

Introduction: “Glass half full/empty”. We tend to think it’s just easier for some people to be positive/happy/thankful. That may be true, but that doesn’t excuse the rest of us, as (I believe) this Psalm makes clear.

I. Joyful Thanksgiving Must Overwhelm the Redeemed

- A. That is David’s confession (v.1,2) and his call to all God’s people (v.3)
- B. While David’s response arose from his own experience (v.4,6), the Psalm applies the call to believers in a much more general way (v.5,8,10), that is, as the way to live life all the time!
- C. In fact, it is what the risen Lord Jesus leads his people in. As the true King of Israel, who fulfills all the promises made to David, He leads His people in praise (Psalm 22:22, Hebrews 2:12) by His outpoured Spirit (Ephesians 5:20)

II. But Such Thanksgiving Doesn’t Ignore This Life’s Difficulties

- A. Note David’s difficulties which occasioned this Psalm
- B. There are afflictions in this life (v.19), sometimes (apparently) even of one’s own making (v.18)
- C. So the thankful believer must take the “long view” of this life, not the myopic or shortsighted view that is so focused on the immediate situation that it sees nothing else (v.15,17,19,22, and even v.20, which must be seen as a reference to the Savior, as John 19:36 implies)

And how else can we comprehend the notion of joyful thanksgiving in the midst of this life’s difficulties **except through the gospel?** Without a Savior, the solemn warnings of v.16 and v.21 must be faced. But with faith in the Lord Jesus, of course there is reason for confidence and hope, as the verses just noted show.

But how, as your profession of faith in Christ develops, do you come to have this “long view” of life that I’ve just mentioned?

III. The “Long View” of Joyful Gratitude Must be Rooted in the Fear of God!

- A. The fear of God has become something of a foreign concept in modern evangelicalism
- B. But for the Bible’s writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is the heart of godliness (v.7,9,11)
- C. Instead of just trying to define this fear for you, I want to suggest how we develop and grow in it
 - 1. You must keep your view of self small (v.18, cf. Isaiah 57:15)
 - 2. Keep your view of God **BIG** (v.4b,6b,7,15-17)

3. So while the words reverence or respect or awe are useful, the fear of God will not be grasped unless we recognize that it involves not only knowledge of the character of God, but also a growing humility in regard to self
4. And as with all true biblical doctrine, it's not just something we affirm on paper or declare with our mouths to be true, but something we live (v.13,14).

Conclusion – Psalm 34 teaches us the necessity of continual, joyful thanksgiving as we learn to fear the Lord. It leads us to look to the saving work of the Lord Jesus with humble faith.