



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

The Words You'll Need When You Can't Think Straight

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Psalms 34; 1 Sam. 21-22.

There are moments in life where you don't need a new idea—you need the old foundations. The ABC's. The Aleph-Tavs. What holds you together when you're at your lowest place? Psalm 34 is one of those gifts from God that's meant to be embedded into us in the good days, in the days of youth and innocence, so that when the darkest days come, we don't have to scramble for something spiritual to say—we already have a song in our bones.

And what makes Psalm 34 hit so differently is that the content doesn't "match" the context. This Psalm is *"Of David, when he feigned insanity before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left"* (Ps. 34:1). That's the story described in 1 Sam. 21-22. David—who once stood fearless before Goliath—ends up so desperate that he runs into enemy territory, then humiliates himself to survive, *"scribbling on the doors of the gate and letting his saliva run down his beard"* (1 Sam. 21:14). He then escapes to the cave of Adullam, and gathers a whole congregation of the broken: *"Anyone who was in distress, anyone in debt, and anyone embittered rallied around him"* (1 Sam. 22:2). So here's the question: how do you stay faithful in the cave—when you're confused, humiliated, and everything feels upside down?

1. BLESS HIM IN THE CAVE

David doesn't start a pity-party playlist. He doesn't lead the 400 in a bitter anthem. He starts with Aleph—*"I will bless ADONAI at all times. His praise is continually in my mouth"* (Ps. 34:2). That is not denial. That's not pretending the cave isn't real. That's David refusing to let the cave tell him who God is. He's basically saying: "I know where I am, and I know what this looks like—but I will not let my circumstances write my theology."

And notice what happens next: *"My soul boasts in ADONAI. The humble ones hear of it and rejoice"* (Ps. 34:3). The "humble ones" aren't theoretical—those are the afflicted ones in the cave, the distressed, indebted, embittered people. David's praise becomes a lifeline to other sufferers. Your cave can make you turn inward... or it can make you lift your voice in a way that gives courage to someone else. So David says, *"Magnify ADONAI with me, and let us exalt His Name together"* (Ps. 34:4). He pulls them into unity praise: "Come on—make God big with me."

2. SEEK HIM, BEHOLD HIM, CRY OUT TO HIM

David doesn't describe a passive spirituality. He says, *"I sought ADONAI, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears"* (Ps. 34:5). He's not bragging about how clever he was—"I acted insane and got out!"—rather, he gives the glory to God: "He snatched me. He delivered me." And that's important, because some of us interpret fear as failure. David shows us fear can become a doorway: not to self-protection, but to seeking God. He sought, and God answered.

Then comes that turning point of vision: *“They who looked to Him were radiant, and their faces will never be ashamed”* (Ps. 34:6). There’s something about beholding the Lord that changes what your face carries—shame, dread, dismay. David is teaching the cave-people a new reflex: look to Him. Don’t “behold” the enemy more than you behold God. And if you need it even simpler, David makes it personal: *“This poor man cried, and ADONAI heard, and saved him out of all his troubles”* (Ps. 34:7). “This afflicted man”—me—cried out, and God heard. Not a performance. Not a polished prayer. A cry. And the Lord saved him out of the narrow places.

3. TASTE HIS GOODNESS, LEARN THE FEAR OF ADONAI, TAKE REFUGE

David goes from crying out to confidence: *“The angel of ADONAI encamps around those who fear Him, and delivers them”* (Ps. 34:8). Even when you don’t recognize it—especially in the cave—heaven is not absent. God is not oblivious. He is surrounding. He is delivering. Then David gives one of the most famous invitations in all Scripture: *“Taste and see how good ADONAI is. Blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him”* (Ps. 34:9). Taste—don’t just analyze. Don’t just react. Let it sit in your mouth. Discern. Don’t make a quick judgment about God based on a dark chapter.

And then he teaches what fear of the Lord looks like on the ground. *“Fear ADONAI, His Chadisim (‘loved ones’), for those who fear Him lack nothing”* (Ps. 34:10). And even when strength fails—*“Young lions may lack, and go hungry, but those who seek ADONAI want for no good thing”* (Ps. 34:11). David then turns his instructions to the next generation: *“Come, children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of ADONAI”* (Ps. 34:12). How? Watch your mouth and your walk: *“Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking treachery”* (Ps. 34:14). *“Depart from evil and do good. Seek shalom and pursue it”* (Ps. 34:15). This is cave-survival holiness: not bitterness on your lips, not *mirmah*—falsehood and fraud—coming out of your mouth. Praise, truth, goodness, and pursuit of shalom.

CONCLUSION

If you’ve ever wondered, “Has God lost sight of me?” Ps. 34 answers straight: *“The eyes of ADONAI are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their cry”* (Ps. 34:16). That includes the sigh, the groan, the quiet cry for “help.” And Psalm 34 refuses to sell you a fake promise that righteous people never suffer. It tells the truth: *“Many are the distresses of the righteous”* (Ps. 34:20). Many. A multitude. But it also tells the deeper truth: *“But ADONAI delivers him out of them all”* (Ps. 34:20). Not always fast. Not always how you expected. David’s own journey to the throne wasn’t a week-long—it was years-long. But deliverance is real, and God is near.

And maybe the most tender line in the whole Psalm is this: *“ADONAI is close to the brokenhearted, and saves those crushed in spirit”* (Ps. 34:19). The very place you assume means abandonment can be the place where God is closest. The Psalm ends with courtroom language: evil itself is what executes the wicked, guilt remains on those who hate righteousness (Ps. 34:22). But for the one who runs to God—there is ransom and refuge: *“ADONAI redeems the soul of His servants—no one who takes refuge in Him will be held guilty”* (Ps. 34:23). That’s the final note: run to Him. Hide in Him. Let the ABC’s of faith rise up in the cave.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What's a "cave" season you've experienced—where the content of your faith didn't seem to match the context of your life?
2. Why do you think David begins with *"I will bless ADONAI at all times"* (Ps. 34:2) instead of explaining the cave?
3. What does it look like practically to *"seek ADONAI"* (Ps. 34:5) when fear is loud?
4. Psalm 34 connects fearing the Lord with speech and actions (Ps. 34:14–15). Where do you most need guarding right now—your tongue, your habits, or both?
5. How might your week change if you truly believed *"ADONAI is close to the brokenhearted"* (Ps. 34:19) in your hardest moment?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, You are good—even when our circumstances are not. In the cave, when we feel isolated, confused, or humiliated, we choose to come back to the foundations. We choose the first letter again: *"I will bless ADONAI at all times. His praise is continually in my mouth"* (Ps. 34:2). Train our reflexes, Lord—so we don't magnify fear, but magnify You. Teach us to seek You and to behold You, until shame lifts and our faces are made radiant again.

Draw near to the brokenhearted right now. Save those who feel crushed in spirit (Ps. 34:19). Let the one who can barely whisper know that Your ears are attentive even to the sigh (Ps. 34:16). Put a guard over our mouths—keep our tongues from evil and our lips from deceit (Ps. 34:14). Help us depart from evil and do good, to seek shalom and pursue it (Ps. 34:15). And for anyone who needs refuge today, lead them to hide in You—to take refuge in You—and let them know the promise is sure: You redeem the soul of Your servants, and no one who takes refuge in You will be held guilty (Ps. 34:23).

B'Shem Yeshua, In Yeshua's name, amen.