

Psalm 33-34

Psalm 33 is a call to praise. and Though we're to praise the Lord individually, and personally, this is a psalm that calls us to praise God collectively as a body. We spoke a little bit Sunday morning about the anointing that God pours out upon a collective gathering of believers who are assembled in one heart and one mind. God desires that we assemble corporately and that we worship Him in unity.

The 33rd Ps is a call to praise the Lord for both His word and His works. His word is faithful and His works are righteous; therefore we're to trust in Him, depend on Him and offer up our praise to Him knowing that He who has begun a good work in us will be faithful to complete it until the day of JESUS CHRIST

As for who wrote this Psalm we don't know, it reads like a Psalm of David, the Septuagint gives credit to David and more than likely he's the one who wrote it.

Vs1-3

Here we have who is called upon to praise the Lord and how it is that they're to do so. 1st of all in Vs 1 we read "Rejoice" or "Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous!" Why? Because praise from the upright is beautiful; that word beautiful could've also been translated as "fitting." Praise from the upright is fitting; it's a right and necessary response to God's work in your life. Because you aren't righteous, and I'm not righteous due to any merit of my own; you're not righteous because you're such a do-gooder and a generally decent person. You're righteous due to the saving grace of God being poured out upon your life. I'm righteous because JESUS CHRIST was willing to come to this earth, wrap Himself in humanity, suffer the gruesome death of the cross, taking upon Himself the sin of the world and shed His blood for the purchase price of redemption. and His Spirit wooed me, He drew you, we've responded in faith and He's imputed the righteousness of Christ to our account, that's why we're righteous. Our righteousness is not our own, it's of Christ; it's a vicarious righteousness, His righteousness ascribed to us because of what He was willing to go through on behalf of us. Paul told the Corinthians, "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption —" 1 Cor 1:30 So it is a fitting and proper response for those of us who've experienced the grace and forgiveness of God to praise Him. He is our Creator, He is our Redeemer, and we are the sheep of His hand, we belong to Him and our praise is due Him.

So as for the who, those who are upright, those who are righteous, those who've received of God's forgiveness and His saving grace. As for the how, notice we're to praise the Lord both instrumentally, we're to play and sing skillfully, loudly (not obnoxiously) but with a sense of enthusiasm genuinely, with a shout of joy. and Our praise and worship of the Lord should maintain a sense of freshness. We're to sing to Him a new song, now that doesn't mean exclusively a new tune, new melody, new words (however it can certainly include those things and we need to sing to Him a new song) but the idea carries a sense of freshness.

Our worship of the Lord shouldn't be stale, no vibrancy, no sense of gratitude or thanksgiving. Even as His mercies are new every morning, fresh upon our lives, so our praise to Him should be new and fresh when we gather together to exalt Him as a body.

Notice that our praise and worship goes beyond just our voices, it includes the instruments we play. We offer praise to God through the music that's being played, that's why we're to do what we do to the best of our ability, skillfully, because it's an offering to the Lord.

It's important to have competent musicians and vocalists leading worship. Because if you can hardly play your instrument, if you struggle to even stay on key, then as much as your heart may be for worship, you shouldn't be leading worship. Because ultimately you serve as a distraction and it's difficult for people to be focusing on Christ if you're all the time throwing them off. Hey, God receives the worship of your heart; make a joyful noise to Him any and all the time, just not with a microphone in front of you. Because God will receive it, but it'll drive us crazy. ;o) We're to do what we do as worship leaders, skillfully, to the very best of our ability. and If you can't sing, or play an instrument, it's not a problem, you're just not called to lead worship, God has a different plan for your life.

So we've spoke of who, we've seen how, what about the why?

Vs 4-9

In brief we're seeing here that we're to praise Him because of His word and His works. "For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is done in truth." and Both His word and His works reveal things to us about His person. His creation reveals His existence, His awesome power, His might, His majesty, His incredible creativity and diversity, the complexity with which He designs, the wisdom through which He's worked. His word reveals His love, His grace, His righteousness, His compassion, His goodness, truth, the plan of salvation. and The power He's displayed in His creation, and the beauty that's displayed in His character should elicit praise from His people.

Vs6-7

In other words there is power in God's word, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made." "God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." Gen 1:3 All the hosts of heaven were created by the breath of His mouth. Now there are vocalists who can hit a certain note and shatter a crystal glass. But that's using your voice to destroy, God used His voice to create, that's power. He created something out of nothing. We're able to take materials that already exist and order them in such a way as to make something out of them. But God took nothing and out of that made something. "Let there be light" and there was light. and There's electrical and electronic power even with in light. My little surround sound unit at home has an optical cable that comes from my DVD player into the receiver. and Through that optical cable (which is light) it somehow decodes the signal sent to it and sends it on to various speakers in the form of sound. and The capacity for all that happened the moment God said, "Let there be light." "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made."

But not just the heavens, the earth and all it's fullness as well, all of it came by the breath of His mouth. "He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses." We read in Jeremiah Ch 5, "'Do you not fear Me?' says the Lord. 'Will you not tremble at My presence, Who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea, By a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it? And though its waves toss to and fro, Yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it.'" Jer 5:22 There's a reason that the sea doesn't spill over the beaches and flood the earth and it's because God has spoken it's boundaries into existence, He's made a decree that that it can not pass beyond them. That's the power of the word of God.

There in Vs 9 where it says, "For He spoke and it was done." Realize that the word "done" isn't there in the Hebrew. The bottom line is, "He spoke, and it was." "Light be, light was." It's that simple, yet that complex and powerful.

Vs10-12

Or to understand that another way, "It's good to be on God's team." Here we're seeing the power of God in human history.

Somewhere in the White House, or in the Supreme Court, or in the counsel of the united nations should be Vs 10-11 to remind them to seek the Lord regarding the decisions they're making. "The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;" however (Vs 11) "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations." Heaven and earth is going to pass away, the word of God will abide forever. The proverbs tell us, "There is no wisdom or understanding Or counsel against the Lord." Prov 21:30 However the counsel of the Lord will stand forever, why not just get in line and fall into the flow of the word of God? Why kick against it, it's an effort in futility...

Vs13-19

It's not a giant military that keeps us safe at night. It's great to be blessed with the best military that this world has to offer currently; but the point here is that salvation doesn't come from a gigantic army, or having the greatest technology, or having the biggest bomb at your disposal, but from the Lord. "The Lord's eye is on those who fear Him, who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death."

There in Vs 14 where it talks about the Lord looking on all the inhabitants of the earth, that word "looks" means to gaze, or stare intently. The idea being that He searches us not only outwardly/circumstantially, but inwardly in the heart. He's testing and searching the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Vs 20-22

Sorta the inward results of our time of worship. Our soul waits for the Lord, our heart rejoices in the Lord (notice the time began with rejoicing and it ends in rejoicing). and Vs 22 is the prayer, "Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You."

Our time of praise and worship should strengthen our inner peace, increase our hope and give us greater confidence in the Lord.

Psalm 34

As to where in Ps 33 we don't really have the person or the occasion from which it was written, Ps 34 gives us both. We find that this is a Ps of David when he pretended to be insane before Achish (or as we read here Abimelech) the king of Gath and he drove him away so he departed. Achish would've been his name, Abimelech his title, much like Pharaoh was the title of the Egyptian ruler.

Now you find this story in 1st Samuel Ch 21. Saul had purposed in his heart to kill David and Jonathon being made aware of it sent David away. and This was the beginning of what the next 10 yrs or so of his life would entail. and As he fled for his life he came to Nob and spoke to Ahimelech the priest, told him he was on the kings business wanted to know if he had any bread. Long story short the priest gave him 5 loaves of show bread and because David had fled in haste he didn't have any weapons. When he asked the priest if there was a spear or a sword lying around anywhere the priest said, "All we have is the sword of Goliath whom you slew, if you want it you can have it." David said, "That'll work." and From there David fled to Gath.

Now I'm not sure what he was thinking because Gath was Goliath's home town, it was a Philistine city, but he was desperate for refuge and so he presented himself before the king there. and While he was there (Goliath's sword on his side) some of the men recognized him and said, "Isn't this like the top, elite fighting force of Israel? Isn't this the guy who's fame goes before him?"

He had an international hit written about him, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." and When David heard that fear seized his heart because he was afraid that Achish would have him executed, because the song they sang about David was in regard to him killing Philistines and he was standing there before a Philistine king.

So he began freaking out, faking insanity, acting all berserk and scratching the doors of the gate, letting the spit run off his beard. and Achish said, "This guy is insane, I don't need one more mad man in my kingdom, get him out of my face." and David took off and fled to the cave of Adullam.

From there he would spend yrs and yrs fleeing from Saul for his life, but that's where the 400 men gathered to him who were in distress, in debt and discontented and they became the mighty men of David. As they spent time with David, they became like David. and That's exactly the way it happens with us and the Lord, the Son of David, the greater than David, we come to Him in distress, in debt and discontented, but as we spend time with Him, we become more and more like Him as we decrease and He increases in our lives.

But that was the scenario that inspired this Psalm, he wasn't the king here, didn't have lots of money, wasn't living on easy street, didn't have things handed to him on a silver platter. These days were difficult, trying, and full of tribulation, wondering where the next meal was coming from, no place to call home, living in caves and obscure locations.

Vs1-3

So again the call goes out that we might magnify the Lord, and exalt His name together. and The context here obviously lending itself to days that aren't all bright and sunny, everything going great, "Hey let's exalt the Lord together!" No, the context is in the light of extremely difficult days, deciding and purposing in our hearts that we're going to give God our praise not because things are so great circumstantially, but because He's worthy.

Oh I have no doubt the reference here is to the fact that he wasn't killed by Achish, he escaped with his life and so he was just praising God. But he didn't get out of that difficult situation and grab a room in the Hilton or the Marriot, he had his life and that was about it, but he was just so thankful that God saw him through, that he was still alive that he just had to praise the Lord.

Vs4-7

The idea here being that God looks favorably (if you will) upon the disposition of humility, "This poor man cried out," poor in spirit, broken and contrite. and When he cried out in humility in invoked a 2 fold response from the Lord, #1 He heard him, #2 He saved him out of all his troubles. The bible teaches us that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

There in Vs 7 where it says that the angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him and delivers them. When the OT mentions the "Angel of the Lord." We believe that to be a reference to the preincarnate Christ; Jesus before He wrapped Himself in humanity. and You see the appearance of the Angel of the Lord multiple times throughout the OT, He appeared to Ab, to Moses at the burning bush, to Joshua before entering the promised land as well as other places. and There's a reference here to the omnipresence of the Lord when it says that the angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him. Well, angels in general aren't omnipresent, it takes more than one to encamp around you. Now it would seem that God does in fact utilize angelic hosts to hedge His own to a degree, but that's not what we're seeing here. We're seeing the presence of the Lord with His own always, the NT equivalent would be, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Or, "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

He will be with you and a hedge about you, and will deliver you in His time and in His way.

Vs8-10

If it's good for you, the God will not withhold it from you. Now the bible doesn't teach that God will give it to you if you think it's good for you. We all think a million dollars would be good for us, God obviously doesn't agree or we'd have it.

If it makes for your eternal good and His eternal glory He'll supply it, we just need to learn to be content to the degree that He provides.

But back in Vs 8 David is calling for anyone else to put his claims to the test, "...if you want to know for yourself that what I'm saying is true come to the Lord, invest yourself fully in the Lord and you'll find out that it's true as well." "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good." Now remember his circumstances right now seem anything but good, but God is still good. It's so important that we understand that foundationally or our world will be rocked when things go awry circumstantially, God is good...period. His priorities are different than ours often times, yet that doesn't change His intrinsic nature, He's good.

The idea behind the "taste" isn't a sip or a nibble, it's not dipping your toe into the edge of the pool, it's full on both feet full commitment, feed on Him, dive into Him and into His word. and You might note the order, it's not "See and taste" it's taste and see, there's a step of faith there. It's not see it then believe it, it's believe it then you'll see it. But it's a call to a personal relationship, a personal experience. I can you how great vanilla ice cream with caramel sauce drizzled over it on top of a warm brownie with chocolate melted through it all day long as I'm eating it in front of you. But you just won't know the fullness of what I'm talking about till you dig in for yourself. and That's the idea here, he's sharing the goodness of God, but places the imperative out there that you've got to experience Him for yourself to truly know and understand it.

Vs11-16

This is just some real practical wisdom here, the fear of the Lord. If you want to have a good life, a heart that delights in the Lord, and that the Lord delights in then here are some practical things to make application of. #1 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Don't be slandering people, gossiping about people, lying about things, the proverbs are full of little jewels along these lines. Prov 12:22, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight." Prov 19:9 "A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies shall perish." and Prov 21:23, "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue Keeps his soul from troubles." Of course whoever doesn't guard his mouth invites trouble upon his soul.

We read in the NT that we're not to lie to one another, since we've have put off the old man with his deeds, (Col 3:9), if you want to walk in wisdom walk in truth.

Depart from evil and do good, another way to understand that, "Repent of your sin and get right with God." Don't be a trouble maker be a peace maker, we're seek peace (not at the cost of purity, the wisdom that comes down from above is 1st of all pure, then peaceable.) But notice we're to pursue it, that means make an effort and work at it.

Finally there in Vs 15-16 trust in the Lord to look after you, take care of you and have your eternal best interest at heart. His eyes are upon you, His ears are open to you and His face is against those who do evil, who would harm you.

Vs17-18

Now I think context is important here, this is not a statement that applies to any and everyone with out exception. God is not near to the broken hearted who stand against Him and aren't submitted to Him. This is a promise to the righteous, those who love Him and trust Him. God's ear is not open to the wicked, or the unrighteous, the bible says, "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination." Prov 28:9

God's not near to some reprobate individual who suddenly gets all busted up emotionally. It's God's desire that he would turn from his sin, repent and call upon Him. He's not there trying to comfort him in his sin, He would that he/she would be broken and turn from their sin.

But to the child of God, to the one who's broken before God, God looks upon them, and draws near to them. He hears their cry and attends unto the need of their soul. So often it seems to be that, that's when He's nowhere around, but the bible declares that, that's when He's drawing near to you. He's there for you, and wants to be strength and comfort to you.

Vs19

To this I would say that many are the afflictions of the unrighteous/wicked as well, however the Lord isn't there to deliver them, they're with out hope being with out God in the world. You have the sovereign God of the universe to turn to and trust in, and He is a Deliverer. Everyone has problems, you just happen to know the problem solver!

Vs20

As you know this points to and was ultimately fulfilled in Christ. He was the spotless Lamb of God and none of His bones were broken. When the guard came to Him there upon the cross and was going to break His legs, he discovered that He was already dead and he pierced His side to make sure (blood and water ran out). and At that point John reminds us that this scripture was fulfilled.

Vs21-22

Hallelujah! The righteous are delivered, the wicked are desolate, the choice is ours.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for the promise of salvation that we have in Your Son JESUS CHRIST and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

We thank You that Your ear is open to us, and Your comfort is available for us. Help us to do good, to seek peace and pursue it, and Father may we have an attitude of gratitude, that Your praise might be continually in our mouth, that our soul might make it's boast in You. Thank You again for Your word, and the works You've wrought.