

Psalm 34

Today's psalm is a 'psalm of David'. In it he is praising God for deliverance from trouble, from a particular trouble in fact, but throughout the psalm he tells us not to wait for a particular time but to always be open to God, to always seek him, whether to give thanks, to plead for help or for answers to our current predicament. As with most psalms we find praise and thanksgiving and many reasons to always put God first; when we do we will find blessing in abundance. We don't need to be afraid, God's angels will set up a circle of protection around us while we pray. We don't need to hide our feelings, we don't need to pretend; some people have no-one in their lives with whom they can be themselves, can be truly honest, can be vulnerable. David is reassuring us that with God we can, God will not let us down. He is also encouraging us to go out and spread the news, to get the word out. But he warns us to guard our tongues – don't utter profanity, don't tell lies but always try to do something good and embrace peace. Amongst all the enthusiasm for praising, blessing and trusting God the psalm also contains a warning for those who turn their back on God's ways, for the rebels and for the wicked. By spending time with God, being open and honest, He will find a way to show us when we are being rebellious and sinful and give us the opportunity (over and over again) to return to His fold and be our bodyguard and shield.

I bless GOD every chance I get;
my lungs expand with his praise.
² I live and breathe GOD;
if things aren't going well, hear this and be happy:
³ Join me in spreading the news;
together let's get the word out.
⁴ GOD met me more than halfway,
he freed me from my anxious fears.
⁵ Look at him; give him your warmest smile.
Never hide your feelings from him.
⁶ When I was desperate, I called out,
and GOD got me out of a tight spot.
⁷ GOD's angel sets up a circle
of protection around us while we pray.
⁸ Open your mouth and taste, open your eyes and see—
how good GOD is.
Blessed are you who run to him.
⁹ Worship GOD if you want the best;
worship opens doors to all his goodness.
¹⁰ Young lions on the prowl get hungry,
but GOD-seekers are full of God.
¹¹ Come, children, listen closely;
I'll give you a lesson in GOD worship.
¹² Who out there has a lust for life?
Can't wait each day to come upon beauty?
¹³ Guard your tongue from profanity,
and no more lying through your teeth.
¹⁴ Turn your back on sin; do something good.
Embrace peace—don't let it get away!

¹⁵ GOD keeps an eye on his friends,
his ears pick up every moan and groan.
¹⁶ GOD won't put up with rebels;
he'll cull them from the pack.
¹⁷ Is anyone crying for help? GOD is listening,
ready to rescue you.
¹⁸ If your heart is broken, you'll find GOD right there;
if you're kicked in the gut, he'll help you catch your breath.
¹⁹ Disciples so often get into trouble;
still, GOD is there every time.
²⁰ He's your bodyguard, shielding every bone;
not even a finger gets broken.
²¹ The wicked commit slow suicide;
they waste their lives hating the good.
²² GOD pays for each slave's freedom;
no one who runs to him loses out.

The Message (MSG)

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Thank you Lord for always being alert to our needs.

Thank you that, through Jesus, you have paid for our freedom and that we can look forward to life in your Kingdom where there will be no more tears and pain.

Help us Lord to praise and thank you at every opportunity, to always turn to you with our troubles and place them at your feet.

In Jesus precious name we pray for hearts and minds that are open to your Holy Spirit.

Amen.