

READ

Psalm 34

CONSIDER

Last Sunday we read 1 Samuel 21:1-22:5 and learned that David, the national hero who rose to fame as the anointed future king of Israel, suddenly found himself desperately fleeing for his life. From Psalm 56 we learned that David came to Gath in the land of the Philistines and was seized and taken to King Achish. Imagine the situation. Here is David the Israelite who has killed countless Philistines, who is wanted dead by King Saul, now in the hands of King Achish. David was so afraid that he pretended to be insane and acted like a mad man before the Philistines. His plan worked and he got kicked out by King Achish, unscathed and free to go. If you were David, how would you feel and what would you say to God at this point?

Psalm 34 is a prayer written by David after this narrow escape. It is an individual thanksgiving prayer song carefully crafted with acrostic construction using consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabets to start each line. Words of praise and thanksgiving are intertwined with summons, counsels and wisdom instruction. He

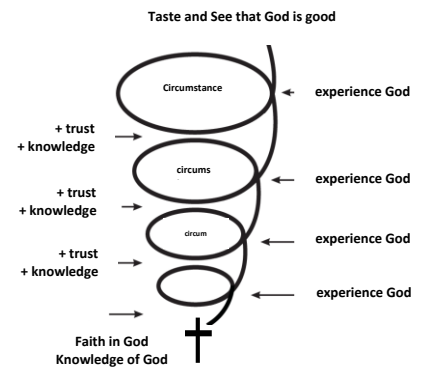
David recalls his experience and acclaims: "Taste and see that the Lord is good". But how is the Lord good? Read the psalm slowly to find out in what ways the Lord is good:

1. What did God do (past), what does God do (present), what will God do (future)?
2. What can we learn about God from these doings?
3. Consider God's promises that are cited in this psalm.
4. What wisdom instruction does David summons all to follow?

Have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good? Use the above questions to reflect on your journey thus far. Recount what God has done in your life and the lessons that you have learned from these experiences. "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*" (Ps. 103:2)

Let us have a quick recap. David found himself in a very traumatic and frightening bad situation that didn't match up with what he anticipated from God. He had to face it and resolve as best as he could. But God was there with him all along. David experienced God's provision, protection and promises that delivered him from his fears and troubles. Through his experience, he gained deeper knowledge of God and grew in wisdom. He summoned all to a life of faith.

Here we get a glimpse of but one out of many episodes in David's life. Likewise we go through life facing different circumstances and situations, one after another. When we seek to follow and trust God, open our eyes and minds to reflect on what God is doing and trying to tell us, through every experience we will grow in faith and in our knowledge of God. We get to understand and trust God's good will and good deeds. We grow in spiritual maturity and godly wisdom. Like a spiral spinning around different circumstances, our faith is entwined with personal experiential knowledge of God's goodness and power.



"Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him". May we see God's goodness in every circumstance and episode in life.

Josephine Chow

PRAY

PRAY the psalm of David in Psalm 34

I will extol 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.

I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
Fear the Lord, you his saints; for those who fear him lack nothing.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry.
The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.
The Lord redeems his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

DIVING DEEPER

Read Psalm 34

- Read v. 1-3. How does David praise God? Consider words like 'at all times' 'always', 'my lips', 'my soul'. What lessons can we learn about our praise and thanksgiving to God?

- v. 4-7 gives the reason for praise. God has delivered David from his fears and troubles. Recall any past experience of God's deliverance of you from troubles. What did you learn about God from those experiences?
- Consider all God's promises that David cites in this psalm. Holding onto these promises, submit your cares and burdens, your fears and tears to God in prayer.
- Consider the instruction and wisdom teachings that David summons all to follow.
- What can we learn from this psalm about God's character and attributes?
- We all have fears. The word fear(s) appear 5 times in this psalm, 'all my fears' and 'fear of the Lord'. What fears do you have in your current state? How would 'fear of the Lord' help?
- Reflect on your life journey and the circumstances that you are facing today. Examine your personal experiential knowledge and relationship with God. Pray for God's help and that your faith can be deepened through all sorts of situations.