

Delivered from Fears

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[0 : 00] 34, 22 verses, Psalm 34. The title says, Of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out and he went away.

I'll read it out loud. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord.

Let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. We'll taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

[1 : 11] O fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack. The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Come, O children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is there who desires life and loves many days that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

Turn away from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their cry.

The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

[2 : 14] He keeps all his bones. Not one of them is broken. Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The Lord redeems the life of his servants.

None of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. This psalm is about fearing God, that we are to fear God because God attends to the righteous but contends with the wicked.

And fear is, as we know, a very powerful motivator, and that's why we see it everywhere around us.

We see it in our politics from both the left and right side of the spectrum.

Every election cycle seems we're on the verge of some kind of apocalyptic threats, right? Fears, fear-mongering in a way, too, because it generates interest.

It generates money. It's a powerful motivator. So fears of terrorism, economic collapse, cyber warfare, global warming, government corruption. It's a rallying tool.

[3 : 16] And David himself wrote the psalm probably. He was familiar with many fears. And he wrote this one in one of the most fearful moments of his life, when he was fleeing for his life from Saul.

And he fled to the territory of the Philistines. And there, because he feared for his life in the presence of the king Achish, the king of Gath, he changed his behavior, acted like a madman in order to avoid his attention.

And here in the title, it says that he did this before Abimelech, which might seem like a contradiction at first, because it's actually Achish, according to 1 Samuel 21. But it's because Abimelech is most likely a title for Philistine kings, just like Pharaoh is a title for Egyptian kings.

So that's why Abimelech appears so frequently throughout the book of Genesis and other parts.

And so it's just referring to the king of Philistine, which was Achish at the time. And so the first part, it tells us that God attends to the righteous.

And David kind of tells his first personal testimony in verses 1 to 4, telling us that he sought the Lord, and then God answered him and delivered him, which is a key word in the psalm. Deliver,

deliver occurs many times.

[4 : 29] He delivered me from all my fears. And how did God deliver David from all his fears? And ironically, it's the fear of God that delivered David from fear of other things, because it's only fearing God that can deliver us from all the other fears.

And he talks about this in verses 7 to 11. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. Will taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack.

The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. Come, O Lord, listen to me. Come, O children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. And the young lions here is a metaphorical reference to kind of predatory people who are really powerful and self-sufficient, seemingly.

And I mean, because if you think about it, out in the wild, if there's one animal that doesn't go hungry, it's the lions, right? I mean, they're the strongest, so they don't go hungry, especially the young lions, right? Maybe the old lions maybe can't hunt anymore, but the young lions never go hungry.

But David's saying that even the young lions, even when they suffer want and hunger, yet even then those who seek the Lord lack no good thing, right? So self-sufficient predators will go hungry, but God-fearing people will be satisfied.

[5 : 47] That's what he's saying. And that's such a challenge to the predominant message in our culture, in our society, which is to lean in, go get it, right? It's to be aggressive, fight for it.

But the message of the word of God instead is fear God, right? And to fear God, we talked about this on Sundays, to accord proper reverence and honor to God, and to live as if we're before him in his presence, with awareness of his sovereignty, goodness, you know, power, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence.

And when we live like that, the reason why that fear of God drives out all the other fears is because when we live as if God really is sovereign, really is good, and really is everywhere, and really is all-powerful and all-knowing, then uncontrollable and seemingly uncertain and even seemingly harmful circumstances in our lives are bearable, right?

We don't have to be afraid of them. We don't have to fear them because God's in control. And this kind of presence of God in our midst is described in really personal terms in verse 15 to 18, very intimate terms.

It says, The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

[7 : 03] But when the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Right?

It's a, I mean, it's in, God's described in human terms, right, to really convey that relationship, personal and intimate relationship. He's looking at us. He's watching us throughout the day to make sure that he can respond when we're in need.

He says his ears are toward our cry. It's almost like his strain is to hear anything, the faintest cry that we might voice in our troubles.

And he's near us. He's not aloof. He's not indifferent. He's intimately involved in our lives and our welfare. In contrast, God, so God attends to the righteous, but he contends with the wicked.

So he says in verse 16 that the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. So he still relates personally with the wicked, but instead of attending to them and caring for them, his face is set against them in opposition to them.

[8 : 11] And that's what sets the righteous apart from the wicked. They will both, on the surface, at least look very similar. They will all experience successes and failures in life, and they will both experience suffering and hardship.

And you see this in verses 19 and 20, right? Because it says that both the righteous and the wicked experience affliction, the same word. It says that many are the afflictions of the righteous, right?

But the difference, of course, is that the Lord delivers the righteous out of them all. But for the wicked, the affliction will slay them, and they will be condemned. So God won't keep the righteous from afflictions, but he will deliver them from them, through them, out of them.

And this assurance, of course, is given only to the righteous. And that's troubling for people who know that we are not perfectly righteous.

And that's where this psalm points to Jesus and finds its fulfillment in Jesus. Because it says in verse 20, God keeps all his bones. Not one of them is broken, right? It's a metaphorical way of referring to God's sustaining help and his protection.

[9 : 21] And this verse is quoted by Apostle John in John 19, 36, to describe Jesus' suffering on the cross. It says of him that not one, for these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, John 19, 36.

Not one of his bones will be broken, right? And though Christ suffered pain and death, God ultimately delivered him and raised him from the dead by his spirit. And what he accomplished for us on the cross is the basis for our righteousness, our right standing with God.

And then because of that, we can live with hope. Because of that, we can live with faith. And because of that, we can live in love. Because we know that through Jesus, we can look to God. And we can be assured that he's always attending to us as his people. So with that, let's turn to prayer.