

The Lord Cares For His People

Psalm 34

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 34:8

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A dry-erase board and a dry-erase marker.

A paper plate for each child, yellow and brown construction paper, scissors, a glue stick, a marker, a hole punch and string.

A soda or ketchup bottle, a small balloon, vinegar, baking soda and a teaspoon.

ATTENTION GETTER!

The Name Game

Play this game as children arrive and before going to worship time. You will need a dry-erase board and dry-erase marker. Divide the class into two teams (three if the class is larger). On the board draw two columns (or one for each team). Before starting read Psalm 34:3 emphasizing, “let us exalt His name together.” Explain to the children that they will take turns thinking of as many names for God as they can. The team that comes up with the most names wins.

Say “go” and allow each team to take a turn. If some of the children get stuck tell them you can give them one “freebie” like shepherd, comforter, deliverer, alpha, or omega. There is a lot more names that you can come up with in the Bible. Keep playing until it is worship time. Explain that now it is their opportunity to exalt the name of the Lord.

LESSON TIME!

This Psalm was written by King David. It was written during a time when David was very fearful for his life. King Saul had been chasing him through the wilderness. He was forced out of Israel and had to “hide out” with the Philistines. Now think about how strange this sounds. Remember the story of David and Goliath? Well, Goliath was a Philistine warrior and David had killed him and totally embarrassed the Philistine army. Now David was hiding out among the Philistines. At one point he even acted like he had lost his mind in front of the Philistine king in order to save his life.

At this time, David had actually served the king of the Philistines. This was a time in David’s life when he had become so discouraged that he ran away to the enemy’s camp and wanted to go with the Philistine king to battle and fight against his own people. David had fallen into fear and unbelief. This is a good lesson for us, for if we take our eyes off of the Lord, we can become overwhelmed with unbelief. Although we see David’s failure, we also see the love and mercy of God. God heard David when he cried, and God will hear us when we cry out for mercy and help. **God will help us when problems come.**

PSALM 34:1-3

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

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

Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.

In verse one, we see that David is determined to bless and praise the Lord. When will he bless the Lord? “At all times” is David’s declaration. How will he bless God? By giving praise to God.

David knows to whom the praise is owed; to God for what He has done for us; in the past, present, and in the future. In every circumstance and in every trial, and in the brightest day, and darkest night, David determined that he would praise God. His praise would not just be in his heart, but in his mouth continually.

How important do you suppose worshipping the Lord is? Is it just something that we do on Sundays when we go to church, or should worship be a part of our every day life? It looks from David's life that he worshipped the Lord all of the time. We can learn from this. The Bible calls David a man after God's own heart. How can we also be boys and girls after God's own heart? One of the ways is to always stay in fellowship with the Lord and worship Him every day.

What kinds of things do we boast of in the Lord? In who He is, in how He reveals Himself to us in our lives, His love and relationship with us, and of how He cares for His people. When the humble hear of our boasting of ourselves, it can make them sad; yet when they hear of the glories of the Almighty God, their hearts rejoice and are glad with ours. Then we will see the sweet fellowship that we can share with one another.

In verse 3, we see that magnifying God is something we want to share with others. Do you know what "magnifying" is? Well, have you ever used a magnifying glass? It makes things look bigger! That is what we should do when we get around others. We need to talk about the Lord and how big He is. When we talk about Him and tell others about how great He is we are bringing the focus on Him and not on ourselves. **God will help us when problems come.**

PSALM 34:4-7

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

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

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

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

William Gurnall said, “God expects to hear from you before you can expect to hear from Him.” When we call out to God, asking for His help, we know that He hears us. God delivered David from all of his fears. It is good to be delivered from our fears, for fear can hold us in terrible bondage. We can be tormented by our fears-- fear of what might happen to us, what people think of us, what we will do, and so many more things that take our eyes off Jesus.

When we fear, we are not trusting in the Lord, but in ourselves. This fear can lead to unbelief, which is sin. We may have trials, but they don't have to pull us from the Lord. Sometimes trials scare us if we let them, but remember what James says, “Count it all joy when you have various trials” (James 1). Sometimes we may look at ungodly people and it may seem that they are free from trouble, but we can't see their hearts. Many times they are filled with fear. They live in more fear than those that trust God do. When we realize, along with David, that God has delivered us from all our fear, our response is to magnify Him and exalt His name above all others. **God will help us when problems come.**

We see in verse 5, that the more we think about the LORD, the less we think about ourselves, and that is much better. As we look to Him, He will keep our heads and our hearts strong when we go through the deep valleys of problems. A dancer “spots” when doing turns so they do not get dizzy and lose their balance. They fix their eyes on one spot and keep their eyes there, and it keeps

them from falling. Just as when we keep our eyes on Jesus, He keeps us in balance.

As verse 5 tells us, when we keep our eyes on the LORD, we will not be ashamed. We will shine with His love on our faces. There is nothing as beautiful as a person who has yielded their lives to Jesus, their eyes sparkle with His love and grace, and they have an unexplainable beauty about them.

In verse 6, the poor man cries, and it is the LORD who hears him and saves him out of all his troubles. Remember that God will regard the prayer of those who need Him. It is God and God alone who will help us in our times of need. The LORD knows when we are suffering and He will always help His children. He loves us and is our Heavenly Father. **God will help us when problems come.**

It is very comforting for us to know that the LORD “encamps” around us as we see in verse 7. He is always with us wherever we go. He will always protect us and help us. When we ask Jesus to save us, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts to live there. The Holy Spirit is God living inside of us, helping us and comforting us in our times of need.

PSALM 34:8-10

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

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

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

Do you love to taste something that is very good and wonderful? What about cookies or chocolate ice cream? We all love such yummy foods. Here David encourages us to “taste and see that the

LORD is good.” He is using our sense of taste to help us realize how wonderfully sweet our Lord is. No matter how good someone tells you that something tastes, until you actually taste it yourself you will never know how good it really is. Now matter how good someone tells you God is you must experience His goodness for yourself. You cannot go on someone else’s experience alone; you need to taste it for yourself.

David knows that when you trust the LORD, you will be “blessed.” From that trust grows a reverence for God and all of your needs will be met. Notice that He does not say our “greed” will be met, but God is always faithful to meet our needs. We see the fullness of God’s care for His children in verses 8-10. Everything we need is in the LORD.

David uses the comparison of the young lions. They are hungry, fierce, cunning and strong, yet they still have needs. So it is with the humble believer who trusts in God for everything, and as he does, will lack nothing he needs. “A life of faith will find food in everything because it is all founded in the LORD. The young lions may, and will lack, because nothing will supply their voracious appetites but that which is carnal.” R. Hawker. **God will help us when problems come.**

Lion Masks

For this craft you will need a paper plate for each child, yellow and brown construction paper, scissors, a glue stick, a marker, a hole punch and string. In Psalm 34:10 we are told that the young lions who are fast and strong still lack and suffer hunger. We are taught that we can’t rely on our own strength; we need to rely upon the Lion of the tribe of Judah, which is another name for Jesus. Let’s remember to always trust in Him for everything.

Cut out several small strips of yellow and brown construction paper approximately 1/2”x 2 1/2”. Each child will need a mixture

of 25 – 30 strips. Once the children have the strips have them glue them to the outer rim of the paper plate. This will constitute the lion's mane. Next cut out triangle shapes out of brown construction paper. Glue these onto the paper plate to make the lion's ears. With a black marker draw a nose and a mouth on for the lion. With other colors decorate or color the mask to make it look more like a lion. Cut out holes for eyes.

Next take a hole punch and punch a hole on both sides of the mask. Tie a piece of string to one end and measure each child's head so the mask will fit snugly. Tie the other end of the string to the other end of the mask.

PSALM 34:11-14

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

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

Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.

Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Here David is giving instruction for a believer to live their lives in honoring the Lord. David gives instruction from his own experience. He is encouraging children to come and listen as he shares with them concerning the fear of the LORD. It is so important that we listen to wisdom and the ways of the Lord when we are young in life. God wants so much for our lives to be wonderful and blessed lives. If we would only listen to and obey Him we will be kept from a lot of problems and heartache later in life. Our lives will be blessed if we, as children, would learn the

ways of the LORD as David did. **God will help us when problems come.**

He shares that the first and most important lesson is the fear of the Lord. Fear of the Lord is a reverence for God because He alone is holy. The basis for all wisdom is the reverence of the LORD. Are we fearing and respecting the LORD in our lives?

In verse 12 he asks a question which he himself answers in verse 13. He asks, “Do you want a long, good life?” (Living Bible). Of course we do! Here is David’s instruction: “Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile.” He tells us to guard with careful diligence that dangerous part of our body, the tongue. Our tongues are dangerous weapons. James 3:5, and 8 tell us, “Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and it is set on the fire of hell... But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

We should never spew out poison, (bad words, bad attitudes, mean sayings to people. Guile is defined as, “treachery, cunning, craftiness.” To be a godly person, deceit must be avoided in our lives. Someone who lives in deceit and guile lives in constant fear of being discovered and suffering the consequences.

Matthew Henry says, “Perhaps David, in warning us that we speak no guile, reflects upon his own sin in pretending to be crazy in front of the Philistine king. They that truly repent of what they have done wrong, will warn others to take heed of doing likewise.”

Next, he tells us to “depart from evil and do good”: to turn away from sin (run from it) and do good works. We are not only to take our hands off of evil, but also to get away from it. We need to set a distance between temptation and ourselves. As we flee evil, we

need to put our time and energy into doing good. If we are busy doing good, we will have no time to be doing evil.

We are to “seek peace and pursue it.” Pursue is defined as, “To follow in an effort to overtake; chase; to follow.” We are to take our energy and turn from evil, do good works, and follow after peace. We need to follow what Paul tells us in Romans 14:19, “Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things with which one may edify another.” We can have peace with God when we are saved by His grace. We can have the peace of God in our daily lives as we receive His grace. The world can never give us real peace, only God can. He desires to give it to us. Let us pursue it with all our hearts.

PSALM 34:15-22

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

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

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

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

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken.

Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

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

Being God's child does not mean that we will never have any problems. The Bible tells us, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." Psalm 119:71 says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." We may have many problems, but the Lord delivers us from them all. That is His promise. There is an end to our problems, and it is a joyful end. We are told that the Lord hears us when we call out to Him and desires to help us.

Verse 20 shares with us the thought that God does not allow the righteous to come to the place that they will sink. He will not allow us to be cut off from His love. We also remember the fulfillment of these words when Jesus was on the cross. You can read about that in John 19:33-37.

As God protects and cares for the righteous, the evil, which the sinner loves and cherishes, becomes like an executioner's ax that falls upon him. Those who hate the righteous will reap the punishment. Those that love God are redeemed, bought with the price of His blood. All He has redeemed belong to Him.

Let's remember the next time that we have a difficult time that we can trust in the Lord always. He cares for His people and loves you and I very much. He hears us when we cry out to Him and will help us in our need. If you have never asked Jesus to come into your life, why not "taste and see that the Lord is good!" God will help us when problems come.

The Big Blow Up

For this activity you will need a soda or ketchup bottle, a small balloon, vinegar, baking soda and a teaspoon. In our lesson today we learned that God will help us. We can't see God with our eyes,

but we can see what He does in our lives. That is how our “experiment” will work today.

Pour 1 inch of vinegar into the bottle. Put 2 teaspoons of baking soda into the balloon. Stretch the open end of the balloon over the top of the bottle. Let the soda fall into the vinegar. Watch the balloon blow up.

The gas that fills the balloon is invisible. We can't see the gas, but we can see it at work. That is how we know God is there and helps us. Even though we can't see Him, we see the things He does!

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord and continue to grow in Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.