

## Sermon Title: All God's Children Can Dance

Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington

Week of June 6, 2010

### Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

**Big Idea:** Christians need to be able to freely express the joy they feel without restraint. Worship happens when God is celebrated in the heart and in the mind. An outward expression of that joy may include the lifting of hands, sing, or dancing. Christians experience a special communion with God when the two are aligned.

#### *Icebreaker*

#### *Sermon Text:*

<sup>1</sup> I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me. You refused to let my enemies triumph over me. <sup>2</sup> O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health. <sup>3</sup> You brought me up from the grave, LORD. You kept me from falling into the pit of death. <sup>4</sup> Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones! Praise his holy name. <sup>5</sup> For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime!

Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. <sup>6</sup> When I was prosperous, I said, "Nothing can stop me now!" <sup>7</sup> Your favor, O LORD, made me as secure as a mountain.

Then you turned away from me, and I was shattered. <sup>8</sup> I cried out to you, O LORD. I begged the Lord for mercy, saying, <sup>9</sup> "What will you gain if I die, if I sink into the grave?

Can my dust praise you? Can it tell of your faithfulness?

<sup>10</sup> Hear me, LORD, and have mercy on me. Help me, O LORD." <sup>11</sup> You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy, <sup>12</sup> that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever! - Psalm 30: 1-12

One of the most popular semi-reality shows is *Dancing with the Stars*. The 10th season just wrapped up last month. The idea for

the show is to have celebrity people who are not dancers to partner with professional dancers to come up with dance moves to compete with other such couples. And of course, there are judges that make all kinds of unkind comments but what makes this a reality show is that you also get to register your votes by calling in to express your approval.

*Dancing with the Stars* has spawned spin-offs and movies that focus on dance moves. But what is surprising is that there's a genuine dancing sensation sweeping the nation. Americans are not just watching these shows; they are actually doing it on the dance floor. At weddings these days, there are fewer spectators and more participants on the dance floor. There's always time set aside for ballroom dancing. We are not just doing the electric slide or YMCA anymore, but people today know how to tango, swing and do all kinds of fancy moves. However some of us just don't dance!

Just because some of us don't like to participate in the particular form of public humiliation our culture designates as dancing doesn't mean that we can exclude ourselves from the kind of dancing God has intentionally choreographed for creation.

There's a soul movement and a spiritual rhythm that pulses throughout the universe, inviting us to participate in a dance, in a joyful response to life, in a resonance with love. Jumping into this dance doesn't take any special skills or shoes. It doesn't require a good band or a flawless floor. Anyone can join in at any time as long as they have access to the one necessary attribute. Joy!

1. Reread the Psalm 30 1-12. What stands out to you from this Psalm? Discuss

2. Reread the last two sentences of this passage. The term worship is such a difficult word to define. If you ask five different people you will probably get five different answers. Some will think worship is church, some will think it is a style of music, some will think it is singing, some will think it is praising God, and others won't even have an answer. Read the synonyms for worship and define worship in your own words:

- a) Awe
- b) Respect
- c) Service
- d) Love
- e) Admire
- f) Bow Down

The Old Testament word for worship is *Shachah* which means to “to bow down oneself”; “to prostrate oneself as an act of respect to a superior being”; “a way of showing submission.” The New Testament word for worship is *Latreia* which means “to serve a superior.” Therefore if we take these two terms for worship and combine them together we would get “the act of surrendering your life to your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

3. Read the following eight verses and write down some of the different ways people worshiped in the Old Testament.

Psalm 34:1  
 Psalm 47:6  
 Psalm 149:3  
 150: 3-5  
 Psalm 27:6  
 95:6  
 Psalm 63:4  
 Psalm 47:1

Psalm  
 Psalm

There are four different ways the English term dancing is used in the Bible.

- a) There is dancing as unto the Lord. [Exodus 15:20; 2 Samuel 6:14; 6:16; I Chronicles 15:29; Psalms 149:3; 150:4] This dancing is nothing more than leaping and rejoicing in the Lord for His goodness and victories and blessings
- b) There is dancing as in contrast to mourning or sorrow. It is viewed as a type of rejoicing and celebrating. [Judges 11:34; 21:21; 21:23; 1 Samuel 18:6; 21:11; 29:5; Ecclesiastes 3:4; Psalms 30:11; Jeremiah 31:4; 31:13; Lamentations 5:15; Matthew 11:17; Luke 7:32; Luke 15:25]
- c) There is dancing that is sinful and evil and even leads to more sin and more evil. [Exodus 32:19; 1 Samuel 30:16; Job 21:11; Matthew 14:6; Mark 6:22]
- d) There is dancing that was applied to an animal. [Isaiah 13:21]

4. C.S. Lewis wrote, “A man can no more diminish God’s glory by refusing to worship than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word ‘darkness’ on the walls of his cell.” Therefore our only reasonable response to who God is and what He has done in our lives is to give Him our lives as an act of worship. How do you do that each day in practical ways? Explain the different shapes that your worship takes.

5. When was the last time that you danced and celebrated with all your might before Him? Is this a practice that is fairly common or uncommon in your life? Explain.

**Taking it Home**

1. Set a time and place each day this week to meet with God in His Word and reflect upon the text found in Psalm 30:1-12. The frequency and duration of these meetings are between you and your Creator. It may be helpful for you to consider the text in several different translations.

This week, consider making *lectio divina* a part of your time with God.

*Lectio Divina* is Latin for “spiritual reading.” It represents an early technique of prayer intended to achieve communion with God, as well as providing special spiritual insights.

It is a way of praying with Scripture that calls one to study, ponder, listen and, finally, pray from God’s Word. The key is formational reading and listening, not informational Bible study. There are many ways to actually practice *Lectio Divina*, but we’d like you to try the following:

#### **Read**

Read the passage aloud, slowly and gently. As you hear the words, pay attention to any particular words or phrases that stand out to you or capture your attention.

#### **Read again and share**

Read the passage aloud again, but this time as you read ask God silently why He might have wanted you to pay particular attention to the word or phrase you identified in part one. Share the word or phrase that stood out to you.

#### **Read one more time and share**

Read it aloud one more time while asking God to reveal what He wants you to do or how he wants you to respond to Him through the thoughts raised from the scripture.

#### **Prayer Requests and Praises:**

How can the group pray for you today? What outward expressions of worship might strengthen your communion with God?