

Psalm 34

O Magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

***Context** This is a psalm of David when he was fleeing from King Saul. To recap- David, son of Jesse was the youngest son and a shepherd boy. During this time God rejected Saul as king and Samuel anointed David as the next king of Israel. David enters Saul's service as a musician and armour bearer but still went back and forth to his flocks of sheep. At first relations between Saul and David were good. David delivered the Israelites from the Philistines by killing Goliath. Saul set David over his men of war. However, when the people praised David more than Saul he became angry. 1 Samuel 18v7-8 He tried to kill David on more than one occasion and eventually David had to flee for his life. David went to Gath, a Philistine town, but he is without an army or weapons. He feigned madness so that Achish would drive him away. 1 Samuel 21v10-15 The name Achish is used in Samuel but scholars agree it is the same king. One explanation is that Achish was a personal name and Abimelech a title.

Read the whole Psalm Note the four sections
verses 1-3 A call to worship
verses 4-7 David's testimony
verses 8-14 Exhortation to live as God's people
verses 15-22 Salvation-The Lord delivers

- 1 David resolves to praise the Lord at all times. How is our resolve important in our spiritual life? Discuss how we can support and encourage one another to follow David's example, including practical ways to facilitate it.
- 2 What does it mean to 'Magnify the Lord'? Who needs you to be a magnifier so that they can see God more clearly? Remember Fruitfulness on the frontline.
- 3 Verses 4-7 tell of David's experience/testimony. What do these verses tell us about David and about God?
- 4 In what way might these verses encourage you to share your experience?

5 Make a list of all the blessings God wants to bestow on us. Verses 4,6,7,8,9,15,22.

6 How should we relate to God and others in the light of the following verses, 4,6,17,8,9,13,14 ?

7 What is your experience of verse 8? Note David knows that first hand experience is necessary. How may this encourage us to invite others to know Jesus? (cf how we might recommend a good restaurant.)

8 Who are the righteous? Verses 15,17,19,21. Read Romans 3 v22; 2 Corinthians 5 v21; and Phil 3 v9.

9 David tells us that all God's people will suffer affliction verse 19. There is no promise that life will be easy, or we'll be more prosperous, or our trials will disappear. However, there are some great promises for us in verses 19b and 22. How can these keep our hope and trust in Jesus alive and how can we encourage others going through difficult times? Note verse 19 and Matthew 12 v30, and Romans 12 v15

Practical application

1 In the next few weeks take turns to share some of 'your story' to the group.

2 David wrote his psalm in an acrostic manner where every verse begins with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order. Write your own acrostic psalm using a word like LOVE or KINDNESS.

Prayer points

- 1 Give thanks for God's word and saving grace.
- 2 Pray for one another in the light of David's exhortation. V8-14
- 3 Pray for us as a church that together we may 'magnify the Lord' in Poynton.
- 4 Pray for persecuted Christians that they may experience God's comfort and provision.
- 5 Pray that our worship individually and corporately pleases The Lord.