



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Summer 2018 Midweek Sermon Starter

Unit 2: No Doubt About It
Sermon Series Title: Biblical Answers for Basic Questions
Sermon 3 Title: Healing Hurts
Bible Passage: Psalm 34:15-22

Background/Context

The action, intrigue, and drama of the life of David rival any other story in all of history. The youngest of his family becomes king of Israel. A lowly shepherd becomes a giant slayer. A prized member of the royal court becomes the enemy of the state. Like any great drama, David's life even includes a touch of comic relief as we read how he escapes Achish, King of Gath. 1 Samuel 21:10-15 explains that with Saul hot on his trail, David made his way to the Philistine city of Gath, home of the giant Goliath whom he had recently killed. David's reputation preceded him, and with good reason he was afraid of the kind of welcome the King of Gath might have in store for him. So, David pretended to be insane. Scripture says he "acted like a madman...scribbling on the doors...letting saliva run down his beard" (v. 13). Achish evidently felt that he had enough madmen in his kingdom already and let David go, although he later welcomed him in 1 Samuel 27.

Today's lesson focuses on Psalm 34, written by David after he was rescued from Achish. The psalm doesn't focus on David's crafty plan, but on God's faithfulness to deliver His servants. In verses 15-22 we find easily applicable truths to help anyone in need of God's comfort and deliverance when their hurting.

**A. God Hears
(Ps. 34:15-17)**

Several years ago, one mobile phone company launched an ad campaign with the famous question: "Can you hear me now?" For many people who find themselves in the midst of turmoil, the same question echoes on their hearts: "God, can you hear me now?" If there is anything in the Christian life that requires great faith, it is the act of praying. To the cynic, the prayers of the believer must appear foolish. After all, in today's world who can really be expected to believe that someone hears when we close our eyes and whisper the deepest cries of our hearts?

But David reminds us that believers are not fools to believe in prayer. He reminds us that there is indeed a Holy God in heaven. He is not busily maintaining all of creation, feeling slightly perturbed when He is interrupted by the requests of His children. No, David says: "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous" (v. 15). He is observing our plight and knows our needs. When we pray, "his ears are open" (v. 15b) and He stands ready to respond.

But the righteous are not the only ones God is watching and listening to. David says that "those who do what is evil" are also under God's surveillance, but His response to them is much different. Though He longs that they would turn to Him (see 2 Pet. 3:9), He is determined to judge eternally if they do not. Even better for the righteous is the fact that the God who hears is able to rescue His children "from all their troubles" (v. 17).

Application Point: Have you been wondering if God is listening to you? Be sure that He is—whether you are among the righteous or among those who do evil. Choose to repent of anything that would displease God. Then call on Him and be sure that He is ready to answer.

B. God Is Near (Ps. 34:18)

David reminds us in verse 18 that the brokenhearted never have to find themselves in a dark, lonely place, only to go in search of God and find Him missing. Yes, there are times when God doesn't feel very close. But the mature believer knows that we cannot trust our feelings but must walk by faith in what God's Word says. We are reminded repeatedly in Scripture that God will never leave nor forsake us (see Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:5; Ps. 94:14; Heb. 13:5). Just before leaving earth, Jesus reminded us: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Application Point: When he was afraid, it was a comfort to David to know that God was near, close, with him. What is troubling you? How is your demeanor different knowing that God is near? Call to Him for He's with you right now.

C. God Acts (Ps. 34:19-22)

Notice in verse 19 that the Lord doesn't prevent His children from experiencing adversities. Unfortunately, David reminds us of a sad fact: "One who is righteous has many adversities" (Ps. 34:19). Death and disease, heart aches and headaches, getting laid off and getting laid up—all are experienced by the righteous and the unrighteous. But the believer can find great comfort when he or she hurts, knowing that God not only hears and is near to us, but He also acts on our behalf. David had just experienced God's hand at work when he wrote this psalm. God had given him the wisdom to know how to escape a dangerous situation. In fact, throughout 1 Samuel God acted to save David from giants, armies, wicked rulers, and rebellious sons.

Some would lead us to believe that if bad things happen to us, then there must be sin in our lives. That's what Job's friends (if you can call them that) were convinced had happened to him. But that isn't always the case. Jesus endured the cross, the greatest adversity of all, but He hadn't sinned. Yet the apostle John referred to Psalm 34:20 in describing the Lord's care for His Son even in the worst of times (John 19:36). God not only acts to protect us, but He also acts to punish others. We can rest soundly in the truth that "those who hate the righteous will be punished" (v. 21).

Application Point: Though God doesn't always act on our timetable, He will always punish the ungodly and "redeems the life of his servants" (v. 22). Don't give into the deception that your problems are bigger than God. Call on Him and know that He is able and willing to answer according to His will.