

I give God
all the Glory!

△ Ps 34

Intro

When I prepared for today, I was looking to find a different type of topic

As it is August and holiday time

Something lighter, perhaps?

Let's look at a Psalm!

Lectionary

Has Ps 32

I thought, Ok, let's take that

Looking through the Psalm

I noticed it was a thanksgiving psalm

But in all the thanksgiving the Psalmist

David

Relates of his own struggles

And how God has redeemed him

Then I heard the first part of the interview with Andrea, on Radio 2 in the morning

I had heard of Andrea

And that she is a Christian

And very open about that

She will on social media relate that she goes to Church, reads the Bible

Including pictures of her bible studies

But she is a very happy and bubbly young woman

I had not heard that she had had such a difficult time in the past

So I looked the interview up on the BBC Sport website

And she there finishes

I think it is God's way of saying, "we still have got a lot more to do",

Yeah, I just give God all the glory"

And I was struck by her testimony

In front of the BBC Sport Cameras

Despite her clearly not wanting to be there

She testifies to what God has done for her

As the implication is that God has given her back the will to live

Giving him all the glory

Amazing

And I thought - that is just what Psalm 34 is saying

God has rescued me

Yes, I am still struggling and life is hard

But I give God all the glory

Psalm 34 - details

First some details that need to be clarified or left as a mystery

In our bibles there is a superscription

In our bibles these are just there and not numbered

In the Hebrew original these superscriptions have a vs number

So the psalm would have 23 vss instead of 22

May cause some confusion if you were looking at a direct Hebrew translation

Of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away

This seems to relate to the story in 1 Sam 21:10-15

Except there he went to King Achish at Gath

Achish realised who he was and fleeing from King Saul

So David thought of the ruse to feign madness so that King Achish would send him away

Instead of using him as a hostage, or worse!

Psalm 34 is achrostic

i.e. every verse starts with the next letter of the Hebrew Alphabet

In this way the poet constructs something using all the letters of the

something using all the letters of the alphabet

In order to indicate that we need all the letters and the words in the world to glorify God

Ps 34 - Structure

First the Psalmist speaks about what he does

^ v1-2

And he invites us to do the same

Glorify the Lord with me

Let us exalt his name for ever

He then speaks about

^ v3

I will extol the Lord at all times

My soul will boast in the Lord

Testimony, Wisdom & Invitation

^ v4-10

The next section is a mixture of the Psalmist on testimony of how good God is

I sought the Lord and he answered me / delivered me from all my fears

^ v4

This poor soul cried and was heard by the Lord / and saved from every trouble

^ v6

It contains wisdom, like in Proverbs & Ecclesiastes

The angel of the Lord encamps around who fear him

^ -

~ v7

The young lions suffer want and hunger /
but those who seek the Lord lack no good
thing

^ v10

And invitations

Look to him and be radiant / so your faces
shall never be ashamed

^ v5

O taste and see that the Lord is good

^ v8

O fear the Lord [...] / for those who fear him
have no want

^ v9

The next section is (an invitation
to) teaching on the the lives of
those who fear the Lord

^ v11-14

Come, I will teach you of the fear of the
Lord

^ v11

Why? because you desire life and
many good days

^ v12

How, stay away from evil

By not speaking it

**Keep your tongue from evil / lips fro speaking
deceit**

^ v13

And by staying away from evil things and
focus on doing good things

^ v14

Seek peace

The next section: realiam

The next section: realism

^ V15-22

Yes there are evil people, but God will cut them off

^ v16

Evil brings death to the wicked / those who hate the righteous will be condemned

^ v21

Instead God is close beside those who suffer and experience hardship

His ears are open to the cry of the righteous

^ v15

The Lord hears the righteous / and rescues them from trouble

^ v17

The Lord is near the brokenhearted / saves the crushed in spirit

Many are the afflictions of the righteousness

^ v19a

Here is the paradox, those who want to do good, who want to follow God in their lives will suffer

But those who reject God seemingly seem to be OK

But the Lord rescues the righteous from all afflictions

^ v19b

He will keep them whole

^ v20

The Psalm ends with a summary verse

The Lord will rescue the life of the

The Lord redeems the life of his
servants / none of those who take
refuge in him will be condemned

^ v22

Memory verse!

Many echoes with the new testament

Jesus died for us so that we can be
redeemed

In Christ there is now no condemnation
(Rom 8)

Looking at the key words

The message is clear, but it is still
good to look at some of the key
words of this psalm

To bless / to praise (NIV) / boast
(NRSV)

^ v1-3

The are words derived from the same
root in Hebrew (hll)

Which has the word 'kneel' in them

To bless is therefore in Hebrew to
kneel before a sovereign in this case
God

This is totally different meaning than what
we mean by blessing in today's English

To Praise/Boast involves offering
oneself to God

It is not just speaking good about someone

But publicly demonstrating that for the
Psalmist, the Lord is his master

And it is the humble who need to hear this

And it is the humble who need to hear this
and be glad!

**There is no room for people who boast and
praise themselves!**

v3 is then the invitation to Magnify the
Lord

How, by making ourselves smaller

The poor / humble / afflicted

These words in Hebrew also have the
same root and are therefore related

The Psalmist is poor - he cannot offer
salvation

But by making himself smaller, he
magnifies the Lord

And points to him as our deliverer

We cannot do this ourselves!

Fear

The word 'Fear' appears in v7 and 9

Anticipating Fear of the Lord in v11

"I will teach you the fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord leads to life

v12 - who desires life

So it is a good thing

But it involves obedience

to keep from evil and pursuit peace and good

In the book of Deuteronomy, fearing God
appears to be virtually synonymous with
obeying God's commandments

It is not fear as in afraid

Which the psalmist was rescued from in v4

I sought the Lord, and he [...] delivered me from all my fears.

^ v4

Life

All this leads to life

Which of you desires life?

The answer is humble yourself before God and fear him

But this is not a life devoid of suffering

As we had already seen that the righteous

Cry out to God

^ v15

Are in trouble

^ v17

Are brokenhearted and crushed in spirit

God will be experienced in the midst of suffering

Fear of God is not rewarded in a material, mechanistic or even health sense

But with the nearness of God

Seek/Sought

The final word to focus on is the word combination Seek and Sought

I sought the Lord (and he answered me)

^ v4

Those who seek the Lord (lack no good thing)

^ v10

David is his life had many troubles

One is the one listed at the top of this

Psalm - that he was afraid of
Abimelech/Amish

But his knew the Lord was with him

And he continually sought him out

It is an active seeking

Some in the way we behave

But also relationally with God

At the end the Psalmist uses the word
servant: servants have a relationship
with their master

Again even here in this Psalm, God is
inviting us via King David that he wants
that relationship with us too

Take away

We learned that blessing God is to
kneel before him

We learned that praising God and
boasting about him, means that
we make ourselves smaller /
humbler

We learned that the fear the Lord
is to obey him

And that this all leads to life

Not a life without suffering

But a life with God in the suffering

Just as Jesus died on the cross,
suffering for us

And we learned that we need to actively seek to have that relationship with God

Andrea Spendolini-Sireix has given us an example of how to do that in real life

That we continue to give God the glory

Even if our life does not work out the way we want to

Amen
