

## The Goodness of God Ps. 34:1-8

What do you turn to for encouragement during times of difficulty? What do you fall back on when you feel the blinds of depression slowly closing, shutting out the sunlight; when your steps begin to be mired in the quicksand of the nameless, faceless, hopelessness and “what’s the use” lessness that dogs all our trails? Some turn to:

- Television- “I’ll just turn on the television and turn off the world.” The world doesn’t go away.
- Food- Crème Brulee or Sweet Potato soufflé becomes a sort of anesthesia that dulls the pain of disappointment or grief.
- Video games- white knuckling a joy stick numbs the mind from the problems that seem to defy solutions

What do you turn to? Whether it’s TV, food, video games, sex or shopping what they have in common is that they all involve escapism and cannot be resorted to without consequences. They change neither us nor our situation. The consequences of procrastination, the difficult marriage, the wayward child, the problems at work are all still there when we reemerge.

The Bible always points us to God; to His person and work to find help in difficult. **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”**

**Ps. 34** is one of eight Psalms assigned to the period of David’s persecution by Saul. Each marks a portion of the weary road of suffering he trod. It is one of the alphabetic Psalms. Each verse, minus one letter, begins with a verse of the Hebrew alphabet.

- **Vv. 1-3.** The Psalm begins with an expression of praise. It intends to encourage someone enduring affliction. To sound forth with greater strength, he invites others to join in.
- **Vv. 4-7.** David gives, for the benefit of this suffering saint, his own testimony. It comes, essentially in two verses; each followed by a general word of encouragement.

- **V. 8.** Is a sort of climactic call to respond that reveals the source of hope he draws from and commends.

The source of encouragement and hope in times of difficulty and discouragement should be the goodness of God.

1. **What is ‘goodness’?** ‘Goodness’ is to have the quality of being ‘good.’ When used with respect to God:
  - a. **Negatively.** It does not refer to the general excellence of His nature- though it is excellent. This statement surely implies this. **“Oh taste and see...”**
  - b. **Positively.** It refers to the principle or ‘attribute’ within God that disposes Him to communicate happiness to His creatures. This is the conviction David has. **“Blessed is the man who takes refuge....”** He hopes we too will arrive at it in difficulty and crises.
2. **Does it matter?** Yes! This is not extraneous, but central! His ‘goodness’ is the foundation of all the trust, and love, and hope we have in Him.
  - a. **Goodness draws us to Him.** We could only think of Him with a distant reverence, if we conceived of Him as taking no interest in the well-being of His creatures.
  - b. **Its opposite fills us with dread.** We would cringe from Him if we thought that He was moved by malevolence. Oh, the terror of the thought of one infinitely superior to us, whose pursuit it was impossible to escape!
3. **How is it true of God?** In God, as with any intelligent agent, the attribute of goodness is regulated by His wisdom and His moral attributes- purity and justice. His goodness is displayed in His works.
  - a. **The goodness of God is revealed in creation. In two ways:**

i. **The fact of creation.** We can conceive of no other motive, subordinate to His glory, for exerting His power in giving life to so many creatures and furnishing out the earth to be a suitable abode for them.

ii. **The mode of creation.** The production of land, sea, air and vegetation is evidence of power. The production of creatures capable of the enjoyment of these things is evidence of goodness! **Do you note:**

1. The abundant provision he makes. ***“The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.” Ps.***

**145:15-16.** This pertains even to insects. **Illustr.** Where you find an organism you also find a support system.

2. The incredible variety He provides. He attaches pleasure to simple existence. **Illustr.** The taste of food, the beauty that strikes the eye, music, the frolic of sheep in the field as they play, kittens etc.

b. **The goodness of God is revealed in His treatment of mankind.**

i. **We see God’s goodness in the privileges He gave man.** Man may have been created last so that he could enjoy a more immediate experience of joy. His was a high station, intellectually spiritually and *possibly* physically.

ii. **We see God’s goodness in the covenant of works.** There was nothing required but our duty, but the significance He attached to it and the rewards He offered in it.

iii. **We see the goodness of God in the way He responded to the problem of the fall. Cf V. 19-22.** 2 things should continually amaze us:

1. That God did not plunge us into immediate misery or unmitigated misery with constant reminders of our fate.

2. That God provides a plan of redemption for sinners. **Consider:**

a. **What our sin really is.** Sin isn’t weakness but rebellion. It is treason against His government, the attempt to enthrone the creature. But for His goodness we’d be like the angels.

b. **What means were required to redeem us.** He employed His own Son (matchless for preciousness and value). He had to suffer. We needed to be ‘kept.’ **Cf. Vv. 7, 17, 19.**

c. **What end God appointed for us.** Not just the re-establishment of fellowship. Creation recalibrated and lifted higher- cleansed and filled with praise and singing. **Cf. Rev. 21:34.**

4. **How should you respond to this goodness?**

a. **Make sure He is your ‘good’ God.** If you have not come to Him through Christ He isn’t. The Devil is your god and he is not good.

b. **Consider how blessed you are. *“Blessed is the man....”*** Praise befits the upright gratitude should be the natural posture of our hearts.