

**\* The Heights Baptist Church \* Series: The Psalms \***  
**\* Topic: God Our Deliverer \* Psalm 34 \* 8/31/25 \***

MAIN POINT

We can maintain our faith in the midst of life's storms because we know we are loved by God, and we know He takes care of us in all circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

**Describe a natural disaster or storm you lived through.**

**What questions might people ask about God when they encounter a "storm," or trial, in life?**

David wrote Psalm 34 when he had been delivered by God from a difficult situation.

Fifteen Psalms are classified as Psalms of Thanksgiving, where the writers express gratitude to God for His blessings. In Psalm 34, David thanks God for delivering him from a very difficult situation.

UNDERSTANDING

BACKGROUND

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 SAMUEL 21:10—22:1

**This is the event going on in David's life when he wrote Psalm 34. What do you think David's life was like when he wrote this Psalm?**

David wrote Psalm 34 when he was on the run from King Saul and had resorted to trying to hide in the territory of the Philistines, with whom Israel was at war. When David was brought before the king of the Philistines, he pretended to be insane in an attempt to get the king to let him live. Miraculously, David's plan worked, and he wrote Psalm 34 in response to God mercifully delivering him.

To have to flee from Saul to the very people David had been fighting against was frightening (vs. 12). And having to resort to feigning insanity to save his own life must have been quite a low point for him.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 34:1-10

**What do these verses add to what David's life must have been like at the time he wrote this Psalm?**

It sounds like David was feeling afflicted (vs. 2), fearful (vs. 4), shameful (vs. 5), and troubled (vs. 6).

**In verses 1-3, what different words are used to describe how David praises God for delivering him?**

Extol or bless (vs. 1), glory in or boast in (vs. 2), rejoice or be glad (vs. 2), glorify or magnify (vs. 3), and exalt (vs. 3).

**How do these verses collectively describe David's attitude toward God that results in his praise?**

David seems overwhelmed with how God delivered him and now desires to bring glory to God's name.

**In verses 4-7, what are some of the ways God has encouraged David as He delivered him?**

God answered him, delivered him (vs. 4), heard him (vs. 6) and saved him from all his troubles (vs. 6).

How does verse 7 combine all these descriptions of how God delivered him?

**Note to study leader:** *In the Old Testament, the “Angel of the LORD” is thought to be the preincarnate Christ. He speaks of what God is doing in the first person (Gen. 16:7, 13; Gen. 22:11-12, Judges 2:1-4).*

God doesn't just provide what we need; He provides Himself! God is not an elusive deity we have to search far and wide to find. Rather, He “encamps around those who fear Him.” To encamp around is to surround for an extended period of time, meaning God thoroughly protects us.

### **What is significant about the verbs used in verse 8?**

David's relationship with God is not merely intellectual; David has experiential knowledge of his God. He has tasted and seen for himself that God is good. God's goodness is to be experienced through our relationship with Him.

In verse 8, David doesn't describe God as simply providing good things for us; He is the ultimate good. Only God Himself can fill our lives with true joy, something that possessions can never do. Within the refuge of His presence, God has promised that we “will not lack any good thing” (v. 10).

### **To fear God is to be in awe of Him. Looking at verse 9, how does deep reverence for God lead to a fulfilled life in which we lack nothing?**

All of us want to find contentment in life, but our human nature and our culture have put their own spin on what that contentment should look like. The world bases contentment and happiness on how much money a person has, the care they drive, or a myriad of other unimportant things. This promise is for all who “seek the Lord.” Jesus stated the same truth in the Sermon on the Mount: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you” (Matt. 6:33). Whatever our needs, He “is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20).

### **In verse 10, what is significant about the fact that even lions may grow weak and weary?**

The lion is the greatest of the wild animals (the king of the jungle). And even this powerful, noble creature is not capable of delivering itself from basic weaknesses like fatigue or hunger.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 34:11-22

### **David has been thanking God for delivering Him. What do these verses say about what our responsibility is in our relationship with Him?**

We've already seen that when we fear God (v. 9) and seek Him (v. 10), He meets us in our need and provides abundantly. But what does it look like to seek and fear the Lord? David highlighted three important actions for us to follow: “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from deceitful speech”; “Turn away from evil and do what is good”; and “Seek peace and pursue it.” It is our role to respond to God with fear, reverence, submission, and holy obedience.

### **How do these verses contrast the idea that religious rituals are what leads to blessings from God?**

These verses align very well with the beatitudes given by Jesus on the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5: 12). The ones who God blesses are those who are humble, meek, brokenhearted, desire to live righteously, and are willing to be persecuted for the sake of Christ.

*“We are all of us remarkably good-tempered while we have our own way; but the true meekness, which is a work of grace, will stand the fire of persecution, and will endure the test of enmity, cruelty, and wrong, even as the meekness of Christ did upon the cross of Calvary.” Charles Spurgeon*

**Psalm 34:18 specifically identifies the broken hearted and those crushed in spirit as the ones whom God saves and is close to. Jesus describes “the poor in spirit” as the ones who will see the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3). What do you think this means?**

A first step in coming to Jesus is recognizing our own spiritual emptiness, and our complete need for God’s mercy and grace in order for Him to deliver us. This runs completely contrary to our human tendency toward self-sufficiency and pride.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 PETER 1:3-9

**According to 1 Peter 1:3-5, what has God done for us? How do you see God’s love for us on display in these verses?**

The book of 1 Peter quotes Psalm 34 eight times—it seems Peter was meditating on it as he wrote his letter. Peter helps us see how God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to us. It is through a relationship with Christ that we are delivered from all of the troubles we face on this earth.

Through the death and resurrection of Christ, God has given all who believe a “new birth into a living hope”, securing for us an eternal inheritance that will never perish. We don’t need to worry about whether God loves us; He has demonstrated His love fully through Jesus.

**What do verses 5-8 teach us about how God delivers us from our trials?**

Trials and difficulties can be a blessing because they often force us to cut ties with the things of the world and run to Christ. When we face trying times, God challenges us to consider who we need to turn to for true hope and joy. Peter says that trials show “genuine” character of your faith.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 19:34-37

**How did Jesus fulfill Psalm 34:20. Why is this important?**

None of Jesus’ bones were broken not only to show us one of the many ways Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy, but to show us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the entirety of Psalm 34. In other words, Jesus is the One who makes us able to taste and see that the Lord is good.

**How does Jesus make us able to taste and see that the Lord is good?**

APPLICATION

**How can we focus our lives on God’s goodness and His love for us, even as we endure trials?**

**Why is it important not just to remember God’s love for us in times of going through the dark valleys, but also in times of green pastures and still waters?**

**How can you intentionally taste the goodness of God this week?**

**How will you take refuge in the Lord this week?**

PRAYER

Thank God for letting us taste and see that He is good through the gift of His Son, and the gift of his Holy Spirit. Ask God to help us trust His goodness even during difficult times. Pray that we would see trials and difficulties as opportunities to grow in our dependence on Christ and opportunities to treasure Him more. Pray that our lives would be a witness for Christ, pointing others to Him.

## COMMENTARY

### Psalm 34

Introduction: The incident mentioned in the title of the Psalm is found in 1 Samuel 21:10-15, where David is delivered from King Achish of Gath. Although an unusual account of deliverance, David praises Yahweh for rescuing him. This psalm can be applied to any situation we face in Christ.

34:1 Some translations translate verse 1 as saying, I will extol the LORD (NIV), and others say, I will bless the LORD (ESV). Both ideas are included in the Hebrew word “barak”. It means, to kneel before, bless, salute, or praise.

34:2 “Boast in the Lord” is described in Jeremiah 9:23-24 as to “understand and know” Yahweh, which is further explained as knowing that Yahweh shows “faithful love, justice, and righteousness on the earth.” We boast in God for who He is and what He does, as we experience Him through trusting in Him.

34:3-5 “Look to” is another way of expressing trust in time of need (145:15) and is equivalent to “seek” in some contexts (Isa. 31:1).

34:6 David identifies himself with the oppressed. The term can also designate someone who is humble or, in the more negative sense, humiliated. The word for “afflicted” (‘ani) is often associated with the poor. The poor were the weakest and most helpless in society and were often the objects of oppression by stronger and more influential people.

34:7 “The angel of the LORD” can also be translated as “messenger of Yahweh.” In most contexts there is a distinction between God and this angel. For example, in the story of Gideon, the angel of the Lord vanished (Judg. 6:21), but Gideon continued to speak to Yahweh (Judg. 6:22-24). This seems to indicate that they were different. However, in other contexts the angel of the Lord spoke as if he were God Himself (Gen. 22:11-12; Ex. 3:2). Since no one has seen God, but God the only Son has made Him known (John 1:18), this may specifically be a Christophany. The inclusion of military imagery (note the word camps) appears elsewhere to show that Yahweh fights for His people (2 Kings 19:35).

34:8 “Taste” can mean “judge” in the sense of determine for oneself (Prov. 31:18). “See” most likely carries the same sense in order to reinforce the concept.

34:9-10 God values people more than the rest of His creation (8:5-8). Since God cares for His creation, He will care for mankind (104:14-15) and especially for His own people (Matt. 6:28-30). “Lack nothing” also appears in the context of Yahweh’s role as a Shepherd in Psalm 23:1.

34:11 The identification of David’s listeners as children recalls a common wisdom motif of parents instructing their children (Ex. 12:26; Deut. 6:6-9) and shows that Psalm 34:11-14 form a wisdom section in this psalm (similar to 32:8-9). To be taught to fear the Lord is preferable to learning it through experience. Fearing the Lord is where wisdom begins (Pr. 9:10).

34:12-16 “Wipes out all memory of them from the earth” is another way to describe annihilation.

34:17-18 “Brokenhearted” and “discouraged” emphasize internal suffering. Yahweh is near those who are broken and humble (51:17) as opposed to those who have “hearts of stone” (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26).

34:19-20 Broken bones are often symbols of physical affliction (51:8; Isa. 38:13) or oppression (Mic. 3:3). God protects His own from these dangers.

34:21-22 “Evil” (ra’ah) can mean disaster and calamity as well as the abstract concept of evil. Note how this contrasts with goodness and faithful love pursuing the person who trusts in Yahweh (23:6).