

Taste and See! - Part 2

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Date: 27 June 2018

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Psalms, Psalm 34, and we'll take as our text again the words of verse 8, where David says, O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

As you know, on Sunday evening, we began looking at Psalm 34, and as we said, Psalm 34 is the testimony of David. But in Psalm 34, David isn't testifying about how he became a Christian. David is testifying about how the Lord has worked in his life as a Christian. And David testifies about the Lord so that we will see how good and how faithful the Lord is, and that it will cause us to do as David is telling us to do, to praise and magnify the Lord together.

And you know, that's how David, he opens this Psalm. He testifies about the Lord, and he says in verse 1, And in these opening words, you can even feel that David wants everyone to see how good and how faithful the Lord is.

He wants everyone to praise and magnify the Lord together. And so in verses 1 to 3, David exhorts us to praise and magnify the Lord together.

[1 : 5 2] But then as we saw on Sunday evening, in verses 4 to 12, David explains why we should praise and magnify the Lord together. And you'll remember that we considered verses 4 to 12, we considered them under three headings, David troubling, David tasting, and David teaching.

And we saw that David's trouble was that he was on the run from King Saul, and he had fled to Gath, and he was in enemy territory, and he ended up in the palace of King Achish.

And with David afraid that he might be killed, he pretends to be a madman. David pretends to be completely insane. And we're told in 1 Samuel 21 that he had drool running down his face, and he's scratching at doors like an animal, just so that King Achish won't recognize him.

And for David, it was a matter of life and death. Because David, well, he didn't have the strength to run. He didn't have the armor to defend himself. And he didn't have the ability to fight.

All David could do was seek the help of the Lord. And that's what he did. We're told in verse 4, I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.

[3 : 0 8] 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 round those who fear him, and delivers them.

So David sought the Lord with all his heart, and the Lord delivered him. And because of how good and how faithful the Lord was to David, David urges us to taste and see for ourselves.

Because David realizes that words would fail him. He could never describe the goodness and the blessing of God for himself. David knows that we will never understand what he's talking about unless we taste and see for ourselves.

Because, well, it's impossible for us to describe the sweetness of salvation, and the wonder of deliverance from sin. It's impossible for us to try and explain the joy of knowing Jesus, and the peace that's felt, and the presence of the Lord that's experienced, when we commit our life to Jesus Christ.

And that's why David urges us in verses 8 to 10. He says, Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

[4 : 2 3] Fear the Lord, you his saints. Those who fear him have no lack. The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

And so David emphasizes to those reading and singing this psalm, which is us, he emphasizes that we need to know the Lord's deliverance and salvation for ourselves.

And so David teaches us that we need to live life with an eternal perspective. And like a father speaking to his son, David gives us sound advice. It's advice that has stood the test of time. He says in verse 11, Come, O children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. One man is there who desires life and loves many days that he may see good.

So David, he invites us to come and listen, that he might teach us what it means to fear the Lord and live our lives with an eternal perspective. And so just in recapping all that, in verses 1 to 3, David exhorts us to praise and magnify the Lord together.

[5 : 31] Then in verses 4 to 12, David explains why we should praise and magnify the Lord together. But then in verses 13 to 22, David explains how we should praise and magnify the Lord together.

And that's what we're looking at this evening. We're looking at verses 13 to 22. And David is explaining to us how we should praise and magnify the Lord together.

And in these verses, verses 13 to 22, David describes the Christian's character, the Christian's cry, and the Christian's Christ.

That's what he presents to us in these verses. The Christian's character, the Christian's cry, and the Christian's Christ. So if we look first of all at the Christian's character.

The Christian's character. Look at verse 13. And what David says. He says, Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil, and do good.

[6 : 34] Seek peace, and pursue it. And in these verses, David explains that we are to praise and magnify the Lord by our Christian character. Because our Christian character, it's not only revealed by our conduct.

Our Christian character is also revealed by our conversation. And our speech is reflective upon the condition of our heart. Because it was Jesus who said, From out of the heart, the mouth speaks. And Jesus said, Those things which proceed out of the mouth, they come from the heart, and they defile a person. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies.

These are the things, says Jesus, which defile a person. Therefore, our Christian character is not only revealed by our conduct, it's also revealed by our conversation.

Which is why David says here, in verse 13, Keep your tongue from evil. Guard your speech. Protect your lips from speaking words of deceit.

[7 : 45] David says that we're to watch our mouth. Because what comes out of our mouth, it not only reveals a lot about our character, but it also reveals the condition of our heart.

And as Christians, we all know that we're to follow the example of Jesus. We are to have a Christ-like character. But you know, in Psalm 45, a psalm that speaks very clearly about Jesus, and in that psalm, we're reminded of the character of speech that belongs to Jesus.

We're told that grace pours out of his lips. Grace pours out of his lips. And so as Christians who are to follow the example of Jesus, and seek to live a Christ-like character, when we speak, we are to speak grace from our lips.

Grace is to pour out of our lips. And you know, that's why David is saying, keep your mouth, guard your tongue. But you know, when David wrote these words in Psalm 34, and he was talking about that the character of our speech reveals the condition of our heart.

David knew how dangerous our tongue can be. And he knew that we must possess this Christ-like character. Because he prays in Psalm 141, David says, O Lord, set a guard over my mouth, and keep watch over the door of my lips.

[9 : 17] O Lord, set a guard over my mouth, and keep watch over the door of my lips. And this is what David is exhorting us to do here. Because if we're going to praise and magnify the Lord by our Christian character, then we need to keep our tongue from evil.

We need to guard our speech. We need to protect our lips from speaking words of deceit. And you know, David, he's so aware that our tongue can be a dangerous weapon.

And it can cause great hurt and great heartache. Our tongue is powerful. And it can cause great pain. But you know, if we can control our tongue, we can control our body.

If we can control our tongue, we can control our Christian character. That's what James tells us in the New Testament. He said, we put bits in Horses' mouths so that they will obey us.

And we can turn their whole body. Look at ships, he says. Although they're so large and they can be driven by fierce winds, they're only turned by a small rudder.

[10 : 29] Even so, he says, the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is able to defile the whole body and it sets on fire, the Kosher-bound nature.

And it's set on fire, he says, by hell. In fact, he says, every kind of beast, bird, reptile, and creature of the sea, they are able to be tamed by mankind.

But no man can tame the tongue. It's an unruly evil full of deadly poison. With it, says James, we bless God and our Father and with it, we curse mankind who has been made in the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth, he says, proceeds blessing and cursing. But James says, my brothers and sisters, these things ought not to be so.

And you know, this is what David is teaching us here in Psalm 34. That if we're going to praise and magnify the Lord by our Christian character, then we need to keep our tongue from evil.

[11 : 36] We need to guard our speech. We need to protect our lips from speaking deceit. We need to possess a Christ-like character. Because gossiping about other people or talking ill of them or slugging them off or putting down on them or muttering and moaning about them, and we're all guilty of it.

But what we're being reminded of here is that David says an unruly tongue is evil. James says in his letter it comes from hell. Jesus says it's completely sinful.

It's ungodly and it's so unlike Christ in its characteristic. So what do we do? What's the remedy to all this?

Well, David says in verse 14, turn away from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. David says that the remedy to keeping our tongue from evil and guarding our speech and protecting our lips from speaking words of deceit.

David says the remedy is to turn away from evil. And that phrase turn away it's what describes repentance and conversion. To repent and convert because repentance is to have the change of mind but conversion is the change of direction.

[12 : 56] And so when we turn away from our sin whether it's a verbal sin or a physical sin or a spiritual sin when we turn away from it we must repent and convert.

We must turn away from our sin by having a change of mind away from our sin and focusing our mind upon Jesus and what Jesus has done for us. We have to repent but we also have to convert. Conversion is not just the time when you're born again. No, we have to keep turning away from our sin. We have to keep having this change of direction away from our sin or our temptation and turn back to Jesus.

And you know when it comes to dealing with sin and temptation we can't be passive. We have to be active. And that's what David emphasizes here because he says if we're going to praise and magnify the Lord by our Christian character then we need to turn away from evil and do good seek peace and pursue it.

We need to actively turn away from evil and do good and seek peace and pursue it earnestly. We have to actively seek peace maybe with those we may have hurt.

[14 : 13] We're to seek reconciliation not only with God but also with those whom we have wronged. We're to pursue reconciliation and peace. We're to pursue it earnestly because you know was it not Jesus who said in the Sermon on the Mount blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be known as the children of God.

Was it not Jesus who said you shall know them by their fruit. Was it not Jesus who said everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

My friend if we're going to praise and magnify the Lord by our Christian character then we need to remember that our Christian character it's not only revealed by our conduct it's also revealed by our conversation and our conversation it reveals the condition of our heart.

It reveals the condition of our heart. And so David says that if we're going to praise and magnify the Lord we have to do it through a Christian character. But then secondly he says that we're to praise and magnify the Lord by the Christian's cry.

The Christian's cry. He says in verse 15 the eyes of the Lord are towards the righteous and his ears are towards their cry.

[15 : 40] 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 broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

In these verses David reminds us about the trials and afflictions that the Lord's people encounter in this life. And as we know it was Jesus who said that it would be through much tribulation that we will enter the kingdom of heaven.

But Jesus also assured us that through our tribulation he will never leave us and he will never forsake us. And you know that was certainly through David's experience because he not only had the angel of the Lord encamping round about him as he describes in verse 7 but David also had the assurance here in verse 15 that he says the eyes of the Lord are upon him and the Lord's ears are attentive to his cry.

And you know as you know David he encountered many difficulties in his life and they are reflected in many of the Psalms but the occasion for writing Psalm 34 it must have reminded David that the Lord is with him even in the darkest of circumstances because as we said this Psalm was written when David was on the run from King Saul.

He had fled from the hands of one enemy into the hands of another. David fled from Saul to Gath and he ends up in the palace of another king and he's pretending to be a madman.

[17:22] It's a matter of life and death for David and all David can do is cry to the Lord for help. But now reflecting upon his experience in Psalm 34 David is amazed that the Lord would see his need and he's amazed that the Lord would hear his cry for help.

And that's his testimony. The eyes of the Lord are towards the righteous and his ears towards their cry. Then he says in verse 17 when the righteous cry for help the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

David's testifying to the fact that the Lord sees our meat, he hears our cries and he understands what we're going through even in the most difficult of circumstances.

promises. And that when we cry to the Lord for help he promises to deliver us from our troubles.

And you know what David is reminding us here of is the ministry that Jesus is involved in in heaven. the Bible repeatedly reminds us that Jesus is our great high priest. And as our great high priest Jesus not only offered himself as the sacrifice to reconcile us to God and satisfy the divine justice of God by laying down his life on the cross.

[18:44] The wonder of Jesus' ministry is that he now ever lives to make intercession for us. our high priest our great high priest he has risen and ascended to the right hand of God the father.

He endured the cross despising its shame. He's now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. And it's there in heaven right at this very moment our great high priest is interceding on our behalf.

He's standing as our mediator and he's praying for his people. And you know I love what's said in the letter to the Hebrews. The Hebrews they were being persecuted for their faith.

They were being tempted to give up and go back to the world. They were being crushed and perplexed by their trials and their tribulations. And yet when the Hebrews received their letter they were reminded that Jesus he is their great high priest who knows and understands all that they're going through.

And it says at the end of Hebrews chapter four since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Jesus the son of God.

[20:00] He says let us hold fast our confession. We're not to give up because he says we do not have a high priest that cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but he was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin.

Therefore he says let us come boldly to that throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. My friend this is the wonder of it all that Jesus the son of God knows and understands all that we're going through tonight.

Jesus knows what we're being faced with, what we're being tempted with, what we're struggling with, what we're being challenged with whether it's at home or at work or wherever we are. Jesus knows, Jesus understands and Jesus is able to help.

And this is what David is affirming here that the Lord sees our need and he hears our cries. And when the Lord's people cry to him for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of their troubles.

And so for David we are to praise and magnify the Lord as we cry to him for help. We're to praise and magnify the Lord even in the midst of our trials and our tribulations and our struggles and all the things that perplex us in this life.

[21:21] We're to keep praising and magnifying the Lord because as the hymn writer reminds us, before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is

love, whoever lives and pleads for me.

You know, my friend, does it not leave you asking who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Paul asks, shall tribulation?

No. Distress? No. Persecution? No. Famine? No. Nakedness? No. Peril? No. Sword? No.

He says, no in all these things. In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. And that even when he was crushed and perplexed at all the trials and circumstances that he faced, Paul could still say, I am persuaded.

I am persuaded. Are you persuaded? My friend, are we persuaded tonight that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come neither height nor depth nor any other creature is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

[22 : 44] Are we persuaded? Because this is what we're promised. And you know it's a wonderful promise. We have this wonderful promise in verse 18.

The Lord is near the broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit. The Lord is near. And this word near not only means that the Lord is in close proximity to us.

It also means that the Lord is near to you relationally. He's in a relationship with you. Like a father with his children.

He's in union with you. He's dwelling within you. He's there to encourage you. He's there when you're crushed by all your circumstances. promises. It's a beautiful promise.

The Lord is near the broken hearted and he saves the crushed in spirit. And you know even though it's not the most pleasant experience to be crushed it carries with it some of the most beautiful imagery.

[23 : 57] You could almost say that David is describing the imagery of a rose because when rose petals are crushed they give off a sweet fragrance.

That's how they often make perfume. They use rose petals that are dying, they're torn and they're crushed. And yet they give off a sweet fragrance.

And you know that's what it's like when you're crushed by your circumstances. You can be so weak like a rose petal that's just dying. Torn, crushed.

And yet through it you give off this sweet fragrance of praise to the Lord. And you know that's what Paul encouraged the Ephesians to do when they were crushed and perplexed by their circumstances.

Paul said be imitators of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ has also loved us and gave himself for us and offering he says as a sweet sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

[25 : 04] And you know what Paul reminds us is that Jesus was crushed on our behalf and that crushing that Jesus experienced it gave off a sweet fragrance of praise to God.

But Paul says as imitators of Christ when we are crushed when we are torn when we are battered by all our providences we are to give off a sweet fragrance of Christ as we praise and magnify the Lord in our circumstances.

You know it's a beautiful image that he gives to us the Lord is near the broken hearted and he saves the crushed in spirit. And so David reminds us that we are to praise and magnify the Lord by our Christian character and by the Christian's cry.

And then lastly and briefly we are to praise and magnify the Lord because of the Christian's Christ. The Christian's Christ. Look at verse 19. He says 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. The Lord redeems the life of his servants none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

[26 : 29] In verse 19 David he affirms what he's been saying throughout this entire psalm. He's just reminding us of what he's saying. Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

But then in the verses following 20 to 22 David affirms that the afflictions of the righteous they not only include the followers of Jesus but they also include Jesus himself.

And I say that because the words of verse 20 they affirm to us that Psalm 34 is a messianic psalm. And we know that Psalm 34 is a messianic psalm because verse 20 is quoted in the New Testament and it's explained and applied to Jesus Christ.

because if you remember in John chapter 19 that's the account of Jesus' crucifixion where John explains that Jesus is hanging up on the cross and as he's crucified as it all comes to its conclusion Jesus cries it is finished.

And then he commits himself into the hands of his father. But then we're told after Jesus dies we're told that because it was the preparation day bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. [27 : 46] So the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken that they might be taken away. And the soldiers were told they came to the legs of the two malefactors who were crucified on either side of Jesus and they broke their legs.

But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers they pierced his side with a spear and blood and water came out. Then John says in his gospel and this is an important part he says he who has seen this has testified and his testimony is true and he knows that he's telling the truth so that you may believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled quoting Psalm 34 verse 20 not one of his bones shall be broken. And so what David is urging us to do as he brings Psalm 34 to its conclusion.

David is basically saying look to this crucified Christ. Look to this crucified Christ and be reminded of what he suffered in order to deliver you and set you free.

[29 : 00] And be reminded that this crucified Christ is the one who came into this world to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. He's the one who was wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities.

And like it was for Jesus even though we may be crushed and perplexed by our situations and our circumstances like it was for Jesus we will not be broken.

You know the Lord may crush us but he will not break us because the Lord's purpose in the life of his people is not destruction.

His purpose is redemption. That's what the Lord is all about. He's all about redemption. And you know that's what David says in verse 22. That's how he concludes his psalm.

The Lord redeems the life of his servants. None of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. My friend Psalm 34 is a messianic psalm.

[30 : 05] It's a psalm all about living for Jesus. It's about looking to Jesus. It's about loving Jesus because it's a psalm that reminds us to keep our eyes upon this crucified Christ especially in all the trials and tribulations that life has for us.

And you know it's important for us. That's what David is saying. It's important for us as the Lord's people to gather together like we're doing this evening. And praise and magnify the Lord together. He says to us oh magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together. And the reason he says this to us is so that each and every one of us will be able to say as it says in verse 8 oh taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. and so may the Lord bless these few thoughts to us. Let us pray. Oh Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for thy word.

Thy word that reminds us that that we are those who are to be imitators of Christ. A word Lord that reminds us that we are to have grace poured out of our lips.

[31 : 27] That we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. But we thank thee Lord that even when we fail and when life takes its unexpected turns. We thank thee Lord that thou thou art one who is open to our cries, whose ear hears us and whose eyes see us.

And Lord we thank thee that thou art one who knows and understands everything we go through. That even when we are crushed, that even when life seems to be too much for us, we thank thee Lord that the great plan and purpose is our redemption.

That we are those who have been redeemed and we are being redeemed and we will be redeemed. That Lord we will be glorified. For those whom he called he justified, those whom he justified he will also glorify and help us Lord then we pray to have all that eternal perspective where thou art one who has begun that good work in us and who will bring it on to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

Bless us Lord we pray thee remember those who are not with us this evening that thou wouldst meet them at their point of need whatever is troubling them Lord that they would know that as the psalmist reminds us that the troubles that afflict the just in number many be yet out of them all the Lord does set him free.

Oh Lord bless us we pray thee keep us on the way looking to Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith cleanse us we ask for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake Amen.

[33 : 07] Well we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the closing words of Psalm 34 Psalm 34 we're singing at verse 18 down to the end of the psalm psalm 34 at verse 18 the Lord is ever nigh to them that be of broken spirit to them his safety doth afford that are in heart contrite the troubles that afflict the just in number many be but yet at length out of them all the Lord doth set him free down to the end of the psalm to God's praise psalm the Lord is ever nigh to them that he all broken sin to them be safety doth afford that are in heart contrite the troubles that afflict the just in number many be but yet

I blame out of them all the Lord doth set him free be careful he his bones doth keep whatever can be poor that not not so much as one of them can broken be at all all it shall the wicked slain linguist shall be who hate the just the

Lord redeems his servant souls none perish that him trust the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more amen