

Rejoicing in Restoration

Psalm 34:1-10; Hebrews 2:17-18

SS Lesson for 05/27/2018

Devotional Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-11

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches that God can restore us to joyful fellowship with Him and therefore wants us to respond by **Rejoicing in Restoration**. The **study's aim** is to understand we can be restored to the joy of the Lord at any time, from any type of decline. The **study's application** is to live with the knowledge that God desires to restore us to fellowship daily.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Ps 34:8

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary on Psalm 34

This song of praise is attributed to David when he escaped from Abimelech by feigning insanity (1 Sam. 21:11). In the psalm David called on the congregation to praise the Lord for their salvation. And after affirming that God is good to those who trust Him, he instructed the people on how to live a long life.

34:1-3. Verses 1-10 are filled with David's praise. In verses 1-3 David called the people to **praise the LORD** with him. He resolved to praise God continually so that **the afflicted** would **rejoice**. But here he called for all the people to **exalt the LORD with him**.

34:4-6. David here recorded the report of his deliverance. Because he cried and was **delivered** (cf. "delivers" in vv. 7, 17, 19), he was convinced that God's people **are never** put to **shame**. Instead they **are radiant** because God hears them (cf. vv. 15, 17) and rescues them from their **troubles** (cf. vv. 17, 19).

34:7-10. David declared that **the Angel of the LORD** (possibly the Lord Himself; cf. Gen. 16:9) camps **around those who fear** (cf. Ps. 34:9, 11) the Lord. In military imagery David envisioned divine protection (cf. Gen. 32:2; 2 Kings 6:16). Those who trust in **the LORD** experience genuine happiness—if they **taste and see**. All who **fear the LORD**, that is, all who are genuine worshipers, will **lack nothing** (cf. Ps. 23:1), or **no good thing** (cf. 16:2; 84:11).

Commentary on Hebrews 2

In this section the writer of Hebrews used, for the first time, the Greek word *archēgos* of Jesus (his other use of the word is in 12:2). The word suggests such concepts as “Leader,” “Originator,” and “Founder” and is almost equivalent in some respects to the English word “Pioneer.” The familiar rendering “Captain” (KJV) seems a bit superior to “Author” (2:10). The Lord Jesus, the writer will try to show, is the Captain of that loyal band of people whom God is preparing for glory.

2:10. The author here continued to think of Psalm 8, as his reference to **everything** reveals (cf. Heb. 2:8). Thus the **glory** he mentioned here is also the glory referred to in the psalm, that is, the glory of dominion over the created order (cf. Heb. 2:7-8). Even the expression **many sons** is inspired by the psalmist’s mention of “the Son of Man” and suggests that for the writer of Hebrews the messianic title Son of Man probably had a corporate aspect. Jesus is *the* Son of Man, and His brothers and sisters are the many people who are linked with Him in both **suffering** and future glory. They will be the King’s “companions” who share His joy in the world to come (cf. 1:9). In 2:9 the writer had mentioned Jesus’ death for the first time. Now he affirmed that such suffering was appropriate for the One who was to serve as the Captain of the many sons. Before He could fittingly lead them to the salvation experience God had in mind for them (i.e., “to glory”), He must be made **perfect** for this role “through suffering.” Since His brethren must suffer, so must He if He is to be the kind of Captain they need. By having done so, He can give them the help they require (cf. v. 18).

2:11-13. Accordingly there is a deep unity between the Son and the many sons. By His death He **makes** them **holy**, and those who are thus **made holy are of the same family**. That the writer thought of the sacrifice of Christ as making the many sons holy in a definitive and final way is clear from 10:10, 14. Thus as Psalm 22:22 (quoted in Heb. 2:12) predicts, Jesus can **call them brothers**. He can also speak to them of His own **trust in God** (v. 13a, quoting Isa. 8:17) and can regard them as **the children God has given Me** (Heb. 2:13b, quoting Isa. 8:18). Like an elder brother in the midst of a circle of younger children, the Captain of their salvation can teach them the lessons of faith along the pathway of suffering.

2:14-15. These children, however, were once held in servitude by their enemy, Satan. Since they were human, their Captain had to become human and die for them, in order to rescue them. But by doing so He was able to **destroy... the devil**. The author did not mean that Satan ceased to exist or to be active. Rather the word he used for “destroy” (*katargēsē*) indicates the annulment of his power over those whom Christ redeems. In speaking of the devil as wielding **the power of death**, the writer meant that Satan uses people’s **fear of death** to enslave them to his will. Often people make wrong moral choices out of their intense desire for self-preservation. The readers were reminded that they were no longer subject to such **slavery** and that they could face death with the same confidence in God their Captain had.

2:16-18. Whatever their needs or trials, their Captain is adequate to help them since He ministers to **Abraham’s descendants**, not angels. The expression “Abraham’s descendants” (lit., “Abraham’s seed”) may point to the Jewishness of the writer’s audience, but even Gentile Christians could claim to be the “seed of Abraham” in a spiritual sense (Gal. 3:29). The help which the Captain gives to these His followers is again predicated on the fact that **He was made like His brothers in every way** (Heb. 2:17), that is, both in terms of becoming incarnate and by virtue of suffering. Here for the first time the writer introduced the thought of His priesthood, which he elaborated on later. For now he was content to affirm that this identification with “His brothers” had made possible a priesthood characterized both by mercy and fidelity **in service to God**. This involved, as its basis, **atonement for the sins of the people**. Of this too the author said more later, but he chose to conclude the section on the profoundly hopeful thought that the Captain, in His role as Priest, is able to aid his readers **who are being tempted** (v. 18) out of the experience of temptation which His own sufferings entailed. Though the discussion of these themes is far from over, the author has already suggested that the Captain has indeed been made perfect for His role in leading them into participation in His future glory.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

How do you tell a person who has never eaten an apple what an apple tastes like? How do you describe the flavor of pumpkin pie to someone unfamiliar with that dessert? You can start with generalities—an apple is sweet (or maybe tart) and juicy; pumpkin pie is sweet and smooth. You can add further details, but soon you are faced with the reality that no words you use are sufficient to give a clear idea of how these foods taste. To really know, the person will simply have to taste them himself. That is the approach that David took in trying to convey to people what God is like. He could have written a lot about God (which, in fact, he and other Bible writers did in many passages), but in our text he invites people to find out for themselves, saying, "O taste and see." David, who in the context of the psalm in which our text is found was rejoicing in God's deliverance from foes, was not interested in having people simply know the right things about God. David had experienced God's goodness to him firsthand; he was eager to see others experience that goodness for themselves. When we proclaim the gospel of Christ to others, we are not hoping that people will merely change their beliefs about Him or agree with our statements. We want to see them trust Him with their whole being and experience Him in a full-fledged personal relationship. We want them (and ourselves) to taste His goodness, to know it on an intimate, heart level. This is not to endorse a contentless, free-floating experience-based approach to knowing God as some mystics and cults do. All that we know of God is based on solid truth as taught to us in the Scriptures. We are to taste and see "that [He] is good." God's goodness is an objective, true reality that we can understand (to a degree) with our minds. But it is also a personal reality that we need to perceive within. God's great goodness leads naturally to the next major truth in our text: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in him." The Hebrew word for "blessed" is the same one that begins the very first psalm: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." It can sometimes be translated "happy," but it speaks of a deep, inner joy that is not affected by changing circumstances. It carries the same idea of the "blesseds" that Jesus pronounced in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-11). The picture behind "the man that trusteth in him" is that of a warrior or valiant man who takes refuge in the Lord. Of course, the verse applies to all people of any age and either gender, but David was deliberately setting the bar high. If even a valiant warrior finds blessing in taking shelter in God, how much more the rest of us! We may think strong individuals do not need God, but that is not true. This text seems a particularly appropriate one with which to wrap up a quarter's studies. It is a very simple truth, but it carries a profound significance that can never be exhausted. My prayer is that every reader will have tasted and found—and will keep tasting and finding—that the Lord indeed is good!

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

A Christian girl soaks her pillow with tears. Her prom date drives away with another girl who won't refuse him. An unemployed father hangs his head in shame. Christmas won't seem so merry because he refused to lie for the good of his company. A faithful family spends another night in the shelter. Speaking publicly about one's Christian faith is not welcomed in their village. The apostle Paul referred to himself and the other apostles in very unflattering terms, as "the scum of the earth" (1 Corinthians 4:13). Through the years, many followers of Jesus have felt much the same. They stuck to their faith whether popular or not. They have proclaimed Christ unswervingly even when it led to abandonment, poverty, and homelessness. This world does not claim them. It does not appreciate their integrity and commitment to purity and truth. But God claims them. He recognizes them as his children, for he is the father of the afflicted. In the midst of rejection and scornful treatment from the world, it can be hard to sense God's parental love. We are more likely to feel anger and resentment. In times like these, we can know that the pain is only temporary. We are encouraged by those who have been there and persevered. We can use examples like David and Jesus, who faced affliction, experienced God's favor, and left behind a powerful witness and testimony.

Psalm 34, one of many written by David, is an alphabetic acrostic poem. This means that each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in consecutive order. In English this would mean beginning the first verse with A and beginning the last verse with Z. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, thus there are 22 verses in Psalm 34. A more elaborate acrostic is Psalm 119. Its first 8 verses begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the second set of 8 verses begin with the second letter, and so on until all 22 letters are used 8 times for a total of 176 verses in the psalm. Some psalms include a heading that provides the setting. Psalm 34 has such a heading. It mentions a time in David's life "when he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left." This account is in 1 Samuel 21:10-15, when David was fleeing from jealous King Saul, who wanted to kill him. David came to the territory of the king of Gath, but his reputation for killing "tens of thousands" of Philistines had preceded him. To avoid suspicion, David acted as if he were insane. The king

berated his servants for bringing such a man into his presence, and David was allowed to leave. It was a time of great distress for David, one when he desperately needed God's help. The contents of Psalm 34 do not fit neatly into any one category. The first 10 verses contain elements of an individual thanksgiving hymn. The remaining verses contain strong wisdom elements. The verses in our printed text fall within the thanksgiving section.

The two verses from Hebrews come from a different setting altogether. The book of Hebrews was written to Christians from a Jewish background who were suffering their own version of rejection: being ostracized for choosing to follow Jesus as Messiah. The pressure to return to Judaism was intense. The writer, who is not named in the book, urges them not to do so, lest they abandon all they have received in Christ (example: Hebrews 10:32-39). This is why the word better occurs so often (11 times) in Hebrews: the writer is trying to persuade his readers that what Christ provides through the new covenant is much better than what the old covenant was able to provide. The portion of our printed text from Hebrews 2 is part of the writer's case for why Jesus is the better (in fact, the perfect) high priest.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Magnify the Lord (Psalms 34:1-3)

1 A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad.

3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together.

Magnify the Lord at all times (1-2)

Magnify God for His acts of power and greatness (Ps 150:2)

2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Magnify God for His mercy (Ps 28:6)

6 Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy.

Magnify God for His faithfulness (Ps 71:22)

22 I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

Magnify God for His righteous Word (Ps 119:164)

164 Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws.

Magnify God because it is right to do (Ps 33:1)

33 Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

Magnify God because He is worthy (Ps 145:3)

3 Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

Magnify God and do not forget all of His benefits (Ps 103:1-2)

1 Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits

Magnify God regardless of situations or circumstances (Hab 3:17-19)

17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. 19 The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

Magnify the Lord's Name (3)

Praise God's name because He is the Lord Most High (Ps 7:17)

17 I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

Praise God's name because His name is majestic (Ps 8:1)

1 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

Praise God's name because glory is due God's name (Ps 29:2)

2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.

Praise God's name because it is good (Ps 54:6)

6 I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

Praise God's name during prayer (Matt 6:9)

9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Praise God's name because it is a way to glorify God (Rom 15:9)

9 so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name."

Look to the Lord (Psalms 34:4-7)

4 I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

Look to the Lord for deliverance from fears (4-5)

Deliverance from fear because Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33)

33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Deliverance from fear through overcoming (Rev 2:7)

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Deliverance from fear because of being born of God (1 John 5:4-5)

4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Deliverance from fear because in Jesus, Christians are more than conquerors (Rom 8:37)

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Deliverance from fear because Christians do not have a spirit of fear, but of sonship (Rom 8:15)

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Deliverance from fear because godly love drives out fear (1 John 4:18)

18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Look to the Lord for deliverance from troubles (6-7)

God delivers from troubles by foiling the plans of man (Ps 33:10)

10 The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

God delivers from troubles by being faithful and the only source of hope (2 Cor 1:10)

10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

God delivers from troubles by having the ability to rescue from calamities (Job 5:19-27)

19 From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you. 20 In famine he will ransom you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. 21 You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes. 22 You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the beasts of the earth. 23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you. 24 You will know that your tent is secure; you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing. 25 You will know that your children will be many, and your descendants like the grass of the earth. 26 You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season. 27 "We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself."

God delivers from troubles the righteous from all troubles (Ps 34:19)

19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;

God delivers from troubles by knowing how to rescue (2 Peter 2:9)

9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

God delivers from troubles by providing a way out (1 Cor 10:13)

13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Trust the Lord (Psalms 34:8-10)

8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

9 Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.

Trust God because He is good (8)

God is good because He is upright (Psalms 25:8)

8 Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.

God is good because He is a refuge in times of trouble (Nahum 1:7)

7 The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him,

God is good because only God is good (Matthew 19:17)

17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

God is good because He allows the saints to dwell in His house forever (Ps 23:6)

6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

God is good because of His compassion (Ps 145:9)

9 The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

God is good to those who seek Him and whose hope is in Him (Lam 3:25)

25 The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

God is good because He stores up goodness (Ps 31:19)

19 How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.

Trust God for our needs (9-10)

God meets our needs according to His riches (Phil 4:19)

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

God meets our needs because He knows them better than we do (Luke 12:29-31)

29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

God meets our needs because He is able (2 Cor 9:8)

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

God meets our needs through spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

God meets our needs through the power of Grace (Titus 2:11-12)

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Find Help in the Lord (Heb 2:17-18)

17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Help through His mercy and faithfulness (17)

Mercy that is prompted by love (Ps 89:28-33)

28 I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. 29 I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. 30 "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, 31 if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, 32 I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; 33 but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.

Mercy that endures forever (Ps 106:1)

1 Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Mercy that is shown through God's discipline (Prov 3:11-12)

11 My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, 12 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Faithfulness because the Bible teaches God is faithful (1 Cor 1:9)

9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Faithfulness because our hope is in God's promises (Heb 10:23)

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Faithfulness because God cannot lie and disown Himself (2 Tim 2:13)

13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Help through His sufferings and temptations (18)

Jesus suffered so that we could be holy through His blood (Heb 13:12)

12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.

Jesus suffered to leave us an example (1 Peter 2:21)

21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

Jesus suffered so that we could participate in His sufferings (1 Peter 4:12-13)

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

Jesus suffered so that He could sympathize with man's temptations (Heb 4:15)

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

Jesus suffered because He was human and temptation is common to man (1 Cor 10:13)

13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

A Promise of Praise (34:1-3)

Psalm 34:1-3 1 A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed. I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear it and rejoice. 3 O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. (NASB)

David begins this psalm with a vow, or a promise: "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (v. 1). Here David promises to persistently praise His God. His praise, while based upon a specific event in his life, is ongoing. It should be understood that David is not promising a marathon praise session, but rather is committing himself to the praise of God at every opportunity and in the midst of various

states of mind, spirit, and body. Just as we are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17)—to pray consistently and in all circumstances—David promises to praise without ceasing.

While verse one stresses the **frequency** of David’s praise, the second verse reveals the **focus** of that praise. His soul will “make its boast in the Lord” (v. 2a). David does not dwell on his experience, nor even on his deliverance, but on his Deliverer. The Lord is both the subject and the object of David’s praise.

Verses 2b and 3 remind us of the **fellowship** of praise. Praise can be private, but that is not the kind of praise which the psalms practice and promote. When David publicly praised God at worship, he did so purposing to promote worship on the part of the entire congregation. Those who loved God, as David did, could rejoice with him. Paul’s teaching in Romans chapter 12 indicates that New Testament worship should be a sharing in the joys of fellow-Christians: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15).

David therefore urges his fellow-worshippers to join with him in magnifying the Lord so that His name will be corporately exalted (v. 3).

David’s Deliverance (34:4-7)

4 I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces shall never be ashamed. 6 This poor man cried and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them. (NASB)

The praise of God in the psalms is based upon two central themes: (1) the acts of God and (2) the attributes of God. God’s works and His worth provide the basis for praise. In verses 4-7 David describes his deliverance, which is the basis for his praise and his teaching.

From the superscription to this psalm and the account in 1 Samuel 21, we know the details of the deliverance to which David is referring. If we did not have these additional details, we would hardly have concluded that David’s praise resulted from that incident with Achish. In view of the background to this psalm, several observations can be made here which will help us better understand the brief historical reference contained in verses 4-7.

(1) The fact that this psalm has a superscription which points us back to 1 Samuel 21 indicates that there was no attempt here to conceal David’s failures. Indeed, it would be safe to say that it was intended for us to interpret this psalm in the light of those failures. There is no effort to “cover up” for David to make him (or this psalm) look good.

(2) The brevity of the description of David’s deliverance should be understood in the light of David’s purpose for the entire psalm, which was to exhort others to share in the blessings of God’s protection and in His praise. David had purposed (and promised, cf. v. 1, 2a) to praise the Lord. While it would have been possible for him to embellish the account, it would have obscured the object of David’s praise, the Lord Himself. The more David minimized his personal experience and generalized God’s goodness, the more others could identify with him and join in his praise. If David’s flight to Gath and his relationship with these Philistines were less than commendable (as I believe was the case), then David would not wish to concentrate on his wrong doings but on God’s grace. There is little value in exploring David’s sin, but much to be gained from pondering God’s salvation.

(3) David is not stressing his deliverance from danger in these verses (which he encountered as a result of his own sin) as much as his deliverance from his fears. In verse 19 David writes that the afflictions of the righteous are many. The righteous must expect affliction. God does deliver His own out of some dangerous situations, just as He removed David from the hand of Achish. David’s fears were his greatest threat. Psalm 56 describes the change of heart David underwent, exchanging his fear of man for the fear of God.

(4) While verses 4-7 briefly account for David’s personal deliverance, they emphasize that what God has done for David, God also does for all His own. Notice the interweaving of the specific (David’s deliverance, vv. 4, 6) with the general (God delivers those who look to Him for salvation, vv. 5, 7). David exhorted all the righteous to praise God with him. While they can rejoice in David’s deliverance, they can do so even more enthusiastically when they are reminded that what God has done for David He has done (and will do) for them.

Verse 5 is most often understood as a reference to the countenance of those who look to the Lord for their deliverance. They look to Him, and they are never put to shame by being neglected or forsaken. Verse 7 changes the focus from the security and assurance of the saints to the instrument by which God’s protection is

accomplished and guaranteed. This indeed is one of the few clear references to the “angel of the Lord” in this context in the Old Testament. Just as Elisha was confident of the protection of the angelic hosts when he and his servant were surrounded by the army of Syria (2 Kings 6), so David sees the “angel of the Lord” (whom I understand to be the pre-incarnate Christ) encamped about every saint.

Such protection is unseen under normal circumstances (e.g. 2 Kings 6:17), but nonetheless present. Only by the “eye of faith” can we be assured of divine protection. David was fearful of Achish because he had forgotten that his protector was ever-present. Those who look to God for their protection and deliverance must understand that deliverance may often take place in unexpected and unforeseen ways. In the Old Testament the Son of God was near at hand to save His people, but few were aware of it. In the New Testament the Son of God came to the earth in human flesh to dwell amongst His people and to save them, yet few recognized Him.

An Exhortation to Taste God’s Provision and Protection Personally (34:8-10)

8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! 9 O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him, there is no want. 10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing. (NASB)

David has already exhorted those in the congregation to join with him in praising God as their provider and protector. Now he urges his fellow-Israelites to personally experience this protection and provision.

A significant shift occurs in verse 8. The psalm which is based upon a personal experience in David’s life begins with a commitment to praise God (vv. 1-3), then devotes only four verses to the deliverance of David (vv. 4-7, only two of which are specific). It then shifts from David’s experience to exhortation and instruction of others to experience the goodness of God in their lives. The remainder of Psalm 34 is addressed to others about their own relationship to God.

We can best understand verses 8-10 by answering two questions: (1) Who is David inviting to share his blessings? (2) What are the blessings which they are invited to enjoy with him? Let us consider these questions.

Those who are exhorted to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (v. 8a) are co-worshippers with David, Israelites who have come to worship God. They are not pagans, nor are they apathetic with regard to their attendance at worship. The blessings which they are encouraged to experience are those which David himself has experienced. The “goodness of the Lord” (v. 8a) is God’s protection (v. 8b) and His provision (v. 9b).

We can infer from verses 8-10 that the majority of David’s contemporaries did not experience the fullest blessings of God. After all, why exhort others to experience what they already possess? If the Israelites of David’s day were devout enough to regularly worship, why did they need to be encouraged to taste, to trust, and to fear the Lord? I would suggest that they, like many church-going people today, go through the rituals of worship, but fail to have the relationship with God which enables them to personally experience the provision and protection of God David had come to know.

Why did faithful, worshipping Israelites not know God’s love and care as they should? I believe that the answer is briefly given in verse 10, and the solution is carefully explained in verses 11-22. The one who “takes refuge” in God (v. 8) is depicted by the Hebrew term *geber*, which means “the strong man,” “the mighty man.” The one who is really strong is the one who finds his strength in the Lord and not in himself. Those who have been delivered from their fear of man are those who have come to fear the Lord.

Verse 10 illustrates the principle underlying verses 8 and 9 and also the principle which will be expounded in the following verses. There are few animals as awesome and as powerful as the young lion. He is the epitome of strength, and yet in spite of its strength, the young lion does go hungry. As great as it may be, its strength is no guarantee of abundant provision. In contrast to the young lion who lacks in spite of his strength, those who seek the Lord (uprightly and out of weakness) are assured that they shall not lack “any good thing.” While we are not promised everything we may want if we trust in the Lord, we are promised we will not lack “any good thing.”

The emphasis of verses 8-10 is to invite others to experience the same kind of blessings for which David is praising God. The assumption is that most of his fellow-Israelites are not experiencing these blessings, despite their religious heritage and their devotion to religious ritual. Like the young lions, they have trusted in their own strength and have not trusted in God, and thereby have suffered want. How then shall they enter into the fear of the Lord (v. 9) and thus taste and see (v. 10) the goodness of the Lord? Verses 11-22 answer this question in detail.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/5-psalm-34-fear-lord>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

From a genealogical perspective, Jesus was clearly a descendant of David. We can trace his ancestry using the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3. But when we read Hebrews alongside Psalm 34, we see Jesus linked with David in a different way. David suffered oppression. He had to escape the wrath of one, possibly two, jealous kings. Not only did he trust God for deliverance, but he encouraged others to do the same. Jesus too faced oppression. The paranoid King Herod tried to kill the infant Jesus. Religious and secular authorities eventually succeeded in putting him to death. But Jesus was not someone who obsessed about the injustices surrounding his trial and execution. Rather, he used his experience to identify with us in the many forms of affliction that beset us in a fallen world. His perfect example of faithfulness even in the face of death encourages us to hold fast. Though the world may appear to get the best of us, the God who vindicated Jesus by raising him from the grave will raise us too; and we will reign victorious with him!

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. Our salvation is reason enough to bless the Lord for the rest of our lives (Ps. 34:1)
2. We should testify of God's goodness and rejoice together (vss. 2-3)
3. If we seek the Lord, He will deliver us (vs. 4)
4. God is good and will not withhold any good thing from His people (vss. 5-10)
5. God is merciful and wants to reconcile us to Himself (Heb. 2:17)
6. Jesus is there to help us resist temptation, just as He did (vs. 18)