

Psalm 34:1-7

- ¹ 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.
- 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.

“A Lesson in Praise” **Psalm 34:1-7**

INTRO:

When we read **Psalm 34** and are caught up in its praise, we often forget the trauma in David’s life which gave birth to this anthem of praise. David wrote **Psalm 56** about this same event. It starts as darkly as **Psalm 34** is bright. *“Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, For there are many who fight against me, O Most High.”* (Psalm 56:1-2). How did David get from **Psalm 56** to **Psalm 34**? His commitment in **56:3** paved the way. *“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.”* He trusted, God delivered, and David praised.

I. THE SETTING OF THE PSALM

II. THE EXERCISE OF PRAISE (v. 1-3)

III. THE BLESSING OF PRAISE (v. 4-7)

I. THE SETTING OF THE PSALM

A. The setting of this Psalm as described in the title is found in **1 Samuel 21:10-15**. *“Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said to him, ‘Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?’”* Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. Then Achish said to

his servants, 'Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?'"

1. Because of the insane jealousy of King Saul, David has to flee for his life. He is living the life of a fugitive. Every step must be taken carefully, for if Saul learns where he is, he could easily be killed.

2. Because we are so familiar with the story of what took place, we often overlook the pressure cooker David was in at that moment. He ran from King Saul in Israel, only to find death staring him in the face in Gath.

B. Because of Saul's pursuit, David fled his home into the kingdom of the Philistines. This looked like a good idea at the time. However, David did not take into account that his fame might precede him there. In the land of Philistia, David faced a new threat to his life.

1. David, immediately adopted a strategy to escape this situation. He pretended to have lost his sanity.

2. The strategy worked. When he was brought to the king, the king has him thrown out. **(vs.14-15)**

C. Having escaped this life threatening situation, David did not congratulate himself on his personal creativity and resultant triumph. Rather, he recognized God's hand in his rescue and as was his habit, he wrote this great hymn of praise to his Sovereign God.

II. THE EXERCISE OF PRAISE (v. 1-3)

A. He opened his song by singing his commitment to continually praise God. **(v.1)**
"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

1. David understood the need to be continually and constantly praising God. Now remember what praise is. Praise is the recitation of Who God is and what He has done.

2. To David, praise was a daily habit. **(Psalm 145:1)**
"I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless your name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless you; and I will praise your name for ever and ever."

3. David praised God for many things. **(I)** He praised the LORD for His uniqueness and power.

Psalm 86:8-10 *“Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; nor are there any works like Your works. All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.”*

(2) He praised the LORD for His holiness.

Psalm 29:2 *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”*

(3) He praised the LORD for His grace and mercy.

Psalm 145:8-10 *“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless You.”*

(4) And David praised God for being his security and strength in difficult situations.

Psalm 144:1-2 *“Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle— My lovingkindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, My shield and the One in whom I take refuge, who subdues my people under me.”*

4. Are we committed to praise? David praised God at the high points of his life. He also knew how to praise in the valleys. David understood the importance of continual praise and practiced it!

B. In **verse 2** he demonstrated a little of what praise is all about.

“My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad.”

Praise is our souls making its boast in the Lord. Do we brag about God? We should.

1. Listen to what our God told Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the Lord.”

David loved to brag about his God, mainly because there literally is nothing his God cannot do.

2. Bragging about our God brought a response in those who recognized God's greatness and their own lack of strength. **(2b)**

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

Those who love the LORD join in the rejoicing in our God.

C. **Verse 3** calls upon us to join our hearts and voices with his in praise to our eternal God.

1. Praise is not only the occupation of one voice. Praise seeks others to praise God with him.

2. For some reason when I read this verse I think of the passage in **Revelation 5:8-13**.

“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.’ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing.”

III. THE BLESSING OF PRAISE (v. 4-7)

A. We have looked at the setting of the Psalm and the exercise of praise. Let me just briefly in closing look at the Blessing of Praise.

B. In **verse 4**, David tells of the occasion that sparked his praise. God had uniquely blessed him by answering his cry for help! More than just delivering him from his situation. God also delivered him from his fears. **(v.4)**

“I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

How did He do that? By showing Himself faithful in this situation, David learned that he could trust God in other situations too!

C. Now in **verse 5** we find one of the first benefits of praise. **(v.5)**

“They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed.”

Others learn of what God has done in our lives and they then trust the LORD and find Him faithful in their lives too.

D. In **verses 6-7** David showed us the second benefit we receive from praise.

Verse 6 is a repeat of the assertion of **verse 4**.

“This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles.”

Some things bear repeating! Because of this David learned something about His God. **(v.7)**

“The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.”

God protects His own and God works even when we cannot see Him working.

What Do We Take From all of This?

1. Praise is for every event in life. We do not get brownie points for praise, but we get great help to get us through.
2. Our reminding others how great our God is helps them praise and trust also.
3. We need deliverance from actual peril and from our fears.
4. God will never leave or forsake His children. He will always help them and deliver them. When you are afraid, trust in God and in His Word.

Hymn #494 *Like A River Glorious*