

Sacred and God

1Kings 8: 1, 6-11, 22-30 Psalm 84 Pastor Lentz
Radcliff Presbyterian Church

The Kings passage shows us a wonderful example of treating things and a place as sacred. The Psalm shows us the emotions that tend to go with treating something as sacred. Together they offer us ways of heightening our relationship with God and getting to feel better along the way. This is a path that promises us genuine benefits as well as opportunities. In spite of having seen these passages many times before this is the first time that I understood them in this way. I feel very blessed and hope that you do as well as you hear about sacredness and how it is a gift to us from God to help us in all sorts of ways.

Sacredness means to be set apart. It means to be set apart for special use. By doing that we then change how we think, and feel in its presence. By doing it we get blessed in all sorts of ways. It is what we are encouraged to do throughout scripture.

Solomon was praying for the area the Arc of the Covenant would occupy. He was being respectful to the Arc, as well as the Temple, God and all who would worship there. He was inviting all who heard him and all who read the words to enter into a willingness to also appreciate that space as sacred. By doing so he was inviting everyone who heard him as well as himself to go deeply into a mental state of recognizing that particular space as sacred. What he was doing was what he was encouraged to do by scripture. I didn't understand when I was younger that what he was doing was generating a positive trance and inviting others into it as well.

I hope that I can explain how it makes sense to me today. A trance is a state of focused attention. Anytime that we are focused upon one thing we are also not focused upon other things. So something becomes foreground, and something becomes background anytime we are

focused upon anything. The big difference comes when we are thinking about two or more things at once. When those things are good things and happy things we can then think about other things in similar ways. It works the same when thinking of not so pleasant things and then thinking of other things the association can also make a person not enjoy what was ok. So if you are in a good mood and someone next to you tells you something unpleasant, you might be able to brush it off easily. However, if there was pain, fear, hurt or shame and someone told you the same thing it would have a more powerful impact. However, when the thought we are beginning with isn't just a good one or not but a sacred one where we can also think of God's presence it changes everything. It then brings into our thinking God's presence while we do other things.

When dwelling on fear, anger, hurt, or shame a person can be attempting to think of God but it would be more difficult if they were trying to not think of those things, but easier if they included them in, and then talked to God about it. I like to refer to positive and negative trance. Positive trance is when we are aware of all that is that we can be aware of and negative trance occurs when a person is trying to not think of be aware of something. It is narrowing what they know or think about whereas a positive trance is willing to acknowledge even things that are not pleasant, and then more on to more pleasant things. It assumes that you can. The negative way tries to but most often fails and even negates other positive things.

Positive trances are mindsets that encourage us to recognize things as they are and to also recognize our strengths, and our connections to God and to other people. They help us to make good decisions, to avoid sin, to connect with others and to feel good about ourselves. Negative trances on the other hand only accentuate a person's fears, hurts, sadness or anger, and often block them person from the strengths they have that would help them. People in a negative trance are more likely to sin, to make dysfunctional decisions, and to treat others with such disregard that people want to avoid them.

By focusing on the sacredness of a place we are setting that place aside for special purpose. However, when we think about it we are also having to think about that and the presence of God, at the same time. When you do that you are very likely to go into a positive trance where you can become more aware of options that God has for you, as well as ones that you already have but haven't been in touch with.

People who survive illness that by all scientific analysis would say they shouldn't are often in a positive trance where no matter what they do it is right. If I really trust God from a place of positive trance then whether I heal, or not then I know that I am ok. That is a positive trance type of concept where no matter what I do it is right. Scripture invites us to that type of thinking and guess what? That is the way to have the most healing naturally in your body, and the way to get the most out of life. Whether you want to be in a trance or not is not the question. We are going to be, in some sort of mindset trance off and on throughout life, because that is simply a fact of life. We do get to choose whether it is going to be in a positive one or not. What we call no trance is probably so common to us that we don't recognize how that way of thinking is limiting or expanding what we see and can see.

When you get up and pray for all the people who you are going to come into contact with during the day, your day will go better. It is simply not only that God will help your day to go better but it will anyway because by you praying first thing and then being aware of that prayer throughout the day you will be very likely to be at least a portion of the day in a positive trance. You will have in a sense made your day sacred. The same is true of the person who gets up and says something negative about the day, and what all they are afraid to see or experience that day, without praying. They are more likely to have things not go well.

However, if that same person who was afraid, got up and told God about how afraid they were and how they needed help because they were going to be dealing with difficult things that day, not only would God be with them in a positive way. They would also be far more aware

of their strengths, options, and connections to others. They would likely be in a positive trance and they would have also made their day sacred by praying about how they felt, instead of trying to not feel what they were feeling.

When was the last time that you tried to not feel what you were feeling? It didn't work very well did it? It wouldn't because of all sorts of reasons but also because it is inviting a negative trance.

A more effective method of dealing with a feeling that we don't want is to tell God about it. Acknowledge the feeling and ask God to help you to get on with your day, and be more kind, or a better person in some way. It is very likely that in a short while that you would recognize that the feeling you didn't want has already disappeared, at which point you can become thankful to God.

The Psalmist is upbeat, full of praise for God. When we enter into that mindset that Solomon was in we can also become more upbeat and full of praise of God. It is acknowledging what is and also choosing to focus upon the positive things instead of what isn't so good. When we like the Psalmist are looking for any and all ways to praise God's house then our praise will also impact us. Our love, devotion and praise of God impacts us and helps us in ways that are beyond the scope of any few words that I could say right now.

The passage in 1Kings goes on and describes a mystical event that was implied came from God. When we allow ourselves to think of someplace as sacred and treat it that way we are inviting that mystical experience because our mindset will become more able to see, hear, understand and recognize the mystical nature of what is happening right in front of us.

It happens because when you treat some space or thing as sacred you are inviting your spirit part to become more open to seeing and understanding what you normally do not. It can be as dramatic as what was seen that day in the temple.

It can also be even more dramatic and personal because you are the one inviting it and you are the one that will be impacted by it, so it will be God connecting with you and or communicating with you personally. What I love about this is that the more that you do it the more easy it is to do it. You could right now if you wanted to. You could treat a part of your day ahead of you as sacred that is right, just allow the time to become sacred. The Sabbath is sacred time according to one very famous theologian. If you allow that time to be sacred it can alter what you see, hear, sense and understand it is a powerful way to allow God to be with you throughout the Sabbath. If you do that very often you will change in positive ways that you didn't even plan on but are very glad that they occurred because you will be allowing God's presence to be with you in ways you may not have thought possible, before. If you have thought of those ways then you can rejoice even more and celebrate that you were even more right than you thought. If you are willing to think of where you are or what you are doing or going to do are sacred then Amen.