battle line. As it does. We know nothing of a spiritual battle. Until that conversant. We put into the battle line. Then sanctification. Enables us. To fight. The good fight of faith.

And to lay hold. Upon eternal life. If conversant. Makes us. Like a little child. And puts us. Among the children of God.

[15 : 13] Then sanctification. Enables us. To become. A man. In Christ. A mature. Person. Growing in grace. And being dependent.

More and more. On our heavenly father. Ought to be weaned. In both these senses.

Made children of God. By conversant. And yet. Not forever. Little children. Like newborn babes. Not forever like that. But growing children.

Growing. Until we reach. The measure. Of the stature. Of the fullness of Christ. And that will never be.

Until first of all. We're able to say. My soul. Is even as a weaned child. What a beautiful description.

[16 : 11] Of this. Of us. Of the saving change. That comes into a sinner's heart. And life. What a beautiful description. Like a weaned child. Detached from.

Taken away from. Taken off. The drugs. And given something. That is so rich. And pure. And good. That's the first thing then.

The meaning of it. Now secondly. We have the evidence of it. And we notice. Two evidences here. That would indicate. That this work.

Has taken place. And is taking place. Through the work of sanctification. We have. Two evidences. One in verse one. One. And the second. In the first part.

Of verse two. Now these of course. Are not the sum total. Of evidences. Of a saving change. In any person's life. They are simply. Samples from stock.

[17 : 09] And there's two of them. The first. In verse one. Is humility. And the second. In the first part. Of verse two. Is contentedness.

You see. He says. Lord. My heart. My heart.

Is not haughty. Nor my eyes. Lofty. Neither do I. Exercise myself. In great matters. Or in things. Too high. For me. We have here.

In verse one. Then. The absence. Of pride. My heart. Is not haughty. Says this man. Says the psalmist. Nor are my eyes. Lofty. Now.

This might. Well seem. A contradiction. In terms. For. Anyone to say. I'm not proud. Could be construed.

[18 : 06] Very easily. As being. Just that. But David. Is not saying. Here. If we. If we. Had time to examine. The background. To this psalm.

David is not saying. Here. That there was no. Pride left. In him. And that he. That he was. Free of all. Pride. And haughtiness. And lofty. Eyes. And so on. He's not saying.

That. Here. He is appealing. To God. About. A particular. Accusation. That was. Laid against him. By his enemies. And the accusation.

Was. That he was. Aspiring. After a kingdom. And if that. Wasn't pride. Then what was. For a man. Like David. A shepherd boy.

Aspiring. After a kingdom. And even. His own brother. Accused him. Of that kind of thing. And what David. Is saying to the Lord. Here is this. That it's not true. I have no such aspirations.

[19 : 03] I have no such ambitions. My soul. Far from being ambitious. Is just like a weaned child. What ambitions. Does a weaned child have.

Well the more weaned. We are. The more humbleness. Of heart. We will have. And the more.

The sin. Of pride. Will be subdued. Furthermore. We will not concern ourselves. As the psalmist says. In verse one. We will not concern ourselves.

With matters. With great matters. Or things. Beyond us. With which we are not fitted to cope. Neither do I exercise myself.

In great matters. Or in things. Too high for me. My dear friends. It's good to know. Our own limitations. And to curb. Our native. Ambitiousness.

[19 : 58] It's good to remember. What Jeremiah said to Baruch. He said. Seekest thou great things for yourself. Seek them not.

You are a weaned child. You belong to me. You will no longer pattern your life. After the world. And the world's ambitiousness. Nor do you let your ambition.

Mock your useful toil. I resist the proud. And the inordinately ambitious. And I give grace. To the humble.

Someone has said that. The great destroyer. Of the good works of a Christian. Is his ambition. Ambition for great works. That is.

Concerning himself. With what he is not capable of handling. Without losing his own soul. Now to concern ourselves.

[21 : 00] With what we haven't the ability to handle. Reaching beyond ourselves. Dealing in matters too high for us. That indicates pride and haughtiness.

And a lofty look as it were. And we cannot do that kind of thing. Without losing our soul. Now that's the first evidence. Humility. Humility. And humility.

Is the repentance of pride. Humility. Is pride. Repenting. And.

Where there is. True repentance. There will be. True humility. For humility. Is the repentance of pride.

That's the first evidence. Humility in verse 1. And then the second evidence. Of being. Weaned. And taken away from what's detrimental. Is contentedness.

[22 : 00] In verse 2. The psalmist says. Surely I have behaved. And quieted myself. As a child that is weaned of its mother.

Surely I have behaved. And quieted myself. The NIV has it. I have stilled. And quieted my soul. The American Standard Bible has it.

I have composed. And quieted my soul. The good news Bible has. I am content. And at peace. Now the general idea.

Is one of contentedness. Of being still. And quiet within ourselves. Be still my soul. Why? The Lord is on thy side.

Bear patiently the cross. Of grief and pain. Lead to thy God. To order. And provide. In every change. He faithful.

[22 : 59] Will remain. I have learned. Says Paul. In whatsoever state I am. Therewith to be content. Godliness.

With contentment. Is great gain. So the. Weaned child of God. Is no longer fretting. Or certainly.

Doesn't need to be fretting. For he has found something. That quiets his soul. Not a soporific. But he has found something.

That quiets his soul. He has been taken off. The ashes. That were his food. For so many years. And has been given. Heavenly manna. So the Christian believer.

Can say. Thou oh Christ. Art all I want. More than all. In thee I find. Benjamin Franklin says that.

- [23 : 57] Contentment. Is a high attainment. It makes the poor man. Rich. While discontent. Makes the rich man. Poor. What a beautiful evidence. Evidence. Of being weaned. It makes the poor man.
- Rich. With the richness. Of contentment. And with the richness. Of humility. These are about two. Just from the stock.
- As it were. Evidences. Of having been weaned. By the work of conversion. And the ongoing work of sanctification. The meaning of it.
- The evidences of it. And now finally. The way to it. The way to it. Which I take to be. Perhaps one of the meanings of verse three.
- [24 : 54] Let Israel. Hope. In the Lord. From henceforth. And forever. It's true that hope. Could be an additional evidence. Of having been weaned.
- But it's also true. That it can be taken. As the way. To weaning. That we hope. In the Lord. Now let me make two points here. First. The fact.
- That there's a way. To weaning. Means. That it is attainable. It's attainable. The attainments of grace. Are not.
- The monopoly. Of one man. Not even David. Nor are they. The monopoly. Of any one age. Weaning. Is what.
- True religion. Does for. All who believe. Everywhere. In every age. And if religion. Does not do that. For us. Then it's not. True religion.
- [25 : 51] We need a religion. That weans us away. From all that destroys us. And that's what. True religion does. And it indicates that. Weaning.
- Is attainable. It's not confined to David. Or to David's day. He says. My soul. Is like a weaned child. A Christian. To the very end. Of the age. Can say precisely.
- The same thing. My soul. Is like a weaned child. It's attainable. That's the first thing. Let's make sure of that. That we're not chasing. Shadows here. The attainment.
- Of grace. Are not the monopoly. Of one man. Or of one age. And then the other thing. Is this. That the particular way. To it. To that attainment.
- Is referred to here. Where. The psalmist says. Let Israel. Hope. In the Lord. From henceforth. And forever. Now.
- [26 : 46] We read. In Romans 8. And verse 24. That. We are saved. By hope. But what that phrase. Really means. Is.
- That. In hope. We are saved. That's a different thing. There's only one way. By which we're saved. That's not by hope. But by faith. By faith alone.
- Through grace alone. Through grace alone. Hope. And yet. The salvation. That faith brings. To us. Is conditioned. By hope. And is inseparable.
- From hope. In hope. We are saved. We are saved. By faith. And that faith. Brings us. Into the hope. And the hopefulness. And the.
- And the realization. Of salvation. Of salvation. In Christ. Richard Sibbes. An old Puritan. Says. That the nature. Of hope. Is to expect.
- [27 : 42] What faith believes. The nature of hope. Is to expect. What faith. Believes. So when we believe.
- In Jesus. Our believing. Gives us. The confident expectation. And that's what hope is. The confident expectation. That God will do.
- What faith requests. And what faith pleads. And when we take ourselves. To Jesus. In faith. It's with the sure. And certain confidence.

That he will begin. And continue. The process. Described here. By the psalmist. Of being. Like a weaned. Child. And if. Our hope. Our trustfulness. In the Lord. Brings us.

[28 : 36] To this experience. Of being a weaned. Child. Then will you notice this. That we will not. Be content. Until others. Know it for themselves.

Because you see. What the psalmist says here. Let Israel hope. My soul is like a weaned. Child. But I want Israel. To know what it is. To be like a weaned. Child.

Let Israel. Hope in the Lord. From henceforth. And forever. Through my faith. And hope in the Lord. Says David. My soul is like a weaned.

Child. Let Israel have that kind of. Believing hope. Hope. That faith. That blossoms into hope. That faith. That gives us salvation.

That's conditioned by hope. And inseparable from hope. Let Israel. Have that kind of hope. In the Lord. So that they. Like me. Says David.

[29 : 30] Would be like a weaned. Child. Well may these things. Be of some help to ourselves. This evening. Let us make certain. That we are weaned.

Spiritually. Through the work of conversion. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Being saved in hope. Through faith in Christ. And then through his gracious work.

By his spirit in us. In sanctification. Going on. And on. Dying more and more unto sin. Becoming more and more. Obviously. His weaned child.

Until the weaning. Is complete. At the moment of death. When the soul. Is made perfect in holiness. And immediately passes.

Into glory. Let us pray. Our gracious God. And our heavenly father.

[30 : 29] We give thanks to thee. For this psalm. And for its message. To us. We thank thee. For. This message. Regarding weaning. It's a spiritual concept. It's something that we. Have to face. For ourselves.

And we pray. That we would know. What this means. In both senses. Initially. Through conversion. And continually. Through.

The sanctifying work. Of thy Holy Spirit. So that we would. Grow more and more. Like the children of God. And be. Like Jesus himself.

Look down upon us. We pray. As we. Think of these things. And may the desire be. Set a foot in our hearts.

[31 : 26] To become more. And more. Weaned. And separated from the. Things that separate us. From thee. From the ashes.

On which we feed so often. From the muddy waters. From which. We can drink. Oh Lord. Deliver us. From all.

Such pollution. And from all. That is so detrimental. To our growth and grace. May thy Holy Spirit. Work. Mightily.

In our souls. Enabling us. To die. And to sin. And unto self. And to live. And to righteousness. To the.

And to the. To the. To the. For imputed righteousness. Charged to our account. Through faith in Christ. And imputed righteousness.

[32 : 21] Through the work of the spirit. In the hearts of believers. Come to us Lord. We pray. That we would. Be. Good witnesses.

Jesus. And bring. Honor and glory. To thy name. For the opportunities. Given us today. Of public worship. We give thanks to thee.

And as the day ends. And. We. Pray that. Thou will. Follow all that has been done. With thy blessing. Not. Here.

Only. But. Everywhere. Wherever the gospel. Has been preached. Wherever a work. For Christ. Has been initiated. Lord. Follow the. Efforts made.

Made. By. Men. In their human weakness. And frailty. Follow the work. By the. Inhuman.

[33 : 17] Of the spirit. By the power. Of the spirit. Refreshing. Renewing. Reviving. And watering. So that the seed sown.

May take root. Down. May take root. Deeply. And bring forth. Fruit. To thy glory. Hear us. We humbly pray. Remember us.

In all our activities. Be with us. Throughout this week. Upon which we have entered. With its responsibilities. Its privileges. Its difficulties. Its testings.

We don't know what. But thou know us all. And we gladly. Commit ourselves now. To thee. In Jesus name.

Amen.