

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"THANKSGIVING: AN EXHORTATION, INVITATION, AND GUARANTEE"

For individual study or discussion

According to Psalm 34, praising God is a choice. God's worthiness to be praised does not change based on our circumstances. David wrote Psalm 34 after being relentlessly hunted by Saul (1 Samuel 21-31). Despite his life being in danger, David chooses to give thanks to God, and he exhorts his readers to join with him in his thanksgiving as he gives testimony of his deliverance.

An Exhortation: God's gracious deliverance exhorts us to praise and gratitude. (vv. 1-7)

In Psalm 34, David invites the readers to share in his thanksgiving as he seems to be saying, "I have reason to praise him; join me!" According to theologian Laurence Kriegshauser, "*The comradely sharing in the praise of the Lord is never so closely expressed in the Psalms...[David's] companions too can 'look to the Lord and be radiant' in his light.*"¹

- When Paul writes the book of Philippians, he is being persecuted and most likely in a Roman prison. And yet he encourages his readers to, "*Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice*" (4:4). What does it mean to "*rejoice in the Lord*"? (cf. Romans 12:12 and James 1:2). Why do you think Paul specifies "*always*"? Discuss how it is possible to rejoice even in hard times.
- In verse 7, David infers that the "*angel of the LORD*" and his army protect those who fear the LORD. Read 2 Kings 6:16-17. Describe the divine care that surrounds those who are humble and fear the Lord. (cf. Psalm 91:9-13; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:14).

An Invitation: God's marvelous goodness invites us to taste, trust, and turn. (vv. 8-14)

In verse 8, the psalmist proclaims, "*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!*" David wants his readers to know that God's goodness is something for them to personally experience. The psalmist then invites his readers to "*listen*" to his words of wisdom (vv. 11-14). His instruction is similar to what we find in Scripture's wisdom literature, "*I will teach you the fear of the LORD*" (v. 11). And how does David teach his listeners to fear God? "*Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it*" (v. 14).

- Verse 8 ends with a beatitude: "*Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*" Read Matthew 5:1-11. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus further characterizes those who are "*blessed*." Describe the type of person who takes refuge in God. What is his reward?
- Read Romans 14:19, Hebrews 12:14, and 1 Peter 3:8-12. What is the peace David refers to in verse 14, and how do we attain it?

A Guarantee: God's attentive presence guarantees our sure hope of redemption. (vv. 15-22)

David reminds us that the Lord is not distant or indifferent to our troubles. Even though trials are inevitable, we are reminded that God's deliverance is certain (v. 17). Because of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, theologian Derek Kidner concludes, "*The Christian can echo the jubilant spirit of the psalm with added gratitude, knowing the unimagined cost of [verse] 22a and the unbounded scope of [verse] 22b.*"²

- Read Luke 21:16-19. Note the seeming contradiction when you compare the words of Jesus to David's in Psalm 34:19, "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*" How do you explain the paradox?
- Read John 19:36 and Exodus 12:46. What do the promise of verse 20 and these passages point us to?
- The psalm ends with eschatological judgment (vv. 21-22). In the end, what will happen to the wicked? The righteous? Read Romans 8:1, 33-34. What made Paul confident that God takes care of His people?

DATE: June 1, 2025

SPEAKER: Wil/Brian

SERIES: Summer in the Psalms

PASSAGE: Psalm 34

Family Dinner Table

I Will Bless the Lord at All Times

Do you find it hard to praise God when you are sad or when something bad has happened in your life? 1 Samuel 21-31 tells the story of David and how Saul was hunting him down in order to kill him. Before David became king of Israel, his life was full of sadness and fear. But David chose to praise God, even when times were dark. He never doubted that God was with him.

Next time you are scared and think that God has forgotten you, remember this illustration: "*The sun is always there. Its size, brightness, and intensity are basically constant. However, our perspective of the sun can vary wildly. Some days the heat and glare can be overwhelming. On other days, there are so many clouds that we can't even see it. On those days our world appears gloomy and depressing. However, the sun did not change. Something in our environment merely blocked its light. The same is true with God. He is constant. As we will see in this psalm, his goodness is constant. At times it is just harder for us to perceive that. On those days, we need to, like David, say 'I will bless the Lord.'*"³

- Discuss as a family how you can attempt to "*Bless the LORD at all times.*" What does this look like in seasons of joy and prosperity? What does it look like during seasons of loss and grief?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

PCA Administrative Committee,
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Annette & Tim Gulick, supported
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¹Kriegshauser, Laurence. *Praying the Psalms of Christ*. 2009, Notre Dame, IN. University of Notre Dame. 84.
²Kidner, Derek. *Psalms, Volume 1*. 1973, Downers Grove, IL. IVP. page 159-60
³Dexter, Jason. *Psalm 34*. <https://studyandobey.com/inductive-bible-study/psalm-119-studies/psalm-34/>