

10. Psalm 34-37

April 14, 2011

Psalm 34

While I was preparing a sermon from this chapter of the Book of Psalm, I found myself singing several chorus worship songs that excerpted their song lyrics from this very chapter. If you are familiar with some of the old Maranatha Music, you know what I mean.

This song of praise is attributed to David when he escaped from Abimelech, Achish the king of Gath in Philistine, by feigning insanity.

1 Samuel 21:10-13 Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. 11 And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?" 12 Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 13 So he changed his behavior before them, feigned madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard.

In this psalm David called on the congregation to praise the Lord for their salvation. And after affirming that God is good to those who trust Him, he instructed the people on how to live a long life.

A. HIS PRAISE SHALL CONTINUALLY BE IN MY MOUTH

Psalm 34:1-4 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.

David calls attention to what God has done rather than boastfully point to his own quick-thinking to get out of his jam.

Whether we are in the midst of great blessings from the Lord or in the middle of a maze of adversities where you can not find the way out, we need to praise the name of our God. Giving praises to the Lord does two things for us:

- 1) **We acknowledge and remind ourselves of the greatness, power, and love of our God for us.**
- 2) **We, in turn, find His comforting shelter in the middle of the valley of the shadow of death where we can rest.**

The situation may not have changed one bit, as a matter of fact, it might even get worse, but we still are in His hands who has everything in the universe under His complete control. And no one can snatch us out of His mighty hands.

John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

B. TASTE AND SEE

Psalm 34:7-10 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.

We need to remember that God's will is good. It may not seem like it at times, but it is. His plan for us is good. However, He usually doesn't give us a detailed blueprint. Generally, God reveals His will to us in bits and pieces. He sees the big picture, while we just see a little at a time.

If you had been Jacob, the father of Joseph, surely like all parents, you would have prayed for the welfare of your child. But when Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers, you could have easily said, "God, what are you doing? Why did you allow this?" Yet if God had not allowed this to happen, Joseph never would have been put into that position of influence that enabled him to save the country of future Israel and his own family.

If you had been an unnamed Hebrew woman, the mother of Moses, how your heart would have broken when you saw your own child being taken into the Pharaoh's court instead of your own house. Yet it was all part of God's grand plan to mold Moses into that leader who would lead Israel out of Egypt and its bondage.

If you had been Mary, the mother of Jesus and watched your own Son hanging on that cross, how easily you could have said, "Lord, why did you let this happen?" But if Jesus had not died on that cross and taken our sins upon Himself, we could not know Him today.

So when we look at the will of God in progress, it may not always make sense. But we must believe that God knows what He is doing. His will is good. Just wait until He finishes what He has begun.

However, protection and deliverance are not automatic, because God expects evidence of allegiance in the form of fear of God instead of dread of life. Because there is no experience of God's goodness without a corresponding godliness. The wise 'taste' God's goodness for themselves by taking 'refuge' in Him and by submitting their way of life to His.

Psalm 35

With great emotion and urgency, David prays this prayer. The context in which the psalm arose is not certain as the language of this psalm shifts between legal and military. Whether David had been maligned and required vindication of his name or whether the problem was of international situation is not clear. There is sufficient ambiguity in the psalm that it may be classified as an individual lament.

Psalm 35:1-3 O Lord, with those who strive with me; Fight against those who fight against me. 2 Take hold of shield and buckler, And stand up for my help. 3 Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."

Psalm 35:17 Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue me from their destructions, My precious life from the lions. 18 I will give You thanks in the great assembly; I will praise You among many people.

Psalm 35:21-24 They also opened their mouth wide against me, And said, "Aha, aha! Our eyes have seen it." 22 This You have seen, O Lord; Do not

keep silence. O Lord, do not be far from me. 23 Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication, To my cause, my God and my Lord. 24 Vindicate me, O Lord my God, according to Your righteousness; And let them not rejoice over me.

The chance of the bread falling with the peanut butter and jelly side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.

Not until you get home from the party will you realize you have a string of spinach in your teeth or someone stuck a long trail of toilet paper in the back of your waist belt. You wondered why they were laughing and to make the matter worse nobody said anything to you.

There's a committee somewhere right now planning your future, and you were not invited to the meeting.

No one's life, liberty, or property is safe while the legislature is in session.

Ever get the feeling that life is a little too tight - like an ill-fitting shoe? Speaking of an ill-fitting shoe, when I joined the South Korean army, they handed me a pair of combat boots. I tried them on and realized that one is too big and the other was too small. I tried to talk to the quartermaster sergeant about them. He looked at me and said to the guy behind me, "Next." So I ended up wearing two different size boots for six months until I inherited another pair from a sergeant who was about to retire.

Don't sweat the small stuff; in fact, the big stuff isn't worth the sweat either. Why? Because you are with the Lord.

David is asking His God to vindicate him from the onslaught accusations of his enemies. Notice that he doesn't ask God to give him weapons to destroy them, rather he asks the Lord to do the vindication for him.

Yes, there is a time of war, and a time of peace. More times than not we are way too quick to solve problems we face by ourselves without, first, consulting with the Lord. When we do that we often realize that we just produce a mountain out of a mole hill. How much better if we just lean on the Lord and wait upon him to resolve the situation according to His righteousness and His will as David asks here?

Psalm 37

I cannot even count how many times I found comfort from reading this Psalm 37. When I faced injustice, evil people and situations, I often turned to this Psalm to find shelter of the Lord where I could find rest in Him.

A. DO NOT FRET

Psalm 37:1-8 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. 7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm.

Isn't that what we see often? Evil men live well all the while righteous and godly people suffer? People like Charlie Sheen who literally wastes away his money because he ran out of things to buy according to him. He used so much cocaine that many of his teeth rotted out of his mouth and he had to have dentures at his young age. Because CBS kicked him out of the TV sitcom "Two and a half men", they are about to lose a lawsuit and it is going to cost them \$100 million dollars. In the meanwhile an Army Private soldier who fights for our freedom would make around \$12,000-\$13,000 a year.

In this first section of the psalm David called for trust despite the presence of evil men. We should not be envious of sinful people and their prosperity because they will wither like the grass and will soon die. Rather we should trust in the Lord who can answer prayers of the heart. The promise, He will give you the desires of your heart, is based on one condition - delighting ourselves in the Lord.

What does it mean "delighting in the Lord"?

1) Meditating upon the Law of God and the commands of the Lord.

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

2) Having holy fear of the Lord and righteous desires to honor Him by obeying His command.

Isaiah 11:3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

The righteous believers should not envy or fret when the wicked succeed. Fretting leads only to evil, including anger.

I remember what Asaph wrote in one of his Psalms:

Psalm 73:12-19 Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. 13 Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence. 14 For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. 15 If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. 16 When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me-- 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. 18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. 19 Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.

God always doesn't hand out His judgment to the wicked during their short earthly lives. There is plenty of time for them to be judged and penalized, like throughout eternity.

B. THE STEPS OF A GOOD MAN ARE ORDERED BY THE LORD

Psalm 37:23-31 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand. 25 I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread. 26 He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed. 27 Depart from evil, and do good; And dwell forevermore. 28 For the Lord loves justice, And does not forsake His saints; They are preserved forever, But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off. 29 The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell in it forever. 30 The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,

And his tongue talks of justice. 31 The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide.

The focus moves from the contrasts between the godly and the wicked to the blessings of the godly. The Lord establishes the godly, even in times of adversity. He may 'stumble', either by sinning or by being jealous of the wicked or by the traps laid by the wicked, but he will not fall. The Lord keeps him from falling, just as He breaks the power of the wicked.

The ground for all the blessings is the love of God. He loves the just and will never forsake His faithful followers. The Lord loves the wise, who promote justice and are loving. True wisdom begins with a heart attitude. The wise man, who fears the Lord, has a reverence for God and desires to do God's will.