

## Slide content for Psalm 34 “Blessed Refuge” - 3/13/22

Outline:

### 1) Desperation and deliverance (34:4-7)

Alec Motyer, “One does not need much imagination to think what a good story David would have made of his pretended loopiness, and how he fooled his way out of danger in Gath. So think of him recounting his cleverness yet once more, when suddenly it came over him that in fact there was a ‘real’ story hidden inside the ‘good’ story – a real story of prayer made and prayer answered. Yes, he had played the madman...but he had also prayed...and wasn’t that the real story? Wasn’t that what he ought to be telling his friends? Not boosting his own cleverness but boasting and rejoicing confidently in his saving, delivering God? Did he suddenly stop telling the tale, and say ‘Please excuse me’ and slip off to some solitary place where he could write what we call Psalm 34? ... The story within the story is the one to listen to, and it is written for our learning in Psalm 34.” (Motyer, *Psalms By the Day*, 88)

### “How Deep the Father’s Love For Us”

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure

...

Behold the man upon a cross  
My sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything  
No gifts, no power, no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart  
His wounds have paid my ransom

**Galatians 6:14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**1 Corinthians 1:26** For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

2) Magnify Yahweh with me! (34:1-3)

**Eph. 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

**1Pet. 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

CS Lewis, in "A Word About Praising" (from *Reflections on the Psalms*)

**... When I first began to draw near to belief in God and even for some time after it had been given to me, I found a stumbling block in the demand so clamorously made by all religious people that we should "praise" God; still more in the suggestion that God Himself demanded it. We all despise the man who demands continued assurance of his own virtue, intelligence or delightfulness; we despise still more the crowd of people round every dictator, every millionaire, every celebrity, who gratify that demand. Thus a picture, at once ludicrous and horrible, both of God and of His worshippers, threatened to appear in my mind.**

**The Psalms were especially troublesome in this way – "Praise the Lord," "O praise the Lord with me," "Praise Him." (And why, incidentally, did praising God so often consist in telling other people to praise Him?)**

... It was extremely distressing. ... The miserable idea that God should in any sense need, or crave for, our worship like a vain woman wanting compliments...

**But the most obvious fact about praise – whether of God or anything – strangely escaped me. ... I have never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise... The world rings with praise – lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game – praise of weather, wines, dishes,**

actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars.

I had not noticed how the humblest, and at the same time most balanced and capacious, praised most, while the cranks, misfits and malcontents praised least. ... **praise almost seems to be inner health made audible.**

... I had not noticed either that **just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it:** “Isn’t she lovely? Wasn’t it glorious? ... **The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.** ...

**I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation... the delight is incomplete till it is expressed.**

**The Scotch catechism says that man’s chief end is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever”. But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.**

### 3) Taste and fear (34:8-10)

Jonathan Edwards, from his sermon, “A Divine and Supernatural Light”:

“There is a difference between having an *opinion* that God is holy and gracious, and having a *sense* of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness.

So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful, and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance.

There is a wide difference between mere speculative rational judging a thing to be excellent, and having a sense of its sweetness and beauty. The former rests only in the head, but the heart is concerned in the latter.”

**Eph. 3:14-19** For this reason I bow my knees before the Father...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

### 4) Learning the fear of Yahweh (34:11-14)

Peter Craigie, “The fear of the Lord is indeed the foundation of life, the key to joy in life and long and happy days. But it is not a guarantee that life will be always easy, devoid of the difficulties that may seem to mar so much of human existence. The fear of the Lord establishes joy and fulfillment in all of life experiences. It may mend the broken heart, but it does not prevent the heart from being broken; it may restore the spiritually crushed, but it does not crush the forces that may create oppression. The psalm, if fully grasped, dispels the naivete of that faith which does not contain within it the strength to stand against the onslaught of evil.”

#### 5) Redemption or condemnation (34:15-22)

[Kathy Keller](#), “For the last eleven months I’ve known anxiety, fear, emergency plane rides, surgery, more surgery, emergency surgery, more emergency surgery, infection, infections that occurred while on antibiotics from the previous infection, non-healing surgical wounds, more surgery, and, not least in my litany of self-pity, twice daily dressing changes for wounds that will not go away.

...it sounds as if the psalmist is giving us a blanket promise that God will always deliver us from our troubles, comfort us when we are crushed and brokenhearted, and protect us from harm.

But wait. Verse 20, where the psalmist says “he (God) will protect all his bones, not one of them will be broken” is a messianic prophecy. It is quoted in John’s gospel account of the crucifixion of Jesus, when the soldiers refrained from breaking Jesus’ legs to hasten his death, because he was already dead. John says in 19:36 “These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken.’”

My reaction at noticing this was at first bewilderment. Well, yes, none of his bones got broken, but he did get crucified! That kind of doesn’t count as being protected from anything bad in my book. But when it comes to my understanding vs. scripture, I know there is always something lacking in my understanding. Jesus’ bones weren’t broken, but he died a painful, hideous death. God didn’t save him from that. But God’s protection of Jesus extended *past* the grave. He was raised from the dead.

Follow the thread, Kathy, follow the thought. While God may not protect you from every bad thing that might, has, or could happen to you, ultimately, through resurrection, you are safe. I will walk through death and come out on the other side fully healed, restored, saved and protected. God does not protect us from things that harm us, he protects us as we go through them, to the other side of the resurrection, where our real hopes and happiness lie. Now there’s a thought I can cling to.”