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“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34:18

Main Idea: I will exalt, honor, and give my utmost praise to God continually, so I always will be praising Him. I will dedicate my life to giving Him glory. For all those in need and trouble can know God and that He loves and cares for us. Thus, we can trust and rejoice in Him. I have earnestly prayed to Him in my darkest need, and He heard me. He will hear you, too. He will listen to us and deliver us; all we need to do is call upon Him as Lord. He will take away our fear and replace it with hope; our lives will have meaning. He hears us in our poverty and when we are discouraged and saves us from where we are at. He has His angels watch over us everywhere we go. All we need to do is respect and trust in Him. We can know that our Lord is good, kind, and has our best in mind. We can be safe in Him. We will not miss out on things that we think are more important because we have what is good and the best already. We must listen to Him, know His ways and trust in His plan. We can love life and experience good things when we have the proper mindset of what is true and important. We can be good, keep our words in check, and lift others up instead of being deceitful or manipulative. For the Lord is against evil and He is for those who trust in Him. He loves to hear from the helpless and brokenhearted and those who have lost their way. He wants us back to Him, thriving, living without condemnation.

Contexts and Background:

This Psalm an acrostic poem where each of the verses begins with the sequential letters of the Hebrew alphabet, with “waw” seemingly out of order. This was perhaps composed when David was running from Saul because of his jealous rage. Because there was also a reward offered to the people of Israel and all surrounding nations for David’s capture or death, David had few options. He was being recognized on the run in Gath, so he pretended to be insane to throw his pursuers off. David gives his thankfulness and praise to God for His protection. David escaped Saul’s persecution and gives God the gratitude and glory for it. Throughout the centuries, this Psalm has been memorized and used by the soldiers of Israel when they were captured to recite for comfort and encouragement as a reminder of God (1 Sam. 21:10-15; Psalm 3; 1 Pet. 2-3).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- **Title:** *Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek.* We are given a historical context to this Psalm. *Abimelek* was a title for Achish, the king of Gath of the Philistines.

Verses 1-10: A personal testimony of deliverance by David while praising God at “*all times.*” This is the experience of one in trouble—deliverance by the hand of God. You can have this, too. If you want to be an effective, growing Christian, you must be solely devoted to Christ—not to a doctrine, an idea, or a cause, but to Him and Him alone, accepting Him as our LORD. As a result, all that we do in life, *whether we eat or drink, at all times, in all places, and in all things, we are doing all for the glory of God* (Rom. 8:28, 37; 1 Thess. 5:18).

- *Extol the LORD/Exalt/bless.* A High form of praise. This means to give honor, gratitude, and majesty (beyond praise) for a glorious, triumphant, and exalted honor that can go only and truly to God Almighty. He, alone, deserves the right to be honored throughout the universe (Psalm 18:3; 30:1-6; 110:1; 150:6; Luke 22:69; John 14:13; Acts 2:33-35, 42-43; 5:31; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; 2 Cor. 1:20; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 3:21)!
- *Praise will always be on my lips.* Giving God the proper honor, respect, and thanksgiving that He deserves (Psalm 18:3; 21:13).
- *Glory/Boast in the LORD.* To boast in the Lord is giving Him glory and honor, not the same as pride for ourselves which is usurping ourselves over God and others, which is detestable (Jer. 9:24; Rom. 1:30; 2 Cor. 10:17).
- *Afflicted/humble hear and rejoice.* Selfless enthusiasm and joy. Like the Shema, with all our heart, mind and strength; but, in this context, not about how I feel, rather, what I must. This is the application of God’s

Truth working in us, causing a response from our gratitude. Because of what God has done for me, I will respond (Deut. 6:4-9).

- **Glorify the LORD.** Our chief purpose in life is to give Christ glory; this is what these passages are all about. This is proclaimed in Scripture (Psalm 73:25-28; 100; 1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36), in our confessions of faith, and must be so in the practice of our faith.
- *Exalt his name.* Meaning His reputation, to be a faithful witness to God's character. God alone deserves the right to be exalted and honored. God is the only One to exalt us! This is an essential attitude we must take before effective Christian character, maturity, or spiritual growth can be possible. Matt. 23:12.
- *Answered me.* God hears the voice of His people and answers!
- *Fears.* What frightens us, what we dread, that we must change our attitude when we can't change our circumstances. We need to wipe away those doubts and fears that distract and stress us for no reason. When we doubt, we focus on our fears and not on Him (Psalm 23:4; Prov. 10:24).
- *Radiant.* Reflecting the Lord's work and blessing. Like a mother excited to see her baby. Being in transformation by our close proximity to God like Moses and our growth in Him (Ex. 34:29; Psalm 31:16; Isa. 60:5; 2 Cor. 3:18).
- *Shame.* The contrast to *radiant* as God withdrawing from the evil person. This comes from one's reckless foolishness or immoral actions and does not feel anything they did was wrong, even contempt for God. We must be able to receive conviction and even correction from God's Word and others (1 Sam. 12; 25; Ecc. 2:14; Psalm 10:4; 18: 1-7; 73:11; Rom. 1:22; 3:10).
- *Poor.* Meaning no power to provide for or save one's self, and totally dependent upon God (Prov. 14:20; 18:23).
- *Saved.* The image is that God fights on our behalf and will punish those better than we, so let Him do so.
- *Angel.* God Himself involving Himself into our lives or sending one of His heavenly messengers (Gen 16:7-13; Jos. 5:14; 2 Kings 6:15-f; Zech. 1:9-19; 9:8).
- *LORD encamps.* Meaning, "pitches his tent," to protect, like an army defending a city (Gen. 26:17; Ex. 13:20; 17:1).
- *Delivers.* Meaning to extricate, to draw off. Not just relief from pain, but bold confidence in God's ability to intervene, heal and make things better. Also, a prelude to what Christ will do ultimately save us from our biggest problem, sin (Job. 36:15; Psalm 6:3; 18:19; 42:11; 116:8; John 12: 20-50; 14:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:21)!
- *Taste and see that the LORD is good.* Meaning to change one's understanding by a personal experience with God. To move from sampling to dining. The result of faith and allowing God's work into our live and not making bad decisions out of fear. To experience the Christian life and being knowledgeable of Who Christ was and what He did. To crave the deeper things of the faith (Heb. 6:5; 1 Pet. 2:3).
- *Refuge.* David needed supplies and safe place to be; God gave. Referring to a safe place to flee to in times of war, like the Masada, outside of Jerusalem. This gives us the image of a God who cares for our wellbeing and leads and protects us (Duet. 33:29; Psalm 5:8-12; 18:1-3; 23; Prov. 30:5).
- *Fear the LORD.* Meaning a right relationship with God. This epic statement of faith means the awe and reverence we must have to God, so that our response is to trust, revere, serve, place first and foremost and worship God as LORD of all. Then, live life as it relates to faith and honor to God (Gen. 20:11; Deut. 6:4-5; Psalm 25:11-22; 27:1; Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 6:19-24, 33; John 10:22-42).
- *Lack nothing.* The result of faith. Like sheep with a good shepherd is all they need. To find contentment in God, not complacency or defiance (Psalm 23; Isa. 40:30).
- *Lions may grow weak and hungry.* Lions usually refers to one enemy and their ruthlessness. That David's enemies would disappear, like a withering flower, and that he and Israel would be at peace (Psalm 1:3; 37:2; Isa. 1:30; 28:1).
- *Seek the LORD.* Place Him first, *pouring out our soul to God* (Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:12-13; Psalm. 22:22-31; 62:8).

Verses 11-22: David wanted others to learn from His faith and trust in the Lord and that his experience is real even in the hardest of times. The strong, when they are in the wrong, do not get what they want, while the meek in God will lack nothing.

- *Come, my children, listen to me.* Referring to all of God's people. Learn from my experiences, our only place to be is in the will of God (1 Sam. 21; 24:7; 26:9-23; 1 Pet. 3:10-12).
- *Loves life.* Meaning "loves days," seeking to honor God brings real prosperity and happiness.
- *Tongue.* What we say and our ability to control our thoughts and resulting words. The tongue is an offensive weapon for hostile striking and just as lethal as a sword (Psalm 5:9; 10:7; 12; 17; 25; 27-28; 31; 35; 41; 52; 54-57; 59; 64:3-4; 63-64; 71; 86; 109; 140-141; Rom. 3:13).
- *Turn from evil.* Those who are sinful do not make good decisions. They live for temporary pleasures or are anchored to apathy or indifference or are imprisoned in past hurts, disappointments, and anger and thus can't stand up to the storms of life or be at peace with God. They must let sin and hurt go and embrace God in order to excel in life and eternity.
- *Peace.* As Christians, we can have peace with God as a result of being justified by faith, our resulting obedience to and trust in Christ and being humble (Psalm 30:4; Jer. 3:12; Rom. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2 Pet. 3:14-18).
- *Righteous.* Refers to those who honor God and live their lives faithfully, in all that they do, according to His precepts (1 Sam. 26:23; Psalm 1:5-6; 5:8; 82:1; Isa. 40:13-14; 1 John 3:7-12).
- *Face of the LORD.* Grace, God turns His attention and blessings to His faithful, versus the "unwelcoming" Face is Judgment. Also, He listens to our prayers.
- *Brokenhearted.* This happened when we lose faith and control and when we reject God. Yet, God is here and willing to help. Keep in mind there is no low point we can be that God is not already there for us (Psalm 51:17; Isa. 57:15; 61:1; 66:2).
- *Crushed in spirit / contrite spirit.* Meaning broken down; because of the oppression of sin or overwhelmed with one's situation.
- *Troubles.* Times will improve; but even if they do not, we need to trust in God. I know He smiles upon me and loves me; therefore, He is my joy even when my situation is not joyful. I have peace and security even when others come against me (Psalm 25:17-22).
- *Protects.* Those who God accepts by faith, and remaining righteous in adversity.
- *Condemned.* Meaning to bear guilt. Those God chastises and rejects for first rejecting Him (Hos. 5:15; 10:2; Rom. 8:1, 33; Heb. 11).
- *Rescue.* God promises us He will come to our rescue, but it will not always be when and what we hoped for. His plan is best, even when we do not see it. Yet, we are to allow His rescue, receive His salvation and work in us (Psalm 18; 25:4-5; 31:2; Isa. 45:13; Jer. 23:6).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

Having a mindset of praising and glorifying Christ will affect all we do in life. It will help us grow in maturity and faith, enhance our relationships, center our church, and cause us to be more fruitful in what He has for us. Yet, we are given a choice to be prideful in our personal lives and church, or boasting for the One who deserves it, our Most Holy Loving God! This is about the basics, who Jesus is, how we know and worship Him as revealed in His Word. Are you and your church doing this in the right direction of His call and precepts (Jer. 9:24; 2 Cor. 10:17)?

We must keep the main thing the main thing: Being centered in and surrendered to Jesus Christ as LORD and Savior! This means Christ's name is honored and His precepts are adhered to. Why? Because we are primarily His display case, His witness; we share Christ by showing Christ. We can't do that if we seek to ignore or run from our One True God! God is the One we exhort and extol, and His lost sheep are the ones we

share our experiences in Him with kindness and care, going where they are in love and guiding them on a voyage of life to Know Him.

Christian Life Principle: The more we know of Christ and His principles, the better decisions and discernment we will make and have. This comes down to the ability for us to Praise Him, be obedient, so we are blessed to be a blessing to others, which in turn makes us happier (Psalm 4:1; 1 Cor. 1:30).

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What have you done to Celebrate God?
2. Is the glory of God in your mindset when you sit in church to worship? If not, why not?
3. What causes you to have doubts, focusing on your fears and not Christ?
4. How will having a mindset of glorifying Christ will affect all we do in life? Even make you happier?
5. Have you considered that what we dread, can be controlled if we change our attitude even when we can't change our circumstances?
6. How can this Psalm show you to be practical and, consider your ways?
7. What does the Lord require of you? Is it self-seeking or seeking to glorify the Lord by self-surrender to His ways?
8. What can your church do to be His Work, allow your church to succeed and grow in His empowerment for His glory?
9. What are some better things can your church do other than glorify the Lord?
10. What are some ways to help be focused on Him, with the will and desire to glorify Christ? Perhaps we should ask ourselves, *what enchants me? What is my pleasure? Where is my treasure? Where is my gain?*
11. How have you experienced the Christian life by being knowledgeable of Who Christ was and what He did?
12. What do you need to do to *taste*, to crave the deeper things of the faith?