



Women's Bible Study
A Godly Response to Life's Realities: A Study in the Psalms
Psalm 34: In Deliverance
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Psalm 34 has been one of my favorite psalms for a number of years and I have been looking forward to teaching it. This psalm, like many others, speaks to the needs of our heart. We can identify with the writer as he struggles in difficulties and cries out to the Lord for help. We can join with him as he expresses praise and thanks-giving for God's grace and blessing, for His mighty deeds and provision, and for the joy of deliverance.

In this psalm we can follow David's example of trusting in the Lord to be able to respond in a godly way to life's realities of fear and anxiety, troubling circumstances, and experience God's protection and deliverance. Can you think of a time in your life when you were extremely afraid and fear almost paralyzed you? What was your first response? Did you panic and think "what am I going to do to get out of this situation?" Or did you immediately turn to the Lord and ask Him to help you and show you what to do? Have you experienced God's peace in the midst of circumstances that would normally produce fear and anxiety?

Let's open our bibles and turn to Psalm 34. For the background of this psalm we have to go back to 1 Sam 21:10-15. David was fleeing from his great enemy, King Saul, and his circumstances seemed to be so desperate that he left his own land and went to the coastal area of the Philistines to seek asylum with Achish, the king of Gath. This was the same area where he had killed the giant Goliath and the very sight of him must have been an offense to the Philistines. He appears to have been in danger and so afraid of Achish that he pretended to be a madman and made meaningless marks on the gates of the city, and let saliva run down his beard. Achish believed his dramatic acting, and instead of arresting or killing him, simply drove him out of the city. David fled to the cave of Adullam where this psalm may have been written, crying out to the Lord and praising Him for His deliverance.

NOTE---The Philistine king is called Achish in 1 Samuel, but the dynastic title of Philistine kings was Abimelech, as in the title of this psalm.

BLESS THE LORD---34:1-3

David begins this psalm with praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for delivering him from his enemies.

I will extol (bless) the Lord at all times, his praise will always be on my lips.
My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
Glorify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together."

Notice the verbs---bless, praise, boast, glorify, and exalt. They all require us to act. David says he will extol the Lord at all times. The NIV uses extol and the KJV uses the word bless. Extol is not a word we use in normal conversation, so I find bless much easier to understand. The Strong's Concordance of Hebrew to English translates this word "extol as to bless, praise, or give blessing. ---pronounced "barack" (as in Bach).

How do you “bless” the Lord? What blesses you? Our first thought would probably be God and how He shows His love to us.

Next, think about your children or a family member, or dear friend and how they bless you? They do things that are pleasing to you, they express their love to you (in word or action), they affirm you, give encouragement, etc. We can bless the Lord by pleasing Him in obedience to His Word, and we can use the next 3 verbs to do so---praise Him (tell Him we love Him), boast (give thanks)in what He has done, glorify (magnify or enlarge upon His character), and exalt (lift up) His name. We can incorporate these “action verbs” into our prayer time and into our daily activities.

I would like to encourage you in each of the Psalms we study, to look for “attributes” of God --- words or concepts that describe His character. It will help you to focus on the Lord and who He is and the many ways He ministers to our needs. These “attributes” are wonderful ways to “bless the Lord” in our prayer time.

Some “attributes” I found in Psalm 34 ---The Lord is *Compassionate, Righteous, Faithful, Provider, Redeemer, and Deliverer*. Keep a list of them and see how often these qualities and others are found in the psalms we study. Use them in the “night watches” when you are awake, to pray and thank God for who He is and His promises.

Psalm 119:148 “My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.”

I would also like to encourage you to join with me in memorizing at least one verse from each psalm we study. Last week Jann taught us in Psalm 119 how important it is to know and meditate on God’s Word and “hide it in our heart”.

David says “praise for the Lord will always be on my lips” Is this statement true for you? Is praise for the Lord always on your lips? I doubt if any of us could answer “yes” to that question. In the psalms there are over 130 references to “praise” and 62 psalms have at least one verse encouraging us to “praise the Lord.”

Psalm 100:4 “...give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Psalm 30:12 “O Lord, my God, I will give you thanks forever.”

Psalm 7:17 “I will give thanks to the Lord...and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.”

It is fairly easy to praise the Lord when everything in our lives is going well. We just overflow with gratitude and thanksgiving. But when we run into sickness, financial troubles, strained or broken relationships, difficult circumstances, or death it is very hard to be thankful and praise the Lord.

In 1 Thess 5:18 we are commanded to “give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. We read in Hebrews 13:15 “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise---the fruit of our lips.” Through these 2 verses we see that to offer praise at all times and in all circumstances ---is a sacrifice that is pleasing to the Lord. We aren’t thanking and praising FOR the circumstances but IN the circumstances. We know we can count on God’s sovereignty and His love for us. He is able to work something good out of any situation for our benefit. (Rom 8:28)

David boasts in the Lord and who He is and what He has done, not in himself or his cleverness and skill. He asks those with him (who may have been his soldiers gathered in a time of worship), to magnify and exalt or lift up the name of the Lord together, in other words, to “bless the Lord”.

Personal Application What can I do each day to focus on having a grateful attitude and bless the Lord by my words and actions, having “praise for Him always on my lips”?

SEEK THE LORD 34:4-8

“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.
This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.”

To “seek the Lord” means to look to Him by faith, as in prayer. This is David’s personal testimony. He sought the Lord when he was in great danger and had many fears and the Lord answered him and delivered or rescued him (vs 4). He admitted that he was a “poor man,” just an ordinary person depending wholly on the Lord and he was “saved out of all his troubles”(vs 6). He was protected when the angel of the Lord encamped around him (7), and his life became radiant with the joy of being in God’s care (vs 5), and he was blessed.

This psalm’s theme is deliverance. David uses his own experience to show God’s deliverance from fear (vs 4), deliverance from enemies (vs 7) and deliverance from troubles (vs 17 & 19). The word “deliver” means to set free, rescue, or liberate.

Notice the personal pronouns that David uses in vs 4, I sought the Lord, he answered ME, he delivered ME from all MY fears. This verse speaks to every one of us. Haven’t each of you here experienced fear in some form? Fears for our family, our jobs, our health, our circumstances, etc. can overwhelm us and dominate our thinking and paralyze us if we let them.

David Jeremiah in his book *Slaying The Giants In Your Life*, describes fear as “a small trickle of doubt that flows through the mind until it wears such a great channel that all your thoughts drain into it. Tiny fears, almost unperceived, can build up day by day until we find ourselves paralyzed and unable to function.”

There are 2 types of fear. One is dread or anxiety, an uneasy feeling about something that will or may happen, and the other is the “fear of the Lord”. Both are included in this psalm. The fear referred to in vs 4 is the first definition, a dread that something will or may happen---the “what ifs” that can overwhelm our minds.

Fear is described in Beth Moore’s study *The Patriarchs* in an acrostic---False Evidence Appearing Real. It’s a tool that satan uses to keep us paralyzed by fear and take our eyes off God and try to rely on our own understanding and resources. Remember, fear does not come from God.

2 Tim 1:7 KJV “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

God has a plan for each of our lives. When we let fear rule us we disregard His plan letting fear distort our view and our perception of God's purposes. Fear discourages us and causes us to worry and disbelieve God's promises and disobey His word. Throughout the Scriptures there are numerous verses that say "Fear not"---which is really a command. When we insist on letting fear rule us, we are really rebelling against God and His Word and what He has provided to help us live courageously. *Slaying the Giants In Your Life*; David Jeremiah

The nation of Israel paid a high price for disobedience. They spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness because they let fear of the people in the land of Canaan keep them from believing God's promises to go in and take possession (Numbers 13 & 14). A good example of "false evidence appearing real".

I love this psalm because I have applied vs 4 over and over in my own life. Notice that the word ALL is used. It doesn't say "some" fears---it says all. Whatever fears David had, God heard him and delivered him from them all. As I mentioned before the word "deliver", means to set free, rescue, or liberate. God doesn't always remove our problem situation, but He works in the circumstance and sets our minds free, releases us or liberates us from fear and gives us the strength and assurance we need. Have you experienced this as you have sought the Lord in a fearful situation, that he gives you a calm confidence that takes away your fear?

There are many wonderful verses that would be helpful to focus on when fear attacks us. It is one of satan's favorite tools to use against us. Remember Jesus in Matt 4 returned satan's attacks with Scripture and that is what we need to do too. Stand on the truths in God's Word. Here are a few---Deut 31:6, Psalm 27:1, Psalm 118:6, and one of my favorites and full of God's wonderful promises to us.

Isaiah 41:10 --"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

A couple of weeks ago Pastor Steer reminded us that fear can be an opportunity for witnessing. As you experience the Lord helping you to overcome fear, He may put someone in your path with whom you can share your faith.

Illustration---When our children were young and taking swimming lessons in the summer the Lord gave me such an opportunity. A neighbor girl whose backyard adjoined ours and our daughter went on a bus for swimming lessons each day at a nearby pool. One day my neighbor called frantically that the girls had not been on the bus when it dropped everyone off. She had called the bus company and couldn't locate where they were. Our minds began immediately to think the worst. 2 cute little blonde girls, had someone snatched them? I sent up a quick prayer right away and told her I would come down to her house as quickly as I could. The Lord calmed my fears and gave me a peace that everything was all right. We made some more phone calls and found that the girls had gotten off at the wrong stop and the bus driver would deliver them to the house. We were so relieved but then my neighbor said, "How could you be so calm and not be frantic like I was?" The Lord had used this scary situation to open the door to witness to her. I shared about my personal relationship with the Lord that Jesus is my Savior, and I can trust Him with everything in my life, and all that is precious to me. We had a good conversation about the Lord as we waited for our girls to be brought home.

Personal Application What fears are "giants" in my life?

Will I seek the Lord and allow Him to deliver or release me from their control and give me victory?

When David refers to himself as “this poor man” (vs 6)—which would include “poor women” too, he speaks to all of us. We are ordinary people and really have no resources to help ourselves and often find ourselves at some very low points in our lives. We call out to the Lord to help us and this verse says, “the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. Once again we see the word all. Nothing is too small or too big to bring to the Lord. He hears us and wants to be involved in every detail of our lives---we are His children and He is our heavenly Father who dearly loves. He wants us to depend totally on Him.

In verse 7, David experiences God’s divine protection. “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and he delivers them.” The phrase, “The angel of the Lord” refers to Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity (Josh. 5:13-15), the Lord of hosts of the angels, who made pre-incarnate visits to His people during Old Testament times. The angel of the Lord is mentioned only twice in the psalms, here and also in 35:5. David may have been thinking of Jacob’s encounter with angels in Gen 32:1-2 at Mahanaim. Another incident involving angels and God’s deliverance is in 2 Kings 6, when Elisha and his servant see that they are surrounded by the King of Aram’s armies.

Elisha tells his servant not to be afraid, he says, “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then he prayed and asked God to open the eyes of his servant. When his servant looked up “he saw the hills full of horses and chariots all around Elisha” The Lord opened his eyes to see the protecting might of the heavenly hosts gathered around Elisha. The Lord delivered them from their enemies.

Angels are mentioned in the NT in Heb 1:14. “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” Angels are servants of the saints (believers) today, and minister to us in ways we will never know about until we get to heaven. Won’t that be interesting to find out all the times angels protected us?

In vs 8 David tells us that the Lord not only saves us out of all our troubles, but he also satisfies us. “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.” The psalmist uses the word picture of “tasting and seeing or experiencing” the Lord and being made happy or satisfied. Food immediately comes to our mind when we think of tasting something to see if it is good to eat.

Spiritually we are to taste or try God’s Word and act on it and see if it doesn’t satisfy us like food does. This verse implies more than a small taste---we need to take several good sized bites to really get the flavor and develop a desire for continued eating.

Psalms 119:103---“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.”

Psalms 63:3 & 5—“Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you... My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods.”

When I read that verse and think of the richest of foods , I think of homemade pecan pie with real whipped cream, rhubarb custard pie with creamy ice cream, buttery cinnamon rolls, and half and half on my morning cereal. Doesn’t your mouth just start salivating as you think of your favorite foods? These kinds of foods can be so delicious and satisfying. The American Medical Association, however, in the past few years has taken all the fun out of eating!!!! We used to “live to eat” but now we “eat to live”. We are put on a guilt trip if we don’t eat low-fat or no fat. I grew up on a dairy farm and I draw the line on “blue” skim milk and butter substitutes!!!! I know that we all need to eat more balanced healthy foods. How wonderful

though that God's Word can satisfy us as much as these rich foods and we will be physically healthy and not gain an ounce!!!!

Just a few weeks ago we had a Sunday eve program at church called "Taste of Missions". All the youth missions teams were reporting on their work and what God had done in the various parts of the country where they ministered. These young people were "tasting and seeing"---trying out God's Word---acting on it, ministering in other cultures and experiencing how the Lord blessed their obedience.

Personal Application Am I daily tasting and feeding on God's Word so that I am learning how to apply these truths in everyday situations? Am I spiritually and emotionally as satisfied with God's Word as I am physically with good food?

FEAR THE LORD---34:9-16

"Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days,
keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.
Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

Here we come to the second kind of fear mentioned in this psalm---"fear of the Lord". This fear is defined in the dictionary as reverence, worship, respect or awe, especially for God.

David says "those who fear the Lord lack nothing" (vs 7,9,11). When we fear the Lord, reverence and walk uprightly (Psa 84:11), He provides all that we need when we need it..

Phil 4:19---"My God will meet all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus."
Luke 22:35---"Then Jesus asked them, 'When I sent you without purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?' 'Nothing', they answered."

If we don't receive what we think we need, it means it isn't good for us and we don't need it at this time.

It appears that David gathered some children or youth around him to teach them what the fear of the Lord is and the "secret of real living" in vs 12-16. (Peter later quotes these verses in 1 Peter 3:10-12.) He instructs them to love life, control the tongue, pursue what is right, and live by faith. Now let's look at each one more closely.

1. Love life---desire to live a full abundant life ("many days")
Psa 37:4: O have a heart that delights in the Lord,
Daily exercise the 2 greatest commandments----

Matt 22:37-39: Jesus said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

This is the emphasis and mission of Autumn Ridge Church---LOVING GOD----SERVING PEOPLE---seen in the banners as you drive in and in all our literature. Mark Struck is teaching

a wonderful Sunday School class, “The Jesus Creed”, on what it means to love God so totally, and to love your neighbor as yourself, so that you practice this in your everyday life.

2. Control the tongue and speak what is true (vs 13). James 3 tells us how powerful the tongue is and how easily it can corrupt our whole being and get us into trouble. Psalm 141:3 “Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.” Be positive---not negative and judgmental.
3. Pursue what is right---turn from evil and do good (pursue means to work at it) Keep our mindset on this popular phrase as we respond to life’s challenges. “What would Jesus do?”
4. Live by faith— expect what is best – trust in the Lord to guide us, care for us, and help us do the right thing because vs 15 says “the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, his ears are attentive to their cry.”

Just like a mother is attentive to the cries from her baby or her children and rushes to their aid, so God does for us. In a room full of crying babies, a mother can pick out her own child’s particular cry We need not fear---God’s eyes are on us and He hears and knows our cry for help.

Personal Application Do I fear the Lord and trust in Him in the circumstances of my life even when I don’t see specific results? Will I focus daily on loving God and delighting in Him so that I can respond in ways that are pleasing to Him?

TRUST THE LORD---34:17-22

“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned. The Lord redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.”

In this psalm we are not promised that the life of faith and obedience will exempt us from trouble. But we are assured that if we trust in Him and call on Him, the Lord will see us through our troubles and make them a blessing to us, and through us to others.

2 Cor 1: 3 &4 “Praise be to the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received.”

We have a promise in vs 18 that the Lord will be close to us (near us) when we are broken hearted and are crushed in spirit. He cares about our emotions and how devastated we may feel, and wants to “save” (meaning to deliver or rescue) us.

Personal Application How has the Lord “heard my cries” when I was crushed in spirit and delivered me in the midst of my troubles?

Notice vs 20---God's protection, "not one of his bones will be broken". John quoted this verse in John 19:36 and applied it to Jesus. In vs 21 -22, the wicked are condemned but the righteous face no condemnation because they trust in the Lord (Romans 8:1). Redeem in vs 22 also means deliver. David experienced God's deliverance from his troubles because he took refuge in him. Just as God redeemed or delivered David, and Israel later from Egypt---He is ABLE to redeem or deliver us from our troubles(Eph 3:20).

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory forever. Amen"

Most importantly as a believer, we have been delivered from the eternal punishment due us for our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who took that condemnation in our place and paid the price for our sins. We have been redeemed or delivered!! Praise to the Lord, for all He has done for us.

As we contemplate this great gift of salvation---deliverance from sin and death---we want to praise and thank the Lord, which brings us back to the beginning of Psalm 34. "We will bless the Lord, praise for Him will be always on our lips, we will give thanks for all He has done for us and we will magnify and exalt His name."