

The LORD is Near
Psalm 34:7-18

Good morning,

As we have been studying the ***Book of Psalms***, we have learned many things about the Lord's character and His attributes.

King David had such a close walk with the LORD, that as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write some of the ***Psalms***, he was able to tell us many things about this God we serve.

Please open your Bibles to ***Psalm 34*** as we continue surveying through that book.

The LORD is so big and there are many facets of Him that we will never understand this side of heaven, but the things we can learn of Him, should comfort His children and scare His foes.

The LORD deals with His children differently than those who refuse to make Him the Lord of their lives.

1 Peter 5:5 Yes, all of you be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Edmond Hiebert said, "*The verb, "resists" in 1 Peter 5:5 vividly pictures God, as one who places Himself in battle array against such individuals.*"

The LORD of Hosts, the God of angel armies, will suit up to fight against proud and haughty people, who will not surrender.

But then *1 Peter 5:6* says, ***“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 1 Peter 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”***. NKJV

Again, ***“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”***

If we are humble before the LORD, He will give us grace.

Remember, Grace is God’s undeserved, unmerited favor, which can also be explained as God’s riches at Christ’s expense.

I. The LORD God protects His children.

Read *Psalms 34:7*

This *Psalms* was written by David when he was being hunted by King Saul and David fled to Gath of the Land of the Philistines.

David pretended to be insane, so the Philistines drove him away and he departed and hid in a cave with the men who joined him.

1 Samuel 21:10 David arose and fled that day from before Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath.

1 Samuel 21:11 And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"

1 Samuel 21:12 Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

1 Samuel 21:13 So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard.

1 Samuel 21:14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me?"

1 Samuel 21:15 Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?" NKJV

So, David wrote this *Psalm* in the cave and sang it with his men.

Whenever scripture uses the term, "*The Angel of the LORD*" instead of "*an*" angel of the LORD, there is a distinction.

The dictionary meaning of an angel is a spiritual being who is an attendant, agent, or messenger of God.

We do not know how many angels there are in heaven, but we know that at some time, Satan fell from heaven, and he convinced one-third of the heavenly hosts to follow him.

We also know that angels are very powerful beings, but this identifier of "*The angel of the LORD*" is about a specific being.

The LORD appeared to different people in the Old Testament, but we first see, "*The Angel of the LORD*", in *Genesis 16*.

gotquestions.org said, "Angels are mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, but "*The angel of the Lord*" is never mentioned in the New Testament after the **birth** of Christ."

Appearances of “*The Angel of the LORD*” were manifestations of Jesus before His incarnation, not God the Father.

John 6:46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. NKJV

Jesus claimed to have lived before Abraham to the religious leaders and said in *John 8:58 "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." NKJV*

“*The Angel of the LORD*” sightings were pre-incarnate appearances of Christ (otherwise known as a **Christophany**).

David said in *Psalms 34:7, “The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him and delivers them.” NKJV*

David had an invisible, all-powerful, always-present, protector who camped out around him so that David was untouchable.

During King Hezekiah's reign, Assyria attacked Judah's cities and mocked Hezekiah as a weak leader with a weak nation.

The LORD promised to defend Judah and strike down the Assyrians.

2 Kings 19:32 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it.

2 Kings 19:33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city, 'Says the LORD.

*2 Kings 19:34'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant **David's** sake.'*"

*2 Kings 19:35 And it came to pass on a certain night that **the angel of the LORD** went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses — all dead. NKJV*

I don't know if I agree or not, but some believe this passage is proof that we all have a guardian angel who watches over us.

George Horne said, *"Let the consideration of these invisible guardians, who are also spectators of our **actions**, at once restrain us from evil, and incite us to good."*

David demonstrated **faith** in God, as he was in the cave hiding from Saul and his men. David reassured his men that the LORD Himself was going to encamp around them and **deliver** them.

II. Taste and see.

Read *Psalms 34:8-10*

David seems to be communicating how to experience the benefits of the LORD, by tasting and finding out for oneself.

If you surrender to Jesus, making Him your Lord and Savior, you will see how good He is and also learn to trust Him.

Nowhere in scripture are we told that the life of faith and obedience will make the child of God exempt from trouble...**but**

Matthew Poole said, “**Taste**, i.e. consider it seriously, and thoroughly, and affectionately; make trial of it by your own and others’ experiences.” (Poole)

Serve the Lord and you will find out, He keeps His children safe, He also satisfies our needs and fulfills our desires.

Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. NKJV

David had been running from King Saul for a long time. Here he is telling these men in the cave, that if you don’t believe for yourself God is good, then ***taste and see the LORD is good.***

When David said to ***taste***, he was not suggesting just to sample the LORD, he was talking about being satisfied and fed by God as we experience all He has for us.

Derek Kidner said, “Both ***Hebrews 6:5*** and ***1 Peter 2:3*** use ***Psalm 34:8*** to describe the first venture into faith and to urge that the tasting should be more than a casual sampling.”

How can we discover all that the Lord has for His followers?

1 Peter 2:2 Desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

1 Peter 2:3 If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. NKJV

According to *the outline of bible usage*, the word “*desire*” means to pursue with love, or to long after something.

The word “*desire*” in the Septuagint Bible is a very strong word describing man’s **deepest** longing for the LORD. *1 Peter 2:2-3*

Most people can have a head knowledge of the Lord, even learning many scriptures, but you will never truly know how good the LORD is, until you have experienced Him personally.

Notice, “*Blessed is the man who trusts in Him*”.

David was saying, “*Oh how happy is the person who learns to trust in the LORD*” because the LORD is faithful to take care of His children.

“*Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints*”. The word *fear* in this context means to have reverence or to be in awe of someone.

David said that we should be in awe of the LORD because as we trust Him, we will also experience His goodness.

Man should have a proper amount of reverence and respect for the LORD, not only because He is all-powerful, but also because if we experience God’s goodness, we will be blessed.

vs. 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger.

These men were all in need and hungry while on the run so David says, but with the LORD, there will be no lack.

McGee said that if a lioness can take care of her cubs, the Lord can certainly take care of His children.

When we trust and revere the LORD, He will provide all we need, and we will not have to **fear** anything or anybody else.

Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

III. The LORD resists evil people.

Read *Psalms 34:11-16*

David was speaking to his followers there in the cave as he told them to listen as he taught about being in awe of the LORD.

James Boice said, “As David describes the **fear of the LORD**, it is rooted in action, not religious **feelings**. The fear of the Lord is doing right, that is, that it involves obedience.” (Boice)

James 1:22 be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. NKJV

The person who desires life and loves many days is equivalent to the person living the Abundant Life promised by Jesus.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV

Serving the Lord has trials and hardships, but ultimately, we find joy, peace, and **fulfillment** in life by living for Him.

Guzik said, “David taught his unusual group of followers what one must do to see God’s blessing on his life — to live in **the fear of the LORD**.”

Keep your tongue from evil: David taught his men — rough as they were — that they should not speak evil.

James 4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. NKJV

And your lips from speaking deceit: David taught them that a particular form of evil to avoid is that of lying and **deceit**.

Depart from evil and do good: David spoke to his men about simply directing life away **from evil** and toward **good**.

Seek peace and pursue it: David taught his men to think not only in terms of war and battles, but in terms of **peace**, and the pursuit of it. Peace with God and among men should be sought”

Notice, “***The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry.***”

The Lord’s watchful eyes and attentive ears, know everything about His children and He is our **protection**.

Psalm 56:8 You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?

Psalm 56:9 When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me. NKJV

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

Wiersbe, “*God’s face is against those who would do evil to us.*

This promise is illustrated in Acts 12 when Peter was in prison awaiting execution, the church was praying, and King Herod seemed to be having his way.

God saw Peter’s plight, He heard the prayers of the saints, and He delivered Peter but destroyed Herod.”

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Edmond Hiebert said, “*The verb, “resists” vividly pictures God as one who places Himself in battle array against such individuals.*” (Hiebert) ***1 Peter 5:5-6***

The LORD of Hosts, the God of angel armies, will suit up to fight against proud and haughty people who will not surrender.

IV. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted.

Read ***Psalm 34:17-18***

Oftentimes, when we are brokenhearted, that is when we feel as if the Lord doesn’t understand, or He is not available for us.

Can you remember a time in your life when you were so brokenhearted that you could not imagine ever getting past it?

David said if we trust the LORD, He will see us through our troubles and turn them into a blessing for us and to others.

If we are meant to drown, we will not burn. *i.e.*, if the Lord has a plan for us, no man, or power can thwart God's will.

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears. David was teaching his men how attentive the LORD is to the **righteous**.

The LORD had delivered David out of all his **trouble**, so He was not going to fail David this time.

Notice the promise from the Lord to help us with our feelings as well, "***The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart.***"

The men in the cave with David were in debt, distressed, and discontent. They were brokenhearted and had contrite spirits.

Jesus said blessed are those who mourn, they will be comforted.

These men needed a different perspective because as David communicated to them, they were recipients of God's favor, salvation, and protection.

The LORD is **aware** of the pain that arises from our experiences. He is always available and close to those who suffer, and not surprised or disappointed with His broken saints.

Jolene Underwood said Emotional pain can leave us speechless.

"This Psalm provides words to remind our hearts and talk to God when we cannot find the words ourselves. God's presence with us in our messy moments is of great comfort."

When we are broken over loneliness, grief, or loss, we begin to realize our need for something or someone beyond ourselves.

The enemy would love to keep us from experiencing the LORD's deep love for us, which provides us with peace and strength to endure times of **brokenness**.

The Lord is always there. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

The unconditional promise, the LORD is near when our hearts are broken and spirits are crushed, whether it feels like it or not.

Adam Clarke calls *a contrite spirit* “*The beaten-out spirit*’, (where) *the hammer is necessarily implied...*

...in breaking to pieces the ore first, and then plating out the metal when it has been separated from the ore.”

V. Practical Application.

Re-read *Psalm 34:7*

The LORD is near, and this promise-keeping, God is “*The Angel of the LORD*”, the **pre-incarnate Christ**, who *killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians*.

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

Isaiah 40:29 He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.

Isaiah 40:30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall,

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

David took time to reflect on the LORD's goodness and presence. *If we are not spending time with Him, how can we be sure He is ever-present?*

Knowing the LORD is near, happens when we have quiet time with Him, prayer time, time in His Word, time journaling about Him, and a time of worship both individually and corporately.

Another way we experience His goodness during our brokenness is to serve someone else as we get our minds off of ourselves.

Paul said in ***Acts 20:35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*** NKJV

It is vital to the healing of hurting hearts to engage with other people and one of the best ways to do that is to serve someone.

Also, spending time with like-minded believers is good to remind us that the LORD is near.

When the lies of the enemy fill our minds, a strong believer can speak words of life and truth to us instead.

Even though our hurt may have come through people, we need people in our lives to bring healing and hope.

Lisa Appelo gave five ways God is near the brokenhearted.

1. God Sees Us in Our Pain

God is revealed as *El-Roi*, “The God Who Sees.”

This name appears in the narrative of Hagar, Sarah’s servant who had run to the wilderness after being harshly mistreated.

In her suffering she found God – or God found her. The angel of the LORD called her by name, gave her clear next steps, and told her God had heard her cries of deep pain.

The LORD knows your circumstances and your losses. He knows every sleepless night and every tear you’ve cried.

2. God Welcomes Our Hard Emotions

Oftentimes in the *Psalms*, David got real with the LORD and even had times of uncomfortable emotions, with Him.

The LORD created our emotions. When God created us fearfully and wonderfully, it included our emotions.

We don’t have to hide our pain or fake that we’re fine. God tells us to come to Him with our weariness and burdens, our pain and despair, our struggles and fears.

3. God is Our Help in the Valley

Psalm 46:1 tells us that God is a “*very present help in trouble.*”

How stunning that the all-powerful God of the universe is also tenderly present with us in difficulty.

God's help isn't a little support while we continue to control the situation. God provides His divine help and as such, it's unlike anything we could ask or imagine.

4. God is Compassionate to Us

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation. NKJV

God's compassion is like the constant, protective nurturing and cherishing care a mother has for her child in her womb.

5. Jesus Experienced Our Pain

Jesus experienced pain, anger, anguish, oppression, rejection, sorrow, weakness, loneliness, betrayal, and exhaustion.

Jesus left the glory of heaven, the perfection of fellowship with the Father and Holy Spirit, the beauty of undefiled worship and honor, to dwell with us on this messy, messed-up earth.

Jesus not only took on human flesh but human emotions as well.

Believers are not **immune** from suffering, but we have the promise that our Good Shepherd walks with us through them.

God who is near to the brokenhearted gets our hard emotions because He both created them and experienced them. When our hearts are broken, God is close whether we feel it or not.