

God is Good

Psalm 34

Intro

This week, Brandi & I (and others in this room) were at MCA's High School Retreat in New Braunfels...

- During the week, my primary responsibility was ***Timekeeper*** — and in that role my job was to keep us on schedule and make announcements about what was happening next...

*I would usually start my announcements with the **call** and **response** that the students had learned while at the Grammar School...*

“God is good — all the time. All the time — God is good.”

This is a way that MCA students have been trained to quiet down and listen for announcements...

- And it is extremely effective for those who have been trained by this method — everyone quiets down and is able to hear what is being announced...

Whatever is going on — whatever conversations are taking place — ***it all stops*** — and *instruction* or *encouragement* or *correction* is then given...

But the usefulness of this method extends far beyond MCA's Grammar School and Upper School...

No matter what age we are, we need this pause in our activities...

- *We are busy — probably too busy — engaged in all sorts activities and arguments and problems and uncertainties — and we would be wise to stop and use this call and response method **with ourselves...***

“God is good — all the time. All the time — God is good.”

We would be wise to go somewhere away from others and remind ourselves of this truth — to say it out loud and to trust that it remains true in spite of whatever is going on in our lives...

- With the subject of God’s goodness in mind, we are taking a little break from our Matthew study this morning and we will instead be considering **Psalm 34** during our time together...

Please follow along as I read our psalm...

Psalm 34 (NKJV)

**1 I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.**

**2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear of it and be glad.**

**3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.**

**4 I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.**

**5 They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces were not ashamed.**

6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him,

And saved him out of all his troubles.

**7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.**

**8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;
Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!**

**9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!
There is no want to those who fear Him.**

**10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;
But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.**

**11 Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.**

**12 Who is the man who desires life,
And loves many days, that he may see good?**

**13 Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.**

**14 Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.**

**15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their cry.**

**16 The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.**

**17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles.**

**18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart,
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.**

**19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.**

**20 He guards all his bones;
Not one of them is broken.**

21 Evil shall slay the wicked,

And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

**22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants,
And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.**

- *[expand — Devotional-Applicational approach / grow in devotion to the Lord and apply these truths to our lives...]*

Let's move into vs...

1 I will bless the LORD at all times;

The word **bless** that David uses here has the idea of *kneeling before the Lord in order to worship Him...*

- This is vital as it indicates a *posture of humility* — it is a recognition that the Lord is above us — that He is greater than we are...

And how many of our problems would be solved if we simply (and continually) acknowledged that God is greater than we are?...[expand]

Triangle of Sufficiency

- ***Death to Self***
- ***Trust in God***
- ***Agape Love***

As we turn our attention back to vs 1, please notice that the worship of the Lord is a **choice** — David says he will **bless the LORD** and **will** is a decision word — it indicates volition...[expand]

And David says he will make the choice to bless the Lord **at all times** — *any time* and *every time* is a good time to worship the Lord...

So, as we put the pieces together we understand that worshipping the Lord is a **choice** and we would be wise to worship the Lord **at all times** because **God is good, all the time...**

Continuing on in vs 1...

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

While praise should start in our **hearts**, it should not remain there — it should **verbalized** — praise should extend to our **speech** and our **singing**...

- The reality is that human beings are **speakers** and **singers** — those two things have no cultural boundaries...

And we human beings speak and sing about what we are **focused on** — we speak and sing about what we **value** — what we view as **praiseworthy**...

- As we increasingly recognize the goodness of God — we will speak and sing of Him — His praise will be continually in our mouths...

But we must practice this — we must practice **talking** about the goodness of God and we must practice **singing** about the goodness of God...[expand]

Let's move on to vs 2-3...

**2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear of it and be glad.**

**3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.**

In these verses we see two key elements of praising God...

*First key Element of Praising God — **Boasting in the Lord...***

- We all want something or someone to boast in — something bigger than ourselves that we can be identified with — God is the One we should boast about...[expand]

*Second Key Element of Praising God — **Praise God in Community***

It is vitally important that we praise God in community because we are a *body* of believers — we are in this together — we are not meant to live the life of faith on our own...[expand]

Moving on to vs...

**4 I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.**

In the midst of his fears, David chose to seek the Lord and the Lord heard him...

As we consider this verse, it is important to understand that ***faith*** and ***fear*** are in *opposition*...

- Or to look at it from a slightly different angle, ***fear is faith in the bad*** — it is a belief that what is bad *will happen* — ***that all things will work together for the bad***...

But if God is good — and this is His universe — then Romans 8:28 is the most obvious thing in the world...

A God who is ***good*** — ***all the time*** will always be working things together for good — it would be impossible for Him to do otherwise...[expand]

Genesis 18:25 (NKJV)

“...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

- [Triangle of Sufficiency — Death to Self / Trust in God / Agape Love...]

Continuing on in Psalm 34 to vs...

**5 They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces were not ashamed.**

This is the experience of worshiping believers — as we look to the Lord — as we kneel before Him in praise — we will become radiant with an unashamed countenance...

- [ex. Moses on Mt. Sinai — came down with a glowing face...]

[ex. you and I can tell when people have been out in the sun — likewise, we can tell when people have been worshipping the Lord — there is a glow about them...]

Moving on to vs...

**6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him,
And saved him out of all his troubles.**

Here we see that David recognized His own *spiritual poverty* — and that proper recognition of his spiritual state led him to seek the Lord...

- [ex. Parable of the Prodigal Son...]

I love this stanza from the hymn Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me...

***Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace:
Foul, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Savior, or I die.***

We come to God with nothing and He offers us everything that we need...

2 Peter 1:3 (NKJV)

...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...

Moving on in Psalm 34 to vs...

7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

- [expand — angel or Angel? — God’s servants or God Himself?...]

BIG IDEA — God supernaturally intervenes in the lives of believers — He has delivered each of us to this very moment... [expand]

And God will continue to deliver us from moment to moment until He delivers into His manifest presence in Heaven...

- [ex. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego — God delivers us *through the fire* or God delivers us *by the fire*...]

8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;

This is a reminder that we can only know that the Lord is good through *personal experience with Him*...

- [ex. can only know that a food is good as you try it for yourself — you have to try the food to experience the goodness...]

So, if you want to know the goodness of God, get to know Him, spend time with Him — seek a relationship with Him like you would with any other person...

Talk to Him directly, hear what He has to say to you in His Word — talk to others who know Him and hear what they have to say...

And if you truly want to know Him, He will reveal Himself to you — and you will know that He is good...

Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NKJV)

11 “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Continuing on in Psalm 34:8 we read...

Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Trusting in the Lord enables us to live a blessed life — it is a life that God can work in...

- [expand — unbelief cuts us off from the work that God wishes to do in our life...]

We read these sad words in...

Mark 6:5-6 (NKJV)

5 Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

6 And He marveled because of their unbelief...

It seems clear that a lack of trust in the Lord cuts a person off from the blessed life that Lord wishes to bestow on them...

Matthew 23:37 (NKJV)

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”

On the other hand, as we trust in the Lord we are blessed with salvation, peace, friendship with God, friendship with other believers, security, purpose, direction, a future, great & precious promises, and the list goes on and on and on...[expand]

Let's move on in Psalm 34 to vs 9-10...

9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!

There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;

But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.

The big idea here is that God is faithful to provide for His people — and this is a theme throughout the scriptures...

For our purposes, I will simply remind you of the life without lack offered to believers in...

Psalm 23 (NKJV) [turn there if you wish...]

**1 The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.**

**2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.**

**3 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.**

**4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

**5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my
enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.**

**6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

Please turn back to Psalm 34 as we consider vs 11-14...

**11 Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.**

**12 Who is the man who desires life,
And loves many days, that he may see good?**

**13 Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.**

**14 Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.**

Here we have David's instruction for walking in the fear of the Lord — for living a life that *enables us to **see good***...

1) don't speak evil / speak the truth

2) flee from evil / practice doing good things

3) actively pursue peace with God and with others

And this is a reminder that life with God is ***not passive*** — it is an ***active pursuit!***...

Continuing on to vs...

**15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their cry.**

*This is a wonderful reminder that the Lord is **looking for** and **listening to** those who are seeking Him...*

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV)

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him...”

Next we come vs...

**16 The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.**

Those who go against God will find God to be their enemy...

- And if they continue in their rebellion they will be cut off permanently — they will be remembered no more...

**17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles.**

God delivers in His way and in His timing — but every believer will by fully and finally delivered from every trouble when they go home to be with Him...[expand]

**18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart,
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.**

broken — *broken into pieces...*

contrite — *crushed into powder...*

David is reminding us that the Lord is ***near to*** and ***delivers*** those who have a *broken heart* and a *contrite spirit*...

- Though it may seem that God is far away in those times of hardship and heartache — the reality is that the Lord is very, very near...

Psalm 51:17 (NKJV)

**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.**

God does not despise our brokenness...

In fact, our brokenness is what enables Him to work in our lives — our brokenness enables us to live the Death to Self Life — it enables us to Trust in God and not in ourselves...

- And as we are in that condition, we will not resist the work He is seeking to accomplish ***in us*** and ***through us***...

[ex. moldable clay versus stubborn clay...]

The question we must ask ourselves is this...

Who is better at shaping my life — me or God?...[expand]

Continuing on in Psalm 34 to vs...

**19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.**

As believers, we are going to have troubles in this world — just like everyone else in the world...

- But as believers, we understand that we will be delivered out of all of them and this allows us so to take heart in the midst of troubles...

John 16:33 (NKJV)

“...In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Continuing on in Psalm 34 to vs...

**20 He guards all his bones;
Not one of them is broken.**

David spoke this of himself but it was also prophetic of the Lord Jesus as He was the perfect Passover Lamb...[expand]

**21 Evil shall slay the wicked,
And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.**

The wages of sin is death — evil will be judged in the end and all who continue in it will be lost — there is no future in evil — only in the good is there hope...

Now to our final verse...

22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants,

redeems — *ransoms, buys back...*

This foreshadowed the Lord Jesus redeeming our souls through His death on the cross...

Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)

...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

We also read in the last part of Psalm 34:22...

And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

Paul writes something similar in...

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...

Wonderful words to remind ourselves of daily...[expand]

Conclusion

Now, as we close our study and move into our time of communion I encourage you and I to pray for eyes to see the goodness of the Lord...

But in order for the Lord to answer that prayer, we must be people who are seeking the good — because in God's world we always find what we are truly looking for...

And if we are seeking to see the true and living God we will find that...

God is good, all the time.

All the time, God is good.