

Psalm 34

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 July 2021

Preacher: Dan Roca

[0 : 00] Right. Am I on? It sounds like I'm on. Okay, good. Yeah, so today we are in Psalm 34. Let's turn our Bibles there.

Now, before I read together, I'm going to turn there too because I should probably have the Bible open, you know, preaching. It's good. So before I read, let me tell you the context of this psalm.

You see the heading of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech so that he drove him out and he went away. He escaped. Right. So a little backstory about David.

So Saul was the anointed king. He became king and he did some things that lost favor with the Lord. And so God appointed and anointed another king to succeed Saul, David.

David was humble. Saul was tall and arrogant and kind of everything you might think of as a king. David was kind of the opposite, smaller, humble.

[1 : 17] And because of this, Saul was very angry and he actually sought to kill David. He saw him as a rival, even though David didn't do anything against Saul.

And so David seeks refuge from a priest. He's a local priest and he needs a weapon because Saul is pursuing him really with his army.

And so he goes to the priest. Do you have any weapons? And the priest, this is a, this is a, we don't have weapons in the temple. Oh yeah, we have Goliath's sword.

You remember you fought Goliath and killed him with his own sword. We have that sword. There's none like it. Okay. Yeah, I'll take that. It's a gigantic sword and it's very obvious what it is.

This is the sword of Goliath of the Philistines. So I'm not exactly sure why, but David then sought refuge in the land of the Philistines with Achish.

[2 : 20] Says Abimelech here, that's maybe a title for Achish. Achish was the fiercest of the Philistine kings. And here's David coming with Goliath's sword.

I'm not sure this is the wisest plan. And the Philistine king, they're made aware, hey, this is David of the Israelites.

Saul killed his thousands, but David killed his ten thousands. He's just a dangerous man. And so David sees this happening and he figures, oh no, I'm in serious trouble.

Achish and his band, they're going to kill me. And so what David does is he pretends to be insane. So much so that he drools even on his own beard and the spit goes down.

And this is just gross. And I mean, it's gross today, right? But even back then, a beard, that's like a sacred thing. You know, you see guys with the like really nice beards and all trim and stuff like that.

[3 : 26] Imagine drool coming down that. And that's just an indignity. And so, I mean, you've got to be insane to do that or you're acting insane. In which case, who would do that? That's just, that's crazy.

And so Achish is repulsed by this. And David is able to kind of escape because he pretended to be insane. And so that's where we find ourselves with this psalm.

And so let's read it. And we see David's perspective on this whole matter. And I think it's a lot different perspective than if you read this story in 1 Samuel.

Psalm 34. I will bless, well, let me say this before I read this. Because I'm going to read this when it says Lord, all capital letters, right?

This is a little aside, but that means Yahweh. Yahweh, I am that I am. We just sang about that. The great I am. That's his covenant name. So I think we should use it sometimes. And so I'm going to use it here as I read in place of Lord.

[4 : 27] I'm going to say Yahweh. That's just his covenant name. I am that I am. And so it's the name that God has given us for himself. You don't have to use that name, but I'm going to do that this time.

So here we go. Psalm 34. I will bless Yahweh 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. Oh, magnify Yahweh with me and let us exalt his name together.

I sought Yahweh 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 Yahweh heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of Yahweh encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.

[5 : 31] Oh, taste and see that Yahweh is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Oh, fear Yahweh, you his saints.

For those who fear him have no lack. The young lions suffer want and hunger. But those who seek Yahweh lack no good thing.

Come, oh children, listen to me. I will teach you to fear Yahweh. 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 Yahweh are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.

The face of Yahweh is against those who do evil. To cut off the memory of them from the earth. When the righteous cry for help, Yahweh hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

[6 : 40] Yahweh is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but Yahweh delivers him out of them all.

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. Yahweh redeems the life of his servants.

None of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. Let's pray. Father, we thank you.

Thank you that we know you by many names. Your covenant name, Yahweh. Father. We know Jesus, your Son.

We know the Holy Spirit. You've helped us and let us see glimpses of you and revealed much about yourself.

[7 : 44] But Lord, more than knowledge today, we want to experience you and your presence. Jesus, we want your presence here today.

Holy Spirit, we want your presence. And you have promised us presence today. When two or more are gathered, you are here with us.

And you, Holy Spirit, indwell each believer. Lord, you are here with us. Lord, you are here with us. What a blessing that we have. This side of the cross.

And Lord, help us as we see this psalm and read it and meditate on it. I pray that we would do that this week as well and further continue meditating on the psalm. May we taste and see that you are good.

may we experience it and know it and have confidence in Your goodness and in Your presence. We pray this in Jesus' name.

[8 : 49] Amen. So how I would summarize this psalm for us is simply this.

Seek the Lord, and He will answer you and deliver you. Seek the Lord, and He will answer you and deliver you. It's a very simple theme, but one, it's a good reminder.

We need to seek the Lord, especially when we're in times of troubles, but even when we're outside of trouble, we need to seek the Lord. And He'll answer you, and He'll deliver you out of your troubles.

And two, there's an important part here, is how. How in the midst of difficulty can we seek the Lord?

How does He answer us? So, let's get to my first point. Verses 1 to 7. Cry out to the Lord.

[9 : 52] This is our first step. Cry out to the Lord. This is kind of two parts here, and I don't always agree with how the ESV separates little sections and how the paragraphs are, but I think it does a pretty good job of this psalm specifically.

And so, 1 to 7, you've got two parts there. 1 to 3, and then 4 to 7. I think that's a pretty good way of breaking that up. And so, that first part, 1 to 3, that's commitment and confidence in God.

And that second part, that's testimony of David crying out. So, the first part, confidence because of the second part. It's really a summary of, or a conclusion, really before He shares the rest of what's happening, but at the beginning.

So, verses 1 to 3. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in Yahweh. Let the humble hear and be glad.

Oh, magnify Yahweh with me. Let us exalt His name together. Let's praise His name together. So, 1, there's a commitment to praise.

[11 : 00] He's committed to praise. He's going to do it. He's saying, this is what I'm committing to. Verse 2, His boast is in the Lord.

My soul makes its boast in the Lord. He's proud that He knows Yahweh. He's going to boast. Hey, I know God.

God knows me. And then an encouragement for others to praise Yahweh. Hey, come and join me. I'm doing this.

I'm making my boast in the Lord. Come and join me. Let's praise God together. Why? Why should we do that? Why should we join David in praising God?

Well, let me tell you a testimony. A testimony of crying out to the Lord. Verse 4, I sought the Lord. I sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

[12 : 00] Those who look unto Him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried. And Yahweh heard Him and saved Him out of all His troubles.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them. So as I said, David was being pursued by the army of Saul to put him to death.

It's kind of one of these situations where David is being pursued by Saul, and he's in the fire. He's in trouble. And so he goes and finds refuge in the Philistines, except there's no refuge there for him to have.

He's even more in trouble. So it's kind of like you're out of the frying pan and into the fire kind of thing that's happening here. But we should know.

We should know how David sees this. He takes, David, remember, he takes clever actions. He pretends to be insane in order to get out of that circumstance.

[13:08] But how does he recall the event here? He sees and recounts these events here in Psalm in kind of a much different way than you might expect.

Scripture is full of encouragement to take action, right? So David's wise in that he pretends to be insane in order to get out of this circumstance. So Scripture is full of encouragement to take action.

You must do this. You must do that. You must be wise. There's a whole book, Proverbs, dedicated to saying this is wisdom. This is wisdom. This is folly. This is wisdom.

Use wisdom. Take action. You must do this. And yet Scripture is also full of showing how God is sovereign. God is over all things.

He controls all things. There's nothing out of His hands. Both are true. Life isn't one or the other.

[14:07] We can't just take action and hope things will work out apart from God. And we don't just pray and cry out to God and kind of twiddle our thumbs and hope that He does something and hope that He fixes everything without moving or doing anything.

Praying is good. Taking action is good. But we are to cry out to God for help and take wise actions. That's what David did. And that's what we see, actually, in much of Scripture.

People taking action, praying, and you see God's hand moving and moving and moving. Let's look at the particulars, though.

Verse 4, He delivered me from all my fears. When David escaped the Philistines after he pretended to be insane, his problems, they didn't end there.

Saul still sought to kill him. Absalom, David's son, after that, tried to kill him. And then there were other troubles. And you probably studied those at some point.

[15:17] David's life was full of trouble. And he admits that he was fearful. We can identify with that, right? Somebody's seeking to kill you, you're probably going to have some fear, even if that fear is sinful.

Even if we're not supposed to worry, well, it's hard not to. We identify that. But here's the thing.

He says, God delivered him from all his fears. Out of all his troubles. And verse 5 says, Never be ashamed.

Those who trust in God, never be ashamed. That's kind of a contrast for David, who just drooled on his own beard.

David probably maybe felt some shame in doing that, but maybe trusted God all the more. This is what I'm supposed to do to get out of this circumstance.

[16:19] And so he's not ashamed. He's not going to be put to shame, even if he has to do something that's a little crazy to get out of the circumstance. God directed him to do that.

Maybe the Holy Spirit told him. I don't know how it all worked, but David did this. And so he reflects on the matter. He's not ashamed. Even though he suffered a great indignity before the Philistines, even though he's running for his life, he's not ashamed.

He never will be ashamed. God is here. And then look at the contrast between verse 7, the angel of the Lord camps around those who fear him and delivers them.

Versus, verse 4, he delivered me from all my fears. You see, David knew to trust in God where experience gave him all the more confidence.

And we see he's fearful, yes, but he feared God as well. And there's a stark contrast between David's fears and Saul's fears.

[17 : 34] Right? So we get to my second point, which is repent and turn to the Lord, 8 to 14. Repent and turn to the Lord. Saul feared the loss of being king.

He wanted kingship. He didn't want to lose it. And David feared for his life. Both sinful fear. But David also feared the Lord.

And I'm not sure what you think of Saul. It's hard to think of Saul as a redeemed character in Scripture. But Saul didn't have the fear of the Lord like David did.

David feared the Lord above all else. And so we see this play out in this middle section here.

And so there's, again, two parts. Verses 8 to 10 and 11 through 14. 8 to 10 is telling of the good of the Lord. And 11 to 14 is encouragement to fear God and keep his ways.

[18 : 39] What does this have to do with what we just shared before? Well, we'll get to that. The first part is confidence in God's goodness. Let's read in 8 to 10.

Oh, 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. He is wanting you, and I am wanting you to know and experience the Lord.

I don't want you just to have knowledge about the Lord. I don't want you just to read your Bible and to know all the things about theology.

I want you to know the Lord and experience him. Know him in a relationship. Not just as a God out there, an abstract idea.

[19 : 40] God is a person who you can know and have a relationship with you. And that's what David wants for you. That's what I want for you, to know the Lord and experience the Lord.

And he wants you to know, and I want you to know, that you will lack no good thing. Isn't that a really interesting phrase that you will lack no good thing?

Fear the Lord. Those who fear him have no lack. I think it's hard for us to think that way, right?

We'll lack no good thing because there's lots of good out there, and I want some of that, but I don't seem to get it. Right? You don't always get the thing that you want.

The thing that seems good, and in Scripture, it says it's good, but I don't get it. Why don't I get it? Well, because not every good thing out there, even when it's a good thing to desire, maybe you're single, you want to be married, that's a good desire.

[21 : 00] Maybe you want a better job. It's a good desire. What is the good thing that you want and you don't have? You lack no good thing.

How does that work together? Well, God is sovereign. He knows what you need. And sometimes we want things that if we got them, wouldn't necessarily work out in our favor.

He knows that you need to grow as a person. He knows that you need patience. He knows that you need to trust Him. If everything in your life always went the way that you wanted, you wouldn't have any mind for God.

You wouldn't seek Him at all. I'm confident of that. Because when things are going well, that's when so often we're not seeking God.

It's in those trials that we often meet God, that we experience God. And so even though the trials and the difficulties and troubles of this life are not fun, they're where we meet God so often.

[22 : 18] And David has this testimony. And I'll tell you a little testimony in a little bit too of similar. But before that, let's get to the second part of this section.

Exhorting you to fear God, to repent, to stay away from evil, and to seek peace and truth. Verse 11 says, Come, O children, listen to me. I will teach you to fear 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. You see, He's teaching us to fear the Lord. That might be a strange term for some, fearing the Lord.

Fear's not good. That doesn't feel good to fear. But fear, when we talk about fear of the Lord, it's a respect for the Lord. A proper fear of authority.

[23 : 18] Not one where you're running away and cowering before Him. One where you're respecting His mightiness. God is big. Bigger than you can imagine.

And so we must fear Him. And He's telling us how to fear Him as He lists out the ways in verse 13 and 14. Keep your tongue from evil.

That's how to fear the Lord. And your lips from speaking deceit. Don't lie. That's how to fear the Lord. Turn away from evil and do good. That's how to fear the Lord. And if you fear Lord, you will seek peace and pursue it.

This is how to fear the Lord. And so, tasting of the goodness of God involves turning away from sin and turning towards God.

Now, there's maybe a common illustration that a lot of people give where, you know, if you eat too much junk food and candy right before dinner, then you get to dinner.

[24 : 22] And even though dinner is maybe your favorite dish, you can't eat much of it because you've filled yourself on junk. And the junk tastes good at the time, but you're left feeling pretty rotten afterward if you don't have a good meal.

And I'm not saying you can't skip meals and just have ice cream sometimes. That's great. But, right? If we fill ourselves with junk, our appetite for a real meal becomes less.

We just don't have it. And so that's why as we turn into adults, right, we have to get good habits to feed ourselves properly and not just eat junk food all the time.

There was a time in my life when I was a Christian and in high school and in college, I wanted a good thing, right?

I wanted to be married. I wanted to find a girl and get married. It's a good desire. And I didn't actually put this together until yesterday.

[25 : 38] Hold on. I had reflected on this time a number of times and recognized my folly in that situation because what I would do is I'd get into a relationship and my fear would take over.

My fear of not getting the good thing. Right? And so I'd pursue a girl and we'd get into a relationship and there'd be, as every relationship, there'd be trouble.

But my fear would put kind of a stranglehold on the girl. She'd feel like, like I wanted this too much and she didn't want to have anything to do with that.

And then that relationship would end and I would be heartbroken and then another relationship would pop up and I'd do the same thing again.

And then that relationship would end and I'd be heartbroken and then there would be another relationship which I did the same thing again. You'd think I'd learn by the second time, but no. No. And I went through much, much heartache because my fear was controlling how I worked out those relationships.

[26 : 58] And my fear of the Lord kind of took a back seat to my fear of not getting this good thing. And so I went through much, much heartache.

I hope you don't have to go through that. And I'm sure your circumstances are much different than mine. But I think if we take a look at our lives and see what are we fearing that we're not getting a fear of missing out, right?

FOMO. That's a, you know, a term these days. We're fearing not getting the good thing. And so that overrides our fear of the Lord, our respect for the Lord, our putting Lord on a higher priority.

And it wasn't until I had finally come to the end of myself and said, Lord, I'm not accomplishing this in my own strength.

I'm not able to do that because every time I try and every time I try to make it happen, I ended up, I ended up ruining it.

[28 : 12] So I'm trying on my own strength. I'm not trusting that God would provide a wife for me. And no, God doesn't always provide everything that you desire, every good thing that you desire.

But God was really, really gracious to me. After I had prayed that prayer, I don't know how long it was after, but it wasn't really in the grand scheme of things. It was not that long after that I met Megan, my wife.

But this time in the relationship, I prayed over and over, Lord, would I have open hands for this?

If this is from you, provide for it. But if it's not, I'm okay with that. And so through the whole relationship, praying, not trying to accomplish it in my own strength, not fearing that I wouldn't get this good thing over the fear of the Lord, but putting the fear of the Lord as top priority in the relationship.

And we've been married for 18 years. That's only part of the taste and see God's goodness, though.

[29 : 32] The other part is that we put the fear of the Lord, and so we turn away from evil and do good. What does that mean for me?

Well, I have to be careful with this kind of illustration, but it means a lot of sacrifice. We have three kids of our own, as Matt mentioned, and, you know, that comes with its own trial.

You who have kids or have, you know, babysat kids or anything like that, you know, kids can be difficult. And our youngest kid has autism, so it's an extra difficulty.

Some days are better than others. This day, this morning, actually was one of his harder times. At church, he just had a hard time as a sacrifice for Megan and for me to care for him.

Now, why would we, on top of that, go and foster two other kids and try to adopt them? One three years old, one six years old. Well, it's not because I want an easy life, that's for sure.

[30 : 48] We feel like God is calling us to adopt. It's not because, you know, I just want more kids.

I actually wanted three kids and I was happy with that. Megan wanted four or five and so here we are with five now. No, it's great.

But let me tell you, this is the life that I kind of had mapped out for myself. And in fact, there are lots of things about my life that I, this isn't really exactly how I had planned it.

I'm a pastor, right? But I have a full-time job. My pastoring, I actually don't get paid for. And I'm okay with that. Why? I'm okay with sacrificing hours of my time pastoring.

Why? Because God is good. Sacrificing for God, for other people.

[31 : 52] It doesn't lead to an easy life, that's for sure. But it leads to joy and fulfillment. And I want you to taste and see like I have. joy and fulfillment.

And so, even though my life is not easy and involves much sacrifice and Megan sacrifices much as well, our lives are full of joy.

And yes, there might be afflictions, there might be troubles. When we face those, when the Lord is with us, wow, it's good.

I have joy. I have much joy. And I have much fulfillment because of what God has done in my life. Not an easy life.

Not a coasting life. But one of sacrifice for God. That's where my joy is.

[32 : 52] For God. And so, when we repent and seek the Lord, not only will we know God, but we'll experience Him.

And not only that, but we can take a hold of His promise to care for you so that in the times of trials, in the times of troubles, God will be with you.

And God will care for you. And you can know that God will care for you because He has told you He will care for you. And so, my last point, Yahweh cares for those who seek Him.

Seek the Lord and He will care for you. Now, a lot of times we bring kind of our theology to a psalm like this and miss that the righteous here doesn't just speak about Jesus, right?

In verse 15 and 17 and 19, the righteous, who is righteous? Romans and Psalm 14 and 53 and many other places in the Bible tell us no one is righteous.

[33 : 56] No, not one. So, okay, this part doesn't apply to us. Sorry. I'll just close the Bible and we'll be done. First, we have to understand the psalm.

As the author wrote it and the audience might have heard it, the righteous here includes David. He's referring to himself. He's the righteous one. In the context of the psalm, he's not changing topics all of a sudden.

He's keeping with a theme. It's also those who fear him, those who seek him, those are the righteous. And throughout all the Old Testament, David knew, the prophets knew, the patriarchs knew, everyone knew that they sinned.

They are not righteous. They knew this. But Genesis says, right, Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness.

All throughout the Bible, how God deals with us, how God deals with his people is grace. Now, David didn't know how it all worked out, but he's trusting God.

[35 : 09] God calls him righteous because he has faith, because he seeks the Lord, because he fears the Lord. And so, now when we read this section again, keep this in mind. The righteous is for those who you, it's including you, if you fear the Lord, if you're seeking the Lord, then you're part of this.

Verse 15, the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears towards 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. Yahweh 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. 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.

Yahweh redeems the life of his servants. None of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. Now, before we apply this to Jesus, right, we know Jesus is the righteous one, but let's hold off on that.

[36 : 31] If you're Israel, how are you receiving this psalm? If you're hearing this, you don't know about Jesus coming. You haven't experienced that yet. But if the eyes of Yahweh are towards the righteous, his ears are toward them, he hears their cry, he delivers them from out of all of their troubles, then I want to be part of the righteous.

I want to be included there. Don't you want to be one who God hears you cry? You want to be one who God delivers you from out of all your troubles.

And so, what are we to do? Well, we can't achieve righteousness, right? But look at the psalm itself, verse 22. It gives us a clue. The Lord redeems the life of his servants.

None of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. So, like I said, David didn't know how this all worked out, nor Israel, they didn't know how it all worked out, but they trusted God.

They took refuge in God. You're not going to be condemned if you take refuge in God, if you seek him.

[37 : 47] Now we get to Christ. How does Christ fit in here? And how do we fit in here? Well, Christ is here. As we see in verse 20, God keeps all his bones.

Not one of them is broken. Is God promising you'll never break a bone? Do Christians never break bones? No, I don't think that's the application here.

So, what is verse 20? Verse 20 is a testimony of David. David's on the run from Saul. He's seeking refuge, running away from an army that's dead set against him.

Not one of his bones are broken. You know, if David was running away from an army, if he had broken a bone, right, he would have been in serious trouble. And I think it's a little bit more serious in their day and age than modern day, right?

They have casts and all that good stuff now. they didn't quite have the medical technology that we have back then. Breaking a bone was a serious problem. But more than that, this is also a prophecy.

[39 : 01] It's a prophecy of Jesus. You don't have to turn there with me, but in John 19, it speaks about this. verse, so this is John 19, 31.

Since it was a day of preparation, this is Christ on the cross, he's dying, right? Since it was a day of preparation, and so the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, that they may be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and the other who had been crucified with them. Remember, Christ is on the cross with two others. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it was born witness. His testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth, that you also may believe.

For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken. And again, another Scripture says, they will look on him whom they have pierced.

[40 : 23] Christ died on the cross for our sin, for your sin. But not one of his bones were broken.

He was pierced on the side for your sin. We can know this is true. There's eyewitness testimony of it.

And so, this is how it works out. That we can seek refuge in God because he has taken our sin on the cross. and now we can be forgiven because he wipes our slate clean.

So those of you who seek God, you're free from danger, free from real danger. The real danger, sin. You won't be overcome by evil.

No. Because your sin has been taken care of. Many are your afflictions. You have verse 19, Yahweh delivers you out of them all.

[41 : 28] How can that be true? It's because this life is not all that there is. Living a life for Jesus, it really is living your best life now, but it's not free from difficulty and trouble.

But it will be joy. It will be filled with joy. It will be fulfilling. And life, life is but a blink compared to eternity. And I know that's hard to think of right now.

As you work day to day and as you go through life and difficulties are there and day after day you struggle with faith and you struggle not to doubt is God good?

Is He there? I don't feel like He hears my cry. I feel like I'm never going to get out of this trouble. Or once I get out of that trouble just another trouble comes by.

It's hard when your family and your friends they don't approve of your religion. They don't approve of your beliefs. It's hard when the world thinks that your beliefs are ugly and they're intolerant.

[42 : 41] And there are many more difficulties in this life and some of those difficulties are shared by non-Christians, right? Everybody experiences difficulties in this life. But there's also some extra ones because you're a Christian.

If you believe you will have difficulties. You'll experience afflictions. But I think American Christians in general I think we just don't know how to suffer very well, right?

We're angry when we're inconvenienced. We feel persecuted and criticized even when it's not really about our faith but because we're a jerk.

We feel alarmed and we feel hopeless when the world surprisingly doesn't share our values. Right? The world is going to act like the world.

And it can be disheartening. I'm not making light of that. But the thought of heaven and eternity I think for American Christians especially when we think about heaven and eternity it's not hope filled.

[43 : 56] We're scared of it. I've heard so many people so many Christians think about heaven oh that what are we going to do for eternity? That just seems kind of boring.

Heaven is supposed to be out there for us. Eternity looking forward to that. It's supposed to give us hope. It's not going to be boring. I tell you I guarantee you heaven will not be boring.

Heaven's going to be wonderful. Think of the best things in this life. They're going to be a million times better. Infinitely better in heaven. I think we're going to sing in heaven.

I think maybe we'll have even jobs in heaven but we don't have to earn money in order to feed ourselves. We can work in the garden or something like that. Maybe you don't like gardening but I'm hoping there will be tech in heaven still.

Maybe there will be an internet still but it won't go down at all. I don't know. I don't know what it's going to be like but it's going to be good. Trust God.

[44 : 57] It's going to be good. We can look forward to it so that this life even if it's full of troubles even though we're afflicted with troubles taste and see that God is good and not just out there someday.

But today taste and see that God is good. But here's why. Here's why I think we especially as American Christians struggle with these kinds of things.

We have lost our identity in Christ when the heat is on. We don't identify with Christ when the heat is on. When there's difficulties we think this is so difficult.

I'm going to cry out to God but we don't see that Christ is our brother. God is our father. He cares for you.

He's near. And because you are identified with Christ if you are a believer God's surrounding you with love.

[46 : 02] And he is going to deliver you and will deliver you out of all your troubles. us. And so what can we do? How can we identify with Christ better as American Christians?

Or if you're not American that's okay too. This applies. Fear the Lord. Fear of the Lord will displace fear of man.

Fear of the Lord will displace those difficulties and those trials. trials. So that when you walk out those trials you can walk them out with joy.

I actually think I've been thinking about this lately in terms of the songs that we sing. I'm a worship leader at our church. There's so many great songs that a lot of the black communities sing.

They're filled with tales of trials and difficulties but the tone of their music is so much joy. And I think it's hard to find songs that evangelical Christians tend to sing like we tend to sing that are filled with trials admitting the trials and difficulties in this life but also filled with joy.

[47 : 21] I want more songs like that. And I'm going to find some. I'm sure they're out there. But it's so good. And I'm going to learn some of the black gospel songs too that are like that.

We already have that art church. But that's what life is. That's life as a Christian. It's difficulties and troubles and trials but joy meets you in the world.

Confidence in God. Taste and see that God is good. The eyes of the Lord are towards the righteous.

And he hears their cry. If you're in Christ you're part of the righteous. He's forgiven you. So his eyes are on you. His ears hear your cry.

The face of the Lord is against those who do evil to cut off the memory of them from the earth. Yeah, you've done evil but God doesn't see you like that because of Christ.

[48 : 21] You identify with Christ. You're in Christ. So you're not going to be cut off. You're not the evil that this is speaking of. When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears.

Because you're in Christ in Jesus, the Lord hears you. The Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Just think of how Christ dealt with those who were crushed in spirit, who were depressed, who were going through difficulties.

He reached down to them every time, cared for them. That's how he cares for you. Many of the afflictions, many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

You know who God didn't deliver out of all the difficulties? Jesus. Jesus took our sin, all our troubles, on the cross so that we could be forgiven.

So now we get to have a clean and forgiven state. And now Jesus died. An innocent person died.

[49 : 38] Jesus, the only innocent person, died. Jesus, our God and Savior, died for our sin. Do you believe that? Do you take hold of that?

So that we can be forgiven. And the best part of that is that Jesus didn't stay in the grave. He rose from the dead so that we can have hope in him.

So application. How do we apply this psalm? Well, one, obviously, take your troubles to God. Cry out to him. He will give you grace. And so a question for you is how can you remember to pray to God more in the midst of your difficulties?

You know, I experience this the most at work. I run into troubles at work, banging my head against a problem, and I just don't think to pray to God, God, help me.

Help me figure out how to code this piece of Python that I'm just struggling against. Python's a programming language.

[50 : 45] It's fine. I just, I'm in trouble, right? I can try it in my own strength, but I pray to God, God will help me. Maybe he won't give me the answer, but he'll help me be more at peace with it, right?

Two, seek the Lord. Seek the Lord in everything. And a question for you is what might be an area that you haven't quite handed over fully to God, right? That's where we know we're supposed to hand everything over to God, but there are those little areas of our lives, that we like control of, we like this good thing, and I want this good thing, and I must have this good thing.

So you grasp it, you hold on to it, you don't let go, you don't give it up to God. Or maybe it's a sin that ensnares you, you don't want to let go of. Give that over to God.

And last, magnify the Lord with me. It's corporate. And so a question for you is, what might you be filling yourself with instead of the Lord?

There's lots of good things out there, right? But fill yourself with God, and you won't be hungry.

[52 : 11] Fill yourself with God. Look forward to the times when we gather corporately to sing, to hear the word preached. Look forward to the times we gather with other people. Look forward to the times when you sit down and read the word.

So I want you to taste and see that Yahweh is good, that the Lord is good. And this is one of those things that you can't just dabble and test the waters. you've got to be all in.

Taste and see. Partake of this. Are you all in? Seek the Lord and he'll answer you and deliver you. Let's pray. Let's seek the Lord together.

Magnify the Lord together. Father, we thank you for this psalm, Lord, and I pray that we would not just run away from here and forget about this psalm and forget about our need for you in times of trouble.

But Lord, would we seek you this week? May we open again this scripture or other scriptures and see our need for you, our desperate need for you to seek you and taste of your goodness, Lord.

[53 : 29] Help us to believe when we doubt your goodness, when we doubt your presence, Lord. Help us to seek you. Lord, some of us are dry.

Some of us are experiencing difficulties, Lord, and it's hard to look up to you. It's hard to have faith in that moment. Lord, I pray, I pray for those who are experiencing that dryness and that desert, Lord, that you would meet them, meet them with water, life-giving water, so that they might taste and see that you are good, that even though there are many afflictions that we experience, there will be joy and fulfillment in the midst of sacrificing for your glory.

Though it might not be easy, though you've not called us to easy lives, you have called us to joy and fulfillment in you.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.