

Troubled? Try Praise!

Psalms 34

Psalm 34:1-22 (NASB)

¹ “I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

² My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.

³ O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.

⁴ I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.

⁵ They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed.

⁶ This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him And saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them.

⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

⁹ O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want.

¹⁰ The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.

¹¹ Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

¹² Who is the man who desires life And loves *length of days* that he may see good?

¹³ Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit.

¹⁴ Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are *open* to their cry.

¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth.

¹⁷ *The righteous cry*, and the LORD hears And delivers them out of all their troubles.

¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

²⁰ He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken.

²¹ Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

²² The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.”

A lot of negative emotions accompany hardship: frustration, despair, fear, and doubt. People ruled by these feelings will often make poor choices. This is why I recommend that you decide now to respond to troubled times the way the psalmist did: with a heart of praise. Even in the darkest hours, worshipping God fills the heart with joy and the mind with peace. A believer who is filled in this way can wisely keep a commitment to obey the Lord no matter what.

Worshipping the Lord enlarges our vision. By doing so, we begin to see how He is at work in the world, perhaps in ways and places we’ve never noticed before. More particularly, we see what God is doing in our situation and detect areas where He requires obedience from us.

Our human tendency is to plot a course through a situation toward the easiest solution. But believers who strike out on their own do not mature in their faith. Moreover, they miss out on the blessings of following the Lord’s plan. Stopping to praise can keep us from taking the easy way out and direct us to the right path—namely, the way of God’s will. Taking a step forward in faith

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can be frightening. However, we can confidently take a risk, knowing our omniscient, omnipotent God has His children's best interest in mind ([Isaiah 64:4](#); [Jeremiah 29:11](#)).

Isaiah 64:4 (NASB)

⁴“For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, Nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.”

Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB)

¹¹“For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

It's hard to despair while honoring the Lord for His love and strength. We can dispel doubt by recalling His past faithfulness to us—and ease frustration by committing our future plans to Him. Praise is not the obvious reaction to hardship, but it is the wisest response.