

Psalm 34: 1-10

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Preacher: Rev David MacLeod

[0 : 00] well if you could have your Bibles open please at Psalm 34 you've probably guessed by now that's the Psalm that we're going to be looking at this evening Psalm 34 and we'll think mainly about the opening section of verse 10 verses of the Psalm but we'll draw a little further than that but also in the time that we have together one of the things that I think it's fair to say that we love to hear and especially over a communion season is a testimony certainly I've enjoyed meeting with you in the hall along the road there to hear of how God has broken into and begun to work in the lives of individuals how God has come in and begun to change those lives as a consequence of the work of the Holy Spirit in them and tonight as we've got Psalm 34 open in front of us what is this Psalm?

it's a testimony this is the testimony of the psalmist or a testimony of the psalmist which he shares with us a testimony of the Lord's faithfulness and his goodness and his grace to him and the question I want to ask in way of applications at the outset of this is do you have a testimony?

and if I was to point to somebody in the room just now and ask you to come up and speak at the microphone and share a word of testimony would you have anything to say?

would you have anything to share? or if I was to give you a bit of paper and ask you to write a record of something in the way that David did as he obviously was inspired but could you and I could we share something?

could we scribe something? could we record something of a testimony of how God has come in and begun a work and is continuing a work of grace in our lives?

[2 : 22] could you give a reason for the hope that is in you? is there a hope in you? so these are the questions and applications from the outset of this psalm and we'll leave them hanging and go into consideration as we work through the text what then are the elements of a testimony?

and what are the elements that we can see in terms of the structure of David's testimony? well there's three things I want to highlight in the time that we have here we can see first of all that David has a desire to glorify God and not only himself but he has a desire to call others to glorify God with him the second thing that we can see is that David has a story of deliverance that he can share he can speak about how the Lord has delivered him in that personal way you see that from verses 4 through verse 7 and then the final section that I want to look at 8 to 10 maybe a wee look forward it's just that delight that David testifies to as he knows and as he shares something of his relationship with God so these are the three elements within the structure of this testimony first of all it is that desire to glorify God and we see that in verses 1 down to verse 3

I heard a story just recently of a young man he'd been away from Harris for a period he'd gone off and he'd worked various places and when he returned to Harris in his 30s I think it was he was somewhat dismayed to discover that his mother had been converted in the past she'd attended church she'd kind of gone through the motions of religion but in the period when he'd been away from home she'd come to that living faith in Christ she'd been converted and one of the things that he noticed as a result of that was that his house which used to be essentially his house was now a focal point for fellowship there's always people in the house they were always singing psalms they were always sharing something of the Lord's goodness and one night this man came back and the house was full of people and so what did he do he headed for the barn the only place he could get any peace and quiet was the barn and so he took solace in the barn as those people in this house did whatever they were doing as the evening wore on he heard two people who were heading out from the house and they were passing the door of the barn he could overhear the conversation one of the people had obviously shared a word of testament and he was speaking to his friend he was walking with him and the question that he asked of his friend as they were leaving the house was was that testimony okay

I hope he said there was more of the Lord in it than there was of me I hope as a more testimony there was more of the Lord in it than there was of me and that's the desire of the Christian that's how he actually introduced his testimony it was a good way to introduce his testimony because that man came to know the Lord and that's actually the it's the way that David begins to introduce his testimony it's the desire of the Christian to glorify God and not self to lift up Jesus and not me and that's what David says here in verses 1 and the first part of verse 2 he says I will bless the Lord at all times his praise shall continually be in my lips my soul shall make his boast in the

Lord I will extol the Lord I will bless the Lord at all times says David not just in the good times not just in the easy times but in all times and David was not going through an easy time just now and we'll come to that in a few moments and yet in the middle of the trauma of the experience he's in he is able to say I will he didn't say I feel like but he said I will I determine in my will I will bless the Lord at all times his praise will always be in my lips my soul shall make its boast in the Lord please be in mind of one Thessalonians where Paul is writing to the Thessalonians and he encourages them to be joyful always not sometimes but always and what

[7 : 46] Paul instructs David illustrates in the way that he begins this testimony as he stands to share his testimony I could put it that way he gives this word of explanation he stands he speaks he writes because he is determined in his will that he will extol that he will bless that he will praise that he will boast in the Lord at all times and when that is our desire it indicates that God has been and is continuing to be at work in our lives it wasn't so long ago where there was a whole lot of work going on in the road between here and Tarbert we couldn't get away from the chips and the lorries and the blockades of all kinds it was evident from the section beforehand there was going to be work there and we could see the evidence of that work as we drove through and when

God is at work in our heart then this is one of the evidences of that work we desire to glorify him not ourselves see in our sinful nature in our fallen state we are prone to boast in ourselves we hear in every part of the world no more so than in politics we crave the praise of others the vote of other people we want to be extolled in ourselves but when God reveals himself to us and when we see the glory of him and when he starts to show us the sinfulness of ourselves we realise I can't boast in self I am not to be praised I am not to be extolled I am not to be worshipped but God is one of your own people Kevin Norman he shared a word of testimony in the last communion season and he spoke about how as a young lad he's not that old really but as a younger lad his desire as he was going through school was to be on the stage with the guitar in his hand and the microphone at his mouth his desire was to be at festivals on the stage everybody looking at him the adulation coming to him but when he came to know the Lord he spoke about how that desire changed and no longer did he want people to be looking at him no longer did he crave that worship of self but he spoke about how the Lord put a new song in his mouth our God to magnify and that personal that inner desire of the

Christian is to glorify God and not self but that's actually not enough because David goes on here and he shows us that the desire of the Christian is not only to in the inner man inner walk to glorify God and to lift him up but there is that call that public call on others to join with them in glorifying and praising the Lord we hear that as we carry on look at the second half of verse 2 into verse 3 David says as God leads him the humble shall hear of it and be glad another translation says let the afflicted hear and rejoice oh magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together glorify the Lord with me let us exalt his name together one commentator James Montgomery

Boyce he said this the person who has experienced God's mercy naturally looks to others to praise God with him corporate worship is one of the natural instance of the new life of Christ in God's people why should you ask people to come to church to public worship it should be our desire we shouldn't be content just to say well you know I want to worship God but you do what you want our desire and the instruction that we are given through this psalm is to call on those around us to call on those in the world to join with us in glorifying and praising the Lord we had John Murda from Kyle with us at the communion season just a few weeks ago and probably a number of you will have heard his testimony in the fellowship afterwards he spoke about how he was an afflicted one he spoke about how he was under that that tyranny of drink he spoke about how he was in that that dark fearful pit and that mighty play and he spoke about the wonder of how you look to Christ and Jesus saved him and because

Jesus saved him his desire was to tell other people that Jesus can save them too not only was he content to rest in that salvation but he wants to share that salvation and so that's what he began to do is to call on others who were afflicted with all manner of afflictions to look to Jesus as he looked to Jesus and that's what David is doing in these verses he's calling the afflicted he's causing those who are humble enough to be able to see their own mess and their own need he's calling the sorrowing he's calling the lost he's calling the hopeless he's calling the godless to listen to his testimony to look to the Lord to join with him in glorifying and exalting the name of the Lord now here's another mark of the Christian

[14 : 22] I don't know perhaps there are some people here this evening and you're not sure whether you're a Christian or not I don't know you well enough to know where each person is spiritually and we're looking at the scriptures and we're looking for marks that we can apply to our own lives well here's two already the Christian is one whose desire is not to have the spotlight on themselves but they want to see Christ glorified and lifted up and the Christian who is one who just cannot keep quiet about Jesus see when Jesus comes into a life he cannot be contained he cannot be muted he cannot be silenced he won't allow us to live that way I heard a few testimonies over the past few weeks which is probably why my thoughts are stirred in this way but you remember in the scene who you had in

South not too long ago and was with us a few weeks ago he spoke about how when he became a Christian he said to the Lord in that moment of surrender okay come in to my life but no one can know this is our secret and the Lord said to him no he talked about how he thought how the Lord must laugh listening to that prayer these are not terms that he will accept a Christian is one who has a desire to glorify God but a Christian is one who is given a commission and has a compulsion to tell others remember the woman at the well John 4 and Jesus meets with her much to her surprise and Jesus addresses her in that personal way and

Jesus tells her everything about her sorry life and offers to her that living water the only he could give and as she trusts him as she seems to receive him she charges back to her village and she says come see a man who told me everything about my life come see a man she can't be quiet about Christ and that's something which Jesus requires from us we're given the commission we have the compulsion to tell others I think it's about a month's time when you will sit around the Lord's table again if we're spared that long and this as we sit at the Lord's table this is one of the things that we do we bear testimony to the fact that we trust

Christ we don't trust ourselves we don't proclaim our own righteousness as we come to the table we make that profession we make that testimony that Jesus has come into our life and he has saved us and we are trusting him and I know it can be difficult to go to the Lord's table but when you're a Christian you have an obedience to Christ's command and as a personal testimony to the work of salvation that the Lord has done in your life you go to the table to tell others that your faith is in him remember the woman in Luke chapter 8 she has that issue of blood for 12 years

I think it was that discharge that made her life so miserable and she hears of Christ and so as he's passing by in the crowd she comes up beside him and she thinks if I can just touch the hem of his garment maybe he can heal me in the way that no one else can and so she does that and she touches the hem of his garment and instantly she's healed she's saved and do you remember what happened next Jesus said who touched me who received that saving touch Jesus asks her to stand and to make herself known to tell others of what Christ had done for us and I wonder if there anyone here who needs to come forward perhaps to the table perhaps in a more audible way in the circles of friends that we have and the family that we are part of do we need to come forward and let others know of what

[20 : 09] Christ has done for us John Calvin said let us learn that when each believer testifies to the personal benefits he has received all will be inspired to join publicly in giving praise to God we do this not that others may witness not just that others may witness our gratitude but also that they may follow our example and David shares that he shares this so that we will follow his example his testimony was a testimony that had that desire to glorify God it was an inner desire to glorify God and it was a desire that others would join with him in glorifying God that is two of the marks of the Christian the second thing and we'll move much more quickly for the rest of this time is that we see here not only that desire to glorify

God but we hear of this deliverance that David receives verses 4 through to verse 7 I saw the Lord he says and he answered me he heard me and delivered me from all my fears they looked to him and were radiant their faces are never covered with shame their faces were not 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 and so we can see if the introduction of David's testimony is that desire that he had to glorify God and not self the second section gives an explanation of why of why he feels that way David begins to share of how the Lord delivered him he speaks of the trouble he speaks of the fear he speaks of the calamity that he was facing

David was verse 6 that poor man who had no hope who had no means of escaping and who cried out but the Lord was with him in the midst of his troubles verse 7 it says the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and he delivers them and here's just a word of encouragement in the passage the Lord is always with his people when they're in trouble I don't know if there are some here this evening and you're going through trouble there's always seasons in our lives when we go through troubled times and the Lord gives us the assurance here through David that he's with us he and his angels encamp around those who fear him what a picture we're given there he is the one who's the friend who stands shoulder to shoulder with us no matter how tough things get in our life and our experience others might flee when trouble comes our way but the Lord is the one who draws close

I'm sure we can all share something of that experience at some point often when we're going through the hardest times and when we feel broken and we feel at an end of ourselves and we need encouragement we find that people cross the road tunnel tree sometimes when we've gone through loss and we want people to draw near they actually seem to avoid us because they don't know what to say and yet the Lord is the one who is close verse 18 to the broken hearted and he saves those who are crushed and spilled there's such comfort in that verse anyone here broken hearted anyone here crushed and spilled the Lord is near the Lord is close he is the helper he is close at hand at times of distress he is the friend that we need to have we sang this morning what a friend we have in Jesus the home writer wrote

I found a friend who such a friend so kind and true and tender so wise a counsellor and guide so mighty a defender and that's David's testimony here he's found a friend who's with him in trouble in the midst of his trouble God is there with him in the midst of your trouble and mine we might feel absolutely isolated as David was at this present moment and yet God is with him God is with David in his troubles but God only he also saves him out of all his troubles and let's just go to 1 Samuel 21 1 Samuel 21 let's turn there for just a moment it's hot in here we're probably drifting off a little biblical exercise will do us good you might wonder what trouble is

[26 : 22] David going through here the Lord draws near to him and his troubles but he's also given testing that the Lord saves him out of his troubles how does that happen what trouble is David going through well in 1 Samuel 21 we see something of it David the context here he's running for his life he's pursued by King Saul and so he flees to Gath that land of the Philistines that place where David was absolutely notorious for killing their champion their giant Goliath and David rolls up on this land enemy territory the only thing he has in his possession is Goliath's sword and so predictively it's not long before David is spotted and he's brought before the king and so David is in an absolutely hopeless situation what will he do and we'll pick up the verse 10 then David arose and fled that day from before

Saul and he went to Achish the king of Gath 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 and dances saying Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands now David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath so he changed his behaviour before them pretended madness in their hands scratched on the doors of the gate and let the saliva fall down in his beard then Achish said to his servants look you see the man is insane why have you brought him to me have I either madmen that you have brought this fellow to play the madman of my presence shall this fellow come into my house that's what David has thrown out looks like his end has come and yet through this ingenious plan that David captures and he manages to execute he is saved and yet when we go back to this psalm this commentary on what was going on in his life at that point we don't read anything here of David congratulating himself on his quick thinking

David realises that God is the one who saves him God is the one who gives him that thought that quickness of thought God is the one who gives him the strength to be able to work out this situation David gives all the praise and all the glory to God who saved him verse 4 and here's a wee point just for those who may be hyper-Calvinistic in their thinking the hyper-Calvinist says well you know if God's going to save me God's going to save me there's not one thing that I can do about it the hyper-Calvinist says well I'm away from the Lord perhaps and if God's going to rescue me well he's just going to have to rescue me that's just the way it goes I'll just sit here and I'll wait for God to act well God saved David but David was no passenger through all this David was no silent spectator in the middle of this scenario David had to act

God inspired his thinking God gave him the strength for every breath that he took that David had to respond with the strength and the thinking that God gave him and you know we're not in the situation that David was in our lives I don't think are in danger this evening we're not being pursued by kings not yet anyway but spiritually we're in danger every one of us we're born that way as a son of Adam as daughters of Adam we are born in danger because of the sin that we've inherited that runs all the way through our family line we are in a fearful calamitous hopeless dangerous position but if we cry out to the

Lord as David did if we trust in him if we come to the cross if we ask for that forgiveness of sin if we look in faith to Jesus we will be saved we will be delivered from the penalty of sin we will be delivered from the clutches of the enemy of our soul Satan we will be delivered from the sting of death we will be delivered from the prospect of eternity lost in hell David says in his testimony verse 4 I sought the Lord and he heard me he answered me have you sought the Lord yet have you and I asked for that deliverance that only

[31 : 48] Jesus can bring to our souls and if you haven't yet why not now why not tonight cry out as David cried out so that you will have that deliverance so that you will be able to testify to the Lord Jesus and how he delivered you from all your fears and gifted you with such infinite salvation so is that desire that David testifies to to glorify God and not self there's that deliverance and finally just in a word that is that delight that David can speak of as he goes on with the Lord and we see that in verses 8 to verse 10 for David here and for us the

Christian life it's not an easy one but it's a soul satisfying one it's a delightful one and I think I think it's fair to say that sometimes we forget that sometimes the Christian life might seem burdensome to us sometimes I think we may give the impression to those that look from the outside in our faces my first that to come to Jesus is far from a delight and that's to give a bad testament that's to give a false impression a false testament of what it's like to know the Lord Jesus said come to me all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light it's a delight to walk with the

Lord even through the hardest of times so what must we do if we are to know and to share and to maintain that delight in the Lord that David testifies to let me just give me three verses to finish first of all taste the Lord verse 8 taste and see that the Lord is good blessed is the man who takes refuge in him if you and I want to know that the Lord is good we need to keep coming to him and coming to him and coming to him day by day we spend time with him in his word in prayer seeking his presence and as we do that we find our souls are nourished when we neglect that we chase here we chase there we chase the next place and the more we chase and the more we accumulate the less we are satisfied and the more malnourished he becomes spiritually there's that chemical in fast foods

MSG it causes us the more we eat the less we are satisfied and the more we crave in this portion that's like sin it's like everything the devil serves up to me and you looks so appealing we devour it sometimes and no sooner have we had it and we feel that lack taste and see that the Lord is good says David one commentator says taste doesn't suggest a sip or a nibble it implies feasting on the Lord through his word and experiencing all he has for us it means knowing him better and enjoying him more can we put an amen to that this is the Lord's day it's his gift to us what's it for it's so that we will taste and see that he is good taste the

Lord as we taste him we know the delight of what it is to know him fear the Lord fear the Lord he was saints verse 9 for those who fear him lack nothing one writer in his book awe Paul David trips the name of the writer he says this he says I was wired for awe of God no other awe satisfies the soul no other awe can give my heart the peace and rest and security that it seeks David said elsewhere the Lord is my shepherd I shall not be in want and when we taste the Lord and when we fear the Lord and do him first we're not left craving what cannot satisfy but we are fulfilled we are satisfied we are built up in our walk with him taste the Lord fear the Lord seek the Lord the lions young suffer want and hunger verse 10 but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing we have that image there is to finish with of the lion and the young lions who are the most ferocious apparently and the most ambitious in the habitat and they seem so sovereign and they seem so in control and they seem so self-sufficient and mighty but still with all their might they grow weak and they go hungry but the

[38 : 57] Lord Jesus the one whom David is pointing us to in verse 19 and following he is the only sovereign and he became poor and weak in order that we could become rich and he became sin in order that we could become righteous and he went to a cross as our Passover lamb and verse 20 prophesies and points us forward to the fact that not one of his bones were broken the apostle John tells us that as he looks back in the crucifixion they came to the three crosses they broke the bones of those who hung there to speed up death but when they got to Jesus he had laid down his life it's not one of his bones were broken he laid his life down it wasn't taken from him and he laid his life down in order that we could receive life that is eternal and satisfaction and delight and purpose for our souls in time and it comes only in him so seek the Lord while he may be found call upon him while he is near fear the

Lord taste and see that the Lord is good that's