

The Lord Is Good

(Psalm 34)

1 Samuel 21:10-22:2. David was fleeing from Saul. He attempted to hide among the Philistines, but after being recognized, he pretended to be insane and escaped to the cave of Adullam.

Vs. 1-3 It's one thing to ask for help during a storm, but it's another to bless Him when the waves are filling the boat! If you didn't have the description, you'd assume the author is living a peachy life. Nope! What a mess. David's trying to do what's right, but it's not going well for him. If he's the King of Israel, why is he hiding in a cave? And why in the world is he BLESSING (to speak well of; praise) God?

- Avoid the shame of blessing God only when it works out. Growth occurs when we purposely speak well of and praise God in the midst of the storm. It's then that you know your faith is genuine and not conditional. "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die," she said. "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" he said - **Job 2:9-10**. David was a man after God's own what? God said what about Job? "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to destroy him without reason." **Job 2:3**.

Vs. 4-7 If you didn't know David any better, you could take his words out of a fuller context and conclude he only cared about himself. Maybe he could only see the good God could do for him. Perhaps you'd say, "That's too harsh because David was being pursued unjustly."

- You know the beautiful thing about David? He asked God to save him from his enemy, which God did, but not before using David to bless his enemy. Yes, more than once, David showed mercy to Saul. His Psalm leaves this out; one can't help but think about the full context. How does the Psalm fit into David's life? Could you do good to your enemies while they pursue you? Jesus taught us to pray for our enemies. Paul instructed the saints to bless them.

Vs. 8-14 It's one thing to believe good will come from it, but another to identify it. There's the "saying the right thing" and then "seeing the blessing." How do you see God's goodness when you're running for your life? What do you think? Look around and see if you're not blessed. Fearing God is never in vain - the wise fear Him.

- We will see what we want to see. Focus on what we want to focus on. Pretend you're David and rewrite this passage. What all could you point out was going wrong? Now, remember that David had a band of people coming to him. He's a leader of a bitter band. Will he lean into the reality of what's happened, or will he pick them up? What kind of counselors are we? Are we constantly negative? How do we leave a conversation? All our conversations can't be purely light-hearted or upbeat, but do you know how to leave every conversation better than where it began? Can you leave the person with hope, or will you bring them down? See, we have a glimpse not just of what David said, but of who he was. What's

coming out of our mouths, and what kind of cave are we calling others to? Do you believe that one of the ways a person can "taste and see that the Lord is good" is because they spent time with you, His servant? We don't need to rewrite the Psalm. Just consider what we're saying (or not saying) about God now.

- While David considers God's blessing, he first draws attention to God's goodness. I fear that during times of uncertainty and trouble, we're more interested in figuring out what the next move is, what God will do, how this will work out, etc., instead of pausing to consider our day-to-day decisions and the goodness of God. We don't want to hear that. Heard a man "declare a man free from his depression and anxiety" in Jesus' name this week at Starbucks. He described the process of hearing God's voice. Apparently, it's never loud - always a whisper. As I fumed, it reminded me of the balance. Ignoring the hubris of this man to "declare him free from anxiety and depression", as he went on, I noticed two things: (1) the preacher was too self-centered. (2) He was training the other man to be self-centered. It wasn't truly about who God is; instead, it was about what he could get out of God. Not about turning away from evil.

Vs. 15-18 The righteous have help. We get God's attention, ear, and response. We pray to God. Jesus and the Spirit intercede and help us.

- Our hearts may be broken and our spirits crushed, but for those with tender hearts, the soil is prepared, the seed planted, and they bear fruit. But prayer and righteous living are hand in hand. However, be warned: our material blessings can fool us into thinking everything is well. It leads us to believe we don't need God. The heart becomes hardened. The seed cannot penetrate. **Hosea 10:1-12.**

Vs. 19-22 The righteous' experience of trials is inevitable, but condemnation is not. We have Jesus. This passage reminds us of Jesus' time on the cross. John says that when the soldiers didn't break His legs (because He was already dead), it fulfilled this passage (**John 19:36**). You should go back and read the Psalm with Jesus in mind. He's our suffering Savior, is He not?