

Good morning, church family.

Good morning.

God bless you.

Psalm 34, the whole thing.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul makes its boast in the Lord.

Let the humble hear and be glad.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

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

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 around those who fear him and delivers them.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack.

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

Come, O children, listen to me.

I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

What man is there who desires life and loves many days that he may see good?

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

Turn away from evil and do good.

Seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.

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 brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

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

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

and him will be condemned.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, again, we ask for your help as we open your word.

Would you help us to magnify you as we look to be faithful to what you've given us in your word?

And Lord, would you magnify yourself in our hearts and our minds this morning?

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

So at camp, we were looking at this passage, Psalm 34.

I was planning on staying in Proverbs today, but circumstances prior to camp...

And a lot of good conversations, a little increased responsibility and some other stuff at camp made it clear that God had other plans for me this morning.

And really this psalm, the longer I kind of sat in the psalm, I taught a portion of it.

And then I was listening to it being taught throughout the week and just reflecting on it.

The more I was eager to share it with you all.

So that's what I'm going to do this morning.

I'm going to walk through.

It's going to be a little less formal from time to time.

or maybe a little bit more camp-like.

I might ask for some interaction here and there.

But I trust that God's going to speak through his word this morning.

So, you know, David's life, David wrote the Psalm, Psalm 34, and David's life was full of highlights.

What are some of the highlights from David's life?

You can talk back today.

It's fine.

Yeah, he slayed Goliath, right?

That's like one of the peaks.

What else?

He became king, right?

He outlasted Saul and he did it graciously, right?

He didn't go and kill Saul or outstretch his hand out against the Lord's anointed, I think is how he put it often.

Rather, he waited on God and basically outlasted Saul and became king.

Good, what else?

Joined the Philistines to injure the Philistines.

Joined the injure, yeah.

Yeah, he did do that.

I'm trying to remember exactly the details of that, but I'll have to look it up.

I remember it.

generally what you're talking about.

He danced before the Lord, right?

Art came home.

I mean, he wrote Psalm 23, probably like the greatest piece of literature ever written, regardless of whether you believe in the God that he wrote about or not.

Good.

Anything else?

Yeah, his faithful friend, the Jonathan, a wonderful, probably the pinnacle example of human friendship in the Bible, right?

The brook Bezor is another highlight for me when he shows mercy to the guys who can't go.

There was also some lowlights.

Probably the two lowlights that most people are familiar with are his sin with Bathsheba, committing adultery with Bathsheba and killing her husband, and also his failure as a father with Absalom, his failure to stand up to Absalom for the good of the nation.

That was kind of a mixed bag of,

good and bad and interaction with his son.

But those are probably the two most familiar and most famous.

But there's more, right?

There's more small stories where we get a glimpse into David's sin and his failure, both as a man before God, but also as God's king and leader.

What makes Psalm 34 here unique

is that it is a seemingly energetic, full throated psalm of praise.

Right.

A psalm or a song of praise written at one of those low points.

Right.

So David and by low points, I mean like kind of

morally low, when David seems to be on the bottom, let's put it that way.

So Psalm 34 is David at a low point in his life, very low point, communicating though that God is magnified through working for his people, working for his people.

God's also magnified in his people's humility

and even his people's suffering.

I think this is a really unique view of praise, of magnifying the Lord and exalting the Lord.

And it helps, I think, correct how we think and how we define some of the key terms of the Christian life.

So we'll just walk right through the Psalm a little bit and show you how that comes out.

First, the whole Psalm is about magnifying the Lord, right?

That's the main theme of the Psalm.

He says it right at the beginning and then he actually does it.

David does it before us.

But right at the beginning, if you look at verses one to three, David makes it really clear what this song is going to be about.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul makes its boast in the Lord.

Let the humble hear and be glad.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name forever.

So what does it mean to magnify God or magnify the Lord?

David gives us some synonyms or some other ways to describe it here in these three verses.

He says, bless the Lord, praise the Lord, boast about the Lord, be glad in the Lord,

exalt the lord or lift up his name right in amongst people so we get a lot of different set i'm going to do word studies on all of them for you today but david elaborates and kind of gives us a picture of what it looks like to magnify the lord if i did this distill like magnify the this word here into like one visual or definition i would say that it's it's to make something larger in our view

to make something larger in our view, to make God bigger in our vision.

We go through life, and the next couple things we've got to do are generally on our radar.

We're thinking about tasks for the day, people that we're going to interact with.

Maybe long-term plans a little bit.

Every now and then we'll notice like the beauty of a sunset or something.

But that radar, that view that we're like walking through life with to magnify the Lord is to make him bigger in that view, in our field of vision, even as we just go throughout the day.

We want to be aware of him and also aware of everything else in context to him.

Now, John Piper points out that there's a couple different ways, two different ways in particular, that you can magnify something.

You can make something small with a microscope look really big, bigger than it actually is.

Or you can magnify something that is further away, like really big, really awesome, but just happens to be further away for some reason,

You can use like a telescope to make that thing that's further away look actually not quite as big as it actually is, but closer to what it actually is and see more detail about it.

That's the kind of magnifying we're doing with God, right?

If you look at the shirts, there's mountains in the background because God's more like a mountain than he is.

you know, one of your skin cells that you're looking at underneath a microscope, right?

We want to see God in more detail.

And because of our sin, because of our sinful nature, God is not in our view as he ought to be most times.

So like magnifying the Lord is to bring him back to where he ought to be in our view and put everything else in its place, to see everything else in relation to how big and how great God is.

So yeah, magnifying the Lord, making him bigger in our field of vision.

David magnifies the Lord in the Psalm here, primarily in two ways, by telling us who he is and reviewing or reciting what he does.

The interesting thing is, he only talks about who the Lord is once, and he really only gives one characteristic of God in the Psalm.

If you look at verse eight, oh, taste and see,

That the Lord is good, right?

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

That's mainly the only characteristic that David lists about God, that he is good.

That's the main thing that David wants us to know about God.

as far as his character and who he is in the Psalm, that he is good.

The author of Hebrews reflects this here in Hebrews 11, 6.

And without faith, it is impossible to please him for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

So good and rewarding those who seek him are kind of similar, talking about generally the same thing.

That God is good to his people.

That God works for his people.

That he does good and not harm to his people.

That if you draw near to him, right, he will not give you a snake, but he'll give you a loaf of bread in the parable that Jesus talks about, right?

That God is good and righteous and just and rewards those who seek him.

So how does he reward those who seek him?

Well, David talks a bit here.

Oops, wrong part.

David talks a bit here about...

some of the stuff that God does.

Now, I'm going to list this off.

But pay close attention to the list.

Like we could preach a sermon on almost every one of these things.

These things that God does for David and does for his people are massive, weighty, like your life will never be the same if you truly wrapped your mind around what God is doing for you here in this list.

In verse four, he delivers his people from their fears.

In verse 5, he makes his people radiant and unashamed.

He hears his people and he saves them from their troubles.

In verse 6, God hears when his people cry out.

He hears and he saves them from all their troubles.

In verse 6, he encamps near his people.

He pitches his tent near his people and delivers them.

In verse 7, he blesses those who take refuge in him.

He supplies all of his people's needs so that they lack no good thing.

In verse 10,

His eyes and his ears are on his people.

He hears and delivers them in verses 15 to 17.

He's near the brokenhearted, and he saves the crushed in spirit in verse 18, and he redeems the life of his servants.

None who take refuge in him will be condemned in verse 22.

God loves to work for his people.

He loves to work for his people.

Isaiah 46.4.

Don't have it for you here.

This is one of the verses.

I love the quote.

when I'm going to visit somebody, right?

If they're maybe in the hospital for some reason, or if they've been out of the hospital, especially as we get to the end of our life.

This is one of those verses that has been really comforting to me, and I trust has been comforting to other people as well.

It says, even to your old age, I am he.

And to gray hairs, I will carry you.

I have made, and I will bear, I will carry, and will save.

The Lord loves to work for his people.

So yes, let's magnify the Lord together, right?

David's got a lot of reasons here to magnify the Lord, and he is joyfully laying them out before us.

Let's magnify the Lord together.

He delivers, he saves, he redeems his people.

He makes us beautiful, radiant, and unashamed.

So the question though, and kind of the nagging question,

is especially in light of suffering, why isn't everyone doing this, right?

If God's so great, which he is, and he works so wonderfully for his people, which he does, why do people resist?

Why do people resist him?

Why do we not all just run into his open arms?

If God is as good and as great and he works for his people so magnificently as he does, why isn't the whole world, why isn't everybody just running into his arms and embracing him?

I believe that David starts to show us this or hints at it in a couple of different ways, but to sum it up and to kind of give you, to distill it for you before we go to the text here.

I believe it's because God's definition of salvation and deliverance are different than ours.

God's definition for salvation and deliverance is often different than ours.

His vision for beauty and glory in our lives is different than ours.

We think we need to be delivered from bad circumstances and other people around us when he sees that we need to be delivered and saved from ourselves, from our sin.

We think, you know, we need new clothes and a new car and success to be beautiful.

When God sees that we need the beauty of righteousness and holiness, and he knows exactly how to give it to us.

And being saved from our sin, God giving us these things, being saved from our sin and making us beautiful, often involves and almost always necessarily involves stuff we don't want to do or experience.

stuff that we would rather not immediately do or experience.

So like I said, the Psalm of praise was written at a dark time in David's life.

And I think it's the key to rightly understanding the type of salvation, the type of beauty that David is praising God for.

We can read all of those good things that God does for us.

We can read that the Lord is good and be putting our own definitions, right?

Our own idea of goodness and salvation and deliverance and all that stuff on there and totally miss the point.

But David kind of doesn't let us if we dig just a smidge deeper.

So God is magnified, right?

Let's magnify the Lord together.

He's magnified by who he is and what he does, but he shows who he is and what he does through his people's humility.

We've got to look at the heading and the context, because it's kind of a weird heading and context, especially with the first three verses, right?

The first three verses, oh, praise the Lord, oh, magnify the Lord.

But the heading says, of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out and he went away.

So what's he talking about here?

What's his heading referring to?

Well, if we go to 1 Samuel 21, 10 to 15, keep your finger here, turn to the left, until you get to 1 Samuel.

So a few books to the left.

1 Samuel 21, we're coming back to Psalm 34, so don't abandon that.

1 Samuel 21, 10 to 15, we got the story that the heading's referring to.

Verse 10 of 1 Samuel 21, so 1 Samuel 21, 10, says, and David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish, that's Abimelech,

There's a couple of reasons why it doesn't say Achish in the heading.

I'm not going to get into it.

It's really nerdy right now.

If you want to know, you can ask me later.

All right, but they're the same guy, Achish and Abimelech.

And went to Achish, the king of Gath.

And the servants of Achish said to him, is not this David, the king of the land?

Did they not sing to one another of him in dances?

Saul has struck down his thousands and David his ten thousands.

And David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish, the king of Gath.

So he changed his behavior before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let a spittle run down his beard.

Then Achish said to his servants, Behold, you see the man is mad.

Why then have you brought him to me?

Do I lack madmen that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence?

Shall this fellow come into my house?

And then like, end of story.

That's it.

So 22.1 tells us that David left, but we don't really know how he left, the circumstances surrounding his release, all that stuff.

That's just a little snippet.

So there's kind of a lot going on here.

First, Gath is a Philistine city.

So David's running from Saul.

Saul throws a spear at him.

David's anointed.

Saul knows that David's going to be taken over as king.

He doesn't like it.

He's jealous.

He tries to kill David.

David runs from Saul.

And he runs to a Philistine city, which is, he had to have been really, really desperate, right, to go to a Philistine city.

The tens of thousands that he's talking about killing, that the women were talking about David killing here and singing about, were Philistines.

And not only does he go to a Philistine city, but he goes to Gath, which was Goliath's hometown.

The giant that he killed and he cut off his head and then he walked around with his head in like a victory parade for a while, you know, bragging about how he killed him.

that was, this is his hometown, right?

So he goes to Goliath's hometown, Philistine City, and he's rightfully afraid, right?

So we're not told exactly why he went there, but really he probably only went there because he had to and there wasn't anywhere else to go.

So he goes and they start recognizing him and they start saying, hey, isn't this the guy that killed like 10,000 of us and cut off Goliath's head and really gave us a hard time?

And they start to recognize him.

So they bring him before the king.

And David, we're not sure why, the text here doesn't necessarily say why, changes his behavior.

And he starts acting insane, scribbling on stuff, carving into the walls, drooling, and just acting totally, totally crazy.

And so the king's like, oh, look at this guy.

You know, like he's already humiliated enough, right?

Like, I don't need more madmen.

This is the great hero everybody's talking about.

And apparently he's released, and David goes on his way.

The big question is, how in the world and why does Psalm 34 come out of this event?

We've got this beautiful psalm of praise.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me.

God delivers his people.

Just this wonderful song of praise.

lifting God up.

And yet it seems like God's man, right?

God's man, David, his anointed man here is humiliated before his enemies.

And yeah, he's released and he escapes with his skin, but that's about it, right?

No dignity at all, right?

He's just, he's shooed out of the city as a madman.

So how does that magnify the Lord, right?

How does that lift up his name and make him look great?

I had no idea for a while.

I was thinking about it, pondering it.

Not too hard because that really wasn't my section.

But then about the night before I had to speak, it kind of dawned on me as I was just thinking about the psalm.

I think the reason that this story about David acting crazy magnifies the Lord and exalts the Lord

is because it highlights that David's success, the salvation that David experienced, and even the salvation that David provided through killing Goliath and killing a bunch of Philistines, the salvation he provided for the nation of Israel, wasn't about David.

It wasn't about making David look great.

David knew God existed, and David knew that God rewarded those who seek him.

So when God called David to kill Goliath and to save Israel and to be the hero, he trusted God and he went and did it when nobody else would do it.

And when God called David to act crazy and to make himself repulsive to other people so that they would let him go,

He trusted God and he did it.

Because it wasn't about what people thought about or believed about David, whether he was a hero or whether he was crazy.

It was about what people thought and believed about God.

And if God's salvation and magnifying God means looking dumb and stupid to everyone else, then David's siding with God and he's choosing his salvation.

You know, I think if you look kind of broadly at evangelical Christianity, of which we're a part, you know, talking as an insider here, not somebody outside making fun.

But I just think if you look at the church in general, it feels like to me that we still care a lot about what other people think of us.

Like we're marketing Christian conferences and concerts with slogans like,

You know, when you become a Christian, you don't have to start wearing khakis and polos, which is fine, you know, but really that's what we want people to know about this concert is that, hey, we're cool over here.

Like, you know, we look like you.

How about this first slogan?

It probably won't sell a ton of tickets, but here we go.

When you become a Christian, you're set free from everyone else's shallow opinions about what you should wear, how you should talk, what you should look like, and you learn to love others deeply so that you don't even notice what they're wearing, right?

Anyways, we all care, right?

We all care what other people think about us.

And it's tempting to let that be bigger in our vision than God and his salvation and what he's done for us.

Magnify the Lord, make him bigger in my vision than my own honor, my own glory, whether or not people think I'm cool or not.

I think we also care a little bit too much about what people think of us, maybe a lot too much, when it comes to confessing our sin to one another.

I mean, what's the one thing that keeps us from confessing our sins, getting them out in the open where God deals with them and repenting of them?

I mean, it's fear of man, fear of how people are going to think of us, fear of being thought less than the perceived perception of us right now.

Part of our salvation...

we got to remember both of these things.

Part of our salvation is being honored and glorified with Jesus.

Like we'll be at Jesus's side when he slays all the giants and the bad guys in the end, right?

We'll be right there participating, experiencing his honor and his glory that's due him on that day.

But part of our salvation is also being humbled enough to look bad, even repulsive to other people as we confess our sins and

and we get our junk and the things that we're ashamed of out in the open and repent of them.

That may look stupid to people sometimes.

Confessing secret sin, asking for forgiveness, repenting of things that we've done wrong.

That may look dumb and foolish and stupid to other people, but God's greatness and his work for us gives us the courage to do it.

So we see in this story,

in this little heading of the psalm, that God delivered David from his fear of death by humbling him.

He had to become like a madman in order for him to be freed from the Philistines and saved from them.

And similarly, God delivers us from our fear of eternal death by humbling us to repent of our sin.

Now, the courage to do this comes kind of at the end of the psalm, when we see that God is magnified, not just through his people's humility, but God's even magnified

through his people's suffering.

How do we get the courage to humble ourselves?

How do we grow the faith?

How does faith grow in us to be able to trust God, to be good, even if we humble ourselves and get our junk out in the open?

I think we see it towards the end of the psalm.

So if you go back to Psalm 34, I'm gonna have you flip one other place, but go back to Psalm 34.

There's a strange section of the Psalm that doesn't seem to make a lot of sense, even when considering the historical context.

It's an odd couple of verses, it's verses 19 and 20.

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

He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken.

It's a little strange that David says many are the afflictions of the righteous, especially after he established the Psalm as a Psalm of praise

And like establish this whole psalm of praise on the foundation of God's salvation and deliverance.

So it's a little odd to talk about multiplying afflictions here.

But it's even stranger to specifically reference bones.

It seems a little out of place.

You know, you go back to the story, it's like, okay, were they gonna break David's legs or something?

Or, you know, like punch him in the ribs?

Like, why are we talking about broken bones here?

It didn't really seem like David's bones were in jeopardy.

It just seemed like they wanted to kill him, right?

So like, what's he talking about?

Is it just a metaphor or why are we talking about bones?

Well, about a thousand years later, I think we see why God includes that description here in this Psalm.

Go to John 19, 31 to 36.

Going to the right this time, flipping to the right to the New Testament, John 19, verses 31 to 36.

Since it was the day of preparation and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

He who saw it has borne witness.

His testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth, that you also may believe.

For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Not one of his bones will be broken.

Just like the Passover lamb, you remember that one of the orders given to the Israelites as they were preparing the Passover lamb was that not one of its bones should be broken, right?

As they prepared it for a meal.

But just like the Passover lamb, none of Jesus's bones were broken.

He was the perfect atoning sacrifice.

offered for god's people so the salvation and the deliverance you and i need most is from our sin right that separates us from god and what psalm 34 is telling us is that god willingly and freely offers us that redemption through his son's blood and his son's sacrifice and while christ offered that sacrifice once to justify us before god god often calls

us to go through our own suffering and difficulties as refining fire to help us grow and turn from our sinful patterns to him, but also to magnify him to others.

As God removes things out of our lives, he's shown to be all we need, everything we need to be satisfied and growing and holy before him.

So as we suffer, we magnify God's salvation and his sustaining power.

The bottom line, what we see in Psalm 34 is that God loves to work for his people, right?

God's magnified as he works for his people.

And he works for his people when they humble themselves, right?

When they are willing to receive that work.

And he even works for his people.

He's even working for his people as they suffer and primarily through the suffering of his own son.

So the response, we kind of skipped over it in the middle of the psalm,

What we're called to do is in verse 11.

It says, Come, O children, listen to me.

I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

What man is there who desires life and loves many days that he may see good?

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

Turn away from evil and do good.

Seek peace and pursue it.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Maybe you need to for the first time.

Maybe as we've talked about all that God is in his goodness and all that God does for his people, maybe he's drawing you even now.

You say, I need that.

I want that.

I need him.

I want him.

Taste and see that the Lord is good, even for the first time.

There's nothing, there's no one,
that loves you and works for you like God can.

You can trust him.

He rewards those who seek him, right?

He is good.

There's nothing else that you can serve and he will serve something.

There's nothing that you can serve in this life that will work for you and will love you the way that God does.

And believers, is there a part of your life that you're proudly holding onto?

not quite ready to look like a madman yet a hidden sin that you're too ashamed to confess too concerned maybe about magnifying yourself to others to bring to light and experience god's deliverance look at verses four and five i sought the lord and he answered me he delivered me from all my fears those who look to him are radiant and their faces shall never be ashamed

Turn to him, get it out in the open.

It's humiliating, but he will make you radiant and unashamed.

Book of Hebrews tells us that, you know, we need to stir one another up to good works.

So let me just ask you and make an attempt to stir you up to good works this week.

How can you, how can I magnify the Lord more?

I mean, I don't know how we can read this psalm and not be excited about drawing attention to God, right?

Not just, you know, drawing our attention to God and making Him bigger in our vision, but also just sharing Him and making Him bigger in other people's vision.

So how can you proactively, stirring one another up to good works, right?

How can you magnify the Lord more?

Maybe there's a part of your life that God's been nudging you to upend, to change drastically, to rearrange, to make him bigger in other people's vision and your own.

If that's you this morning, I'm just encouraging you to do it, right?

To, even if it seems foolish, even if it seems like people are gonna question your sanity and what you're doing, do it, right?

Magnify the Lord with me this morning.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, you are great and awesome.

Lord, you demonstrate your goodness and your greatness in how you work for your people and how you love and redeem your people.

And Lord, we're blown away by that.

Lord, you're all powerful.

You're sovereign over the universe.

You could exercise that power and that sovereignty in any way you choose.

You would have been just and right to wipe us out for our rebellion against you.

And yet you love us and work for us and redeem us at great cost to yourself, even the death of your son.

So Lord, we magnify your name.

We lift you high.

And Lord, we don't want to just come and do it for an hour.

Lord, we want to magnify you with our lives.

We want to make your name known because not only does that lift you up, but Lord, we know that's what other people need.

They need to know you and to magnify you.

That's what they were made for, and that's what we were made for.

So Lord, would you give us opportunities to do that?

Would you give us strength to do that?

Would you give us faith to do it?

And Lord, would you help us?

Would you just be big in our vision this week?

Would you help us to be in your word, to be before you in prayer, to be with one another, encouraging one another, and stirring one another up to good works?

We trust that you'll be in all of that.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Let's stand and I will read the benediction for us as we leave this morning.

This is number 6, 24 to 26.

This benediction comes to us because of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

This is God working for us.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen.

You're dismissed.