

Psalm 34:1-22 Taste and See That The LORD is Good Thanksgiving 2022

What if I asked you to write a song of Thanks? Are you in a good frame of mind to write one this year? Maybe your heart is broken. Your hopes have been dashed.

You and I find it easier to thank God in good times, when things seem to be going our way. But we find it difficult to thank God when our dreams are crushed. We need help giving thanks to God, when life is hard.

In Psalm 34, God gave us four steps to cope with a crisis.

We know from the title to the Psalm that this Psalm was written soon after David had to say good-bye to his best friend Jonathan. We know that Jonathan's father was trying to kill David. David was facing loneliness. David had no friend, no weapons, and not even any food. David went to see his pastor – the chief priest – asking for food. The pastor gave him a loaf of bread and also gave him a sword. Goliath's old sword!

With that sword, David went to the city of Gath, the hometown of the giant Goliath. David was in danger for his life. David was forced to fake being insane in order to escape. David needed to go into hiding in a dismal cave, where David was when he wrote this Psalm. He had nothing.

Step 1. Decide to praise God throughout the crisis. (v.1-3)

In verses 1-2, God encourages us to take the first step by making a commitment to keep praising God no matter what. (v.1-2)

It starts with the very first words of the Psalm, "I will bless the LORD at all times..." (v.1) "...His praise shall continually be in my mouth..." (v.1) "...my soul makes its boast in the LORD..." (v.2)

David had already slain Goliath. (1 Samuel 17) David had been clever to fake insanity. (1 Samuel 21) But David did not give himself credit for his own skill with the sling or his own cleverness and creativity. David had decided to praise God, not himself.

In verse 3, God encourages us to go public with our decision and our commitment to always praise God by calling on others to praise the Lord with us, instead of us calling on others to see how bad our situation is. (v.3)

David sang, v.3, "glorify the LORD with me...let us exalt His name together.." I have reason to praise God; join me!

SI – A Christian friend of our family is named Diane – she experienced a devastating fire on her farm. When we called her to talk about it, all she could say was praise God with me. "The LORD was so good. He sent people at every turn. Each time we would identify something we needed, someone was already bringing it to us." Instead of inviting us to see how bad her situation was, she was inviting us to see how good her God is.

Step 2. Learn about God early in the crisis. (v.4-7)

In verse 4, in a crisis, we learn from God about God. *“I sought the LORD and He answered me...”* The LORD’s answer may be relief, or it may be endurance.

Look carefully at verse 4, it does not say delivered me from all my problems. It says God *“delivered me from all my fears.”* Sometimes, that is the Lord’s answer for us! We have to learn to keep on praising a God who CAN remove our problems, but sometimes decides NOT to remove our problems. In 2 Corinthians 12 – Paul prayed, “Lord, take away my thorn!” God’s answer to Paul was no, My grace is sufficient for you.

In verses 5-7, God encourages us to learn something else about God - the difference the LORD makes as we enter a crisis. (v.5-7)

v.5, *“those who look to Him are radiant.”* In Exodus 34, Moses’ face was *“radiant”* coming down the mountain after meeting with God. And this same radiant face of Moses is referred to by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18 where Paul wrote that the radiant face of Moses is like Christians growing more like the Lord. This is a transformation of the mindset of the whole person. We are able to keep looking to the LORD, no matter what happens, and we are able to remain radiant, no matter what happens. That is the difference the LORD makes!

SI – 149 years ago this month, it was in November of 1873, that a Chicago businessman, sent his wife and three daughters to Europe by ship. The plan was for him to come later. His family’s ship went down. His wife survived the shipwreck, and she wired a message to her husband saying, “All of our daughters have been lost. Only I have been saved.” The man got on the very next vessel to join his wife in grief in Europe. His name was Mr. Horatio Spafford, a believer who had learned about God in good times, and was suddenly learning more about God in his pain. As his boat came near the place where his daughters had been drown, the skipper of the ship pointed out for Mr. Spafford the place where the previous ship went down. It was right there and then, on the deck of that ship, that Mr. Spafford wrote down these words, “When peace like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’” Since that time - 149 years ago this month - our dear brother Mr. Spafford, through his writing and his faith, has been calling on us to praise God with Him in that classic hymn. This is the difference that the Lord makes in a crisis.

Let us exalt His name together!

The angel of The LORD encamps around those who fear Him.

Those who look to him are radiant.

Step 3. Teach others in the middle of the crisis.

In verse 8, we call others to taste and See that the LORD is good! (v.8). This tasting is more than a sampling. Both Hebrews 6:5 and 1 Peter 2:3 use this verse, Psalm 34:8 to describe tasting faith as a lifestyle!

In verses 9 through 11, God expects us to offer “how to” classes about fearing The LORD during trials. (v.9-11)

SI – When the chancellor at the University of Glasgow at the start of a chapel service, introduced a missionary named David Livingstone, he stepped aside and motioned for Mr. Livingstone to come forward. As he walked to the platform to speak, the students saw hair that had changed color because it had been so beaten with tropical sun. The students saw a dedicated missionary’s body, still emaciated with jungle fever. The students observed his right arm hanging limp, because it had been destroyed by an African lion. As the students took notice of this, the students spontaneously stood up in awe and silence before God’s missionary, already receiving the experienced missionary’s lesson loud and clear. Before David Livingstone even began to speak that day, how he lived his life had taught the students how to fear the LORD in their own trials.

It is as if David Livingstone’s scars, each received in the middle of a crisis, were illustrating to the students the words of King David, as we read from verse 9, “*Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints..(and from verse 11) listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*”

Step 4. Hide from the crisis in The LORD, follow His way, and wait it out.

When we are hurting, we start complaining and grumbling! So, we get a timely word in verse 13, “*Keep your tongue from evil.*” Complaining is not just bad manners or bad form, it is evil.

Verse 13 goes further. Next God instructs us to keep our lips “*..from speaking deceit.*” We deceive ourselves with lies such as ‘it will always be like this.’ That is a lie. ‘It stinks to be me.’ That is a lie. ‘There is nothing good about this day.’ That is a lie. “*This is the day that the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.*” Psalm 118:24

What must we do instead? Verse 14, We must “*...turn away from evil and do good.*” We must “*...seek peace and pursue it.*”

We must only let our tongues say helpful words, such as from 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “*give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*” Not just our mouths. Our hearts need to hide in The LORD. Our hearts and our mouths are connected! What our mouths say reveals the status of our hearts! We must turn our hearts to God! How?

Like David, in verse 15 and in verse 17, we cry out to God. What about when troubles have broken our hearts? God reminds about His nearness during the troubles that breaks our hearts. Listen to verse 18, “*The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*” Our suffering may be extreme.

Our God sees us. Our God hears us. (see v.15) God does not take our suffering lightly. God never loses control of the situation. It is all designed to reveal God's closeness, God's nearness. While we wait for deliverance, we have God nearby, waiting with us. Verse 18 does not say that God will draw near, or that God will respond by coming near. It says God IS near. What is needed is for God to reveal His nearness to us.

In verse 20, the protection of His bones is a prophecy that points us to the crucifixion of Christ. Not one of His bones was broken. (John 19:32-33, "*the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break his legs.* (v.36), "...these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'Not one of His bones would be broken.'") And 3 days later, Jesus rose again. It was through this crucifixion and resurrection, that God protected us. God grants us resurrection.

The nearness of God leads ultimately to our rescue from the situation. Long before our rescue from the situation, we are rescued from our own heartache, our own misery, our own sin, and the condemnation that leads to death.

The Lord Jesus explained in Luke 21:16, "*You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you will they put to death.*" PARADOX verse 18, "*But not a hair of your head will perish.*" What?? These verses point us beyond death. Jesus went on to say in Luke 21:19, "*By your endurance you will gain your lives.*"

1) Crucified, but no bones broken. Resurrection!

2) Put to death, yet not hair lost. Resurrection!

In verses 21 and 22, The LORD at the end of the Psalm, presented the end of all things. There are two outcomes.

1) The justice of God's coming judgment in verse 21, "*Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.*"

2) The mercy of God in coming salvation in verse 22, "*The LORD redeems the life of His servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.*"

God wants us to set these two truths side by side.

Judgment and mercy. Hell and heaven. A broken heart, and a thankful heart.

But the cost is not imagined by David in these words of verse 22, "*The LORD redeems the life of His servants...*".

How? How would the LORD redeem? How would the LORD redeem the life of His servants? The new Testament tells us that it was by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, the son of David. † cross.

The scope of 22b is unbounded, “*none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.*” Why not? Because Christ has been condemned in our place, and Christ rose again.

Conclude:

Application 1: taste and see that the LORD is good. I know you believe that God is Good, but have you tasted that? What is the fundamental difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. Not that Christians know that God exists. Everyone knows that God exists. Rather, the fundamental difference between Christian and a non-Christian is that a Christian has tasted that the Lord is good, and gives thanks to God.

Application 2: Remember whenever your heart is broken, that The LORD is near to the brokenhearted. God delights to draw near to people whose hopes have been crushed. Jesus became a brokenhearted person. He came to meet us where we are, and pull us out of it. Christ died to remove our misery and sin, and He rose again to keep us near to Him forever.