

Psalm 34:1-10
From Despair to Deliverance

INTRODUCTION:

Illustration of Lucy the Cat

We had a cat called Lucy. Lucy was a he and not a she. But that is an whole other story. Lucy had to go when we moved to Prince George. I remember Lucy was a little bit crazy. He had an hatred for vacuum cleaners. Whenever Lucy heard the vacuum cleaner, he would dash upstairs as fast as he could and hide in the same bedroom closet every time. Too bad for Lucy, The closet where he always took refuge was carpeted too, so it needed to be vacuumed.

When the time came for me to open the closet door and vacuum, Lucy was cornered. There was no where for him to go but straight-right into the vacuum cleaner. You never saw a cat run as fast as Lucy did when the closet door open.

I think this real life illustration describes the condition of David when he stood before the King of Gath.

Psalm 34 was written after the Lord delivered David from the hand of Achish and was probably first sung in a cave called Adullah.

Feeling cornered and no where to go, David was out of options. I Samuel 21 records the historical account between David and the King of Gath

We read in verses 11-15

11And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances,

saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

12And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

14Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?

15Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

Why did David flee to Gath? This was the city where Goliath had hailed from and it was the stronghold of the Philistines, the sworn enemy of Israel. Strangely and surprisingly, David fled to Gath. David chose Gath to take refuge.

When David met Achish the king of Gath, he became sore afraid and feared for his life. David had convinced himself that if he did not do something drastic the Philistines would kill him and his men. Therefore, in an act of desperation, David played the role of a mad man in the presence of the Philistine King.

You might ask yourself, is this the same man that we read about in I Samuel 17 who defeated the Philistine champion Goliath. Who said to King Saul, “Thy servant will go up and fight against this uncircumcised Philistine.”

The contrasts between David’s behavior here in I Samuel 21 and at other times in his life are striking. There were times when David is riding high on the mountain tops of faith. But then there were other times in his life when the flesh rose up, and he finds himself in the valley of gloom.

We have the same ups and downs in our own Christian lives, don't we? There are times when we experience great spiritual victories and blessings. We meet the Lord in special ways in prayer and around His Word and we believe "we can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." However, there are other times when unbelief raises its ugly head and we feel defeated and despondent. Paul writes in **Romans 7:18-25**

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Despite this strange behavior of David, the Lord intervened and heard the cry of his servant and delivered him from the hand of the King of Gath. The cry of David is recorded for us in Psalm 56:1-3

1 Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that

fight against me, O thou most High.

3What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

Now we come to Psalm 34 (I will be looking at the first ten verses). We see from Psalm 34 that David was not delivered from Achish because he was cleverer or smarter than the king. David was delivered because the Lord heard the cry of his child. A King greater than Achish was working in the life of David. It was His loving and sovereign King, Jehovah, who set him free from the hand of his enemy.

Psalm 34 surpasses the personal experience of David, and reaches the lives of all of God's people. From Despair to Deliverance was the testimony of David in Psalm 34 and this is our testimony, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. David shares three responses of a man who was in despair but delivered by the Mighty Hand of God.

I. The first response is Praise (vv.1-3)

1. Praise is personal v.1

- “I” will bless the Lord at all times
- The word *bless* is used exactly the same whether God blesses us or when we bless God. We know there is a vast difference in meaning.
- When God blesses us he gives us something that we didn't have before. Where we were lacking, He enriches and empowers our impoverished souls. He confers upon us grace and favor when we are undeserving.
- But when we bless God we can't add to His fullness or happiness. We can't give God anything because He lacks nothing.

- So what does it mean to bless God?

It means to declare that Eternal Blessedness in God. That God is Great and Glorious and Sufficient in Himself. It means that we recognize and acknowledge who the Lord is. Holy. Immutable. Perfect. And worthy of Praise and Honor.

Amazing that God receives praise from such poor, vile sinners as we are. Filthy in sin but clean in the blood of Christ

APPLICATION: We are here today to Praise Jesus Christ. The one who has delivered us from despair, sin, and hopelessness. The Wondrous Works of God in salvation and creation. To bless His holy name!

When Christ is our object we respond with Praise and Adoration. But when we don't look to Christ and make other things our focus the result is different.

Psalm 73:3 The Psalmist looked at the ungodly and notice the effect it had on him.

“For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”

Psalm 77:6-9 The Psalmist focused to long on his sin and notice the effect it had on him.

“I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.
7Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? 8Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? 9Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?”

Psalm 34 teaches us to look away from the world and look away from our sins and look to Christ for salvation, and this produces praise and adoration to God.

2. Praise is continual v.1

- “At all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”
- When there is no cause to be happy, When the news is black and bleak.
- Blessing of my soul doesn’t depend on riches, favor, position. Depends on X. Circumstances may change. Feelings may change. Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Philippians 4:11-13 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have *learned*, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

3. Praise is boasting v.2

Boasting in the LORD is necessary. Micah makes his boast in the Lord.

Micah 7:18 “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.”

Paul teaches us to boast in the Cross of Christ.

Galatians 6:14

14But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

4. Praise is Corporate

- “Praises to God are better sung in concert.” United Praise
- Hearts that are bursting and overflowing with joy for Christ

Ephesians 1:3-6 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

- What kind of people were with David? The outcasts and nobodies of society.

1 Samuel 22 1David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

2And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

This describes us as sinners.

II. From Despair to Deliverance should lead us to PRAYER (vv 4-7)

- Urgent Need to pray Read v. 4
- Old Puritan preacher observed, “God expects to hear from you before you can expect to hear from him.”

Fears-We can’t see a way out. We can’t understand.

Philippians 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

He heard me! The urgent need is to pray.

V. 5 tells us that the Lord received them. Not rejected or turned them away but they were enlightened. Encouraged. Inspired.

- Our Poor Condition in prayer (Read v. 6)
Weak and “nothing to bring but simply to thy cross I cling!”

Billions of people. Vast universe. No one else would hear me. But the Lord does. He sees. He hears. He knows.

APPLICATION: Do you come before the Lord poor and needy recognizing your great need of Him?

- Sure Help promised in prayer (Read v. 7)

1 John 2:1

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God, and one **mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

III. From despair to deliverance should lead to a stronger TRUST in the Lord VV 8-10

Verse 8 “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that **trusteth** in him.”

1. Taste and See/Experience.

I Peter 2:3 “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. You want more of the Lord and His grace.”

C.H. Spurgeon observed, “Experience is the only true test of religious truth.”

- A famous American writer wrote, “A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.”
- We must receive Christ by faith and we must live Christ by faith. We are not to settle for theoretical knowledge. People can explain truth and teach it but they have never experienced it.

2. Those who trust in the Lord are those who **Fear the Lord (vv. 9-10)**

- This fear is not a terror or servile fear. But a fear of reverence and awe. It is a way of trusting the Lord and this is illustrated with the picture of the young lions.

Picture of the young lions: Extremely unlikely that young lions will be short of food. Lions are strong and fierce. Look after themselves. When fully grown they are at the height of their powers. It is more possible for the strong young lions with all of their skill, power, and ferocity to be hungry than the People of God to lack what they really need from their Gracious and Loving Father in Heaven.

From despair to deliverance should lead to three things in the life of God's people: Praise, Prayer, and Trust. Let us meditate upon this word as we come before the Lord at the Lord's Table.