

Exhortation I. Psalm 34:11-14

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[0:00] Well, good evening. Good evening. It is a joy to be with you again.! I counted it tremendous privilege and honor again, as the whole series is.

And we started two weeks ago, three weeks ago now. Psalm 34. This is a wisdom psalm. And we've touched on just a little bit some of the wisdom aspects in the first two sections. When we looked at 1-7 the first week, and then 8-10. And tonight, we're going to read verses 11-14. So let me read, and then I will pray. Come, O children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is there who desires life and loves many days that he may see good?

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. Father, we come this evening in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1:29] We come as the people of God in this place. We bring no merit of our own. We bring nothing in our hands except our need. And we are needy.

We need Your grace. We come having received Your grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we are Your children. And we are delighted and thankful to be Your children.

Lord, I ask that You would help us tonight as children. Teach us, Lord, a little bit more of who You are and what it means to taste and see that You're good by following Your wise way.

Lord, You are beautiful and Your way is attractive. Help us, Lord, in our stumbling way like toddlers to see it for what it is.

To see You for who You are. We love You, God. We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Yeah, so Psalm 34, as was mentioned before I came up here, as this particular section is related to the subject of wisdom.

[2:49] I debated whether or not I should ask you this question. And I'm not sure if I should, but I'm going to. What is wisdom?

If you think about wisdom, you're not sure, does He want me to answer or not? I don't know. Does anyone have a quick idea? What is wisdom? Sophia.

Yeah, let's just throw a Greek word at it. Sure. That's just Greek for wisdom. What? Okay. I'm going to come back to that.

Fear of the Lord. I'm going to come back to that. It's the use, the proper use of knowledge. Okay. So it's related to the use of knowledge.

Yes. So we're going to do that too. Good. Good. That's what we need to think about tonight is wisdom. What is it? It is absolutely related to the fear of the Lord.

[3:49] What is the beginning of wisdom? The beginning of knowledge. It is fear of the Lord. Job 28, 28 actually says the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.

So there is definitely a sense where wisdom equals fear of the Lord. But fear of the Lord has to be practiced. It's active.

Right? It's a working thing. It's an applied thing. Right? That's what our passage does tonight. Last week was, oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.

Last week, looked at the goodness of God and called us to delight in who he is. This week, this week, as it specifically dives into wisdom type topics, takes that truth.

God is good and God should be trusted and God should be sought after and God should be feared. And it takes that and it brings it down now to, all right, you say you fear the Lord.

[4:56] You say you trust the Lord. You say that you're delighting in God. What does that look like in your life? How does that get lived out?

I like to think of it this way. Wisdom. Just, just track with me here for a minute. Wisdom is a worldview. Wisdom is an entire way of seeing the world and life and everything.

And anytime you have a worldview, you start living according to that worldview, right? So wisdom first starts with this truth of who God is. He is God.

He is creator. He is sustainer. He is our savior. He is good. Then, since I know that that is who he is and I trust him and I believe him and I want to obey him now, all right, what is my life going to start looking like?

And then we look at a life that lives out that truth of who God is. We say, wow, that is a wise life. That's the life that can start taking the wisdom of Scripture, the instruction of Scripture, Proverbs and Job and Ecclesiastes and the wisdom Psalms and dare I say it, Song of Solomon.

[6:16] Don't get started on that one. But be able to take those and apply those in life. It's not about rules, applying a set of rules.

It's about this is who God is. This is what it looks like to live under him. That's wisdom. That's wisdom. So this section is the application to the tasting, the fearing, the trusting that we looked at last week, verses 8 through 10.

This is the boots on the ground section, if you will. So let's look at verse 11. First of all, we just have this kind of command, this call, this exhortation, as your sheets, your study guides, your note guides mention.

This is exhortation. Come, O children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. So there it is again. So before we saw the fear of the Lord is something that people who trust in God, that's something we do.

That's what it means to trust. We fear the Lord. But now he says there's something to be learned about fear of the Lord. There's kind of a two part. There's this posture of, I'm trusting God.

[7:26] That's fear of the Lord. But then there's the boots on the ground part, and that has to be learned. Right? And so he calls us, he calls us, children. Right?

That's not condescending or patronizing. That's affectionate. It's kindly meant. And it's intended to say, hey, come here. Come here, my children. Do I have your attention, child?

Right? This line right here should make every Christian under the sound of the word of God go, okay, I'm listening. Right?

I just put everyone on notice who's about ready to fall asleep. Right? Just like I don't let my children fall asleep while I'm talking to them. God doesn't want us to fall asleep while he's talking to us.

Come, my children. Listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. So last week was taste and see.

[8:24] And I told you last week that taste and see is not the same thing as smell and guess. Remember that? Right? You actually have to taste. You actually have to trust God.

You actually have to put yourself under him. Not just stand back and go, yeah, you know, God looks good. I think that makes sense.

No, it is a deliberate trusting. Well, just as that was active, taste and see, this is come and learn, not sit down and spectate. Right?

Right? So the call here to every Christian is to learn. Is to engage with the text and let the text judge our lives.

Let the text and the Holy Spirit through it, diagnose our lives and challenge our lives and bring conviction where it's necessary.

[9:25] Let me put it this way. God is good. Taste and see. God's way is good too. Come and learn. You see that?

God is good. Taste and see. God's way is good. Come and learn. And it does need to be learned. So before, and yes, I do keep running back and forth between the sections because we have to connect them.

Verse 8, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. There is blessing upon the person who trusts, rests, fears God.

Verses 11 through 14 is, you want to experience that blessing, right? You want to experience the blessing, right? Everyone wants to experience the blessing, right?

Right? You want the blessing, right? Right? We're all on the same page. You want blessing, right? Come and learn. Come and learn.

[10:34] So verse 11, learn the fear of the Lord. This is where we see the connection of fearing the Lord to our lives. It's not enough to intellectually go, yeah, God's good.

I've prayed and asked Jesus into my heart or whatever phrase Anglicans use. That's the bad phrase Baptists use. Ask Jesus into your heart. That's not in the Bible, but that's the phrase that gets used all the time.

I don't know what you use, but you've received Christ as Savior, right? It's not intellectual. It's not head space.

It's not internal belief. It's not a mystical experience of God. But it is lived out. James, in James chapter 2, says faith without works is dead.

Remember what the, you know, in the epistles, you know, Paul would write his epistles and he'd say, you know, I'm Paul. I'm the apostle according to the will of God to you who are in such and such a city.

[11:33] And then the next line would be grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ or something like that, right? And then he would proceed in the epistle to give them doctrine, things to believe and commit to and then things to do, exhortation, right?

It wasn't just a sort of a random grace and peace to you. Now take the, take or leave the rest of the letter however you like, right? How is grace and peace multiplied to all of those Christians back in the first century as they're receiving this letter from the apostle Paul?

Grace and peace be multiplied. How did they experience the multiplication of grace and peace?

Believe what I'm telling you and then live out and do what I'm telling you.

We're not talking about earning salvation. We're talking about experiencing a multiplication of God's goodness in our lives, the grace. God will not give us grace daily grace to go and disobey him.

Will he? Right? No, he won't. He will not empower us to disobey him. He will not empower us to walk contrary to his way.

[12:49] So we want the blessing of God upon our daily lives. He says, come and learn. I will teach you the lived out fear of the Lord.

Verse 12. Verse 12 answers the question of why. Verse 11 is the exhortation. Learn the fear of the Lord. Verse 12. Why? And he asked this question almost feels like a no-brainer question.

What man or person, what man is there who desires life and loves many days that he may see good? It's got a nice little meter and rhythm to it.

But it feels like a no-brainer question, doesn't it? Right? Who among you desires life, wants to live a long time and see good?

Yeah. Yeah. Sure. That was easy. That one definitely feels like a no-brainer question.

[13:58] But the thing we have to be careful about, it's not quite as no-brainer as it may seem. This isn't just about a long life. This isn't just about I want to live long enough, I want to have a long life and enjoy my retirement.

I want longer life so that I can enjoy you know, eventually not working and moving to Florida and out of the snow and you know, you're like, no, I don't want to move to Florida.

Okay, bad example. I'm sorry. Wherever you want to go. Your boat, your yacht, whatever. That's not the good he's talking about.

he's talking about the opportunity to experience the goodness of God. Do you want the time and the grace to experience the goodness of God?

See, that's a different question. And you can't say, oh yeah, I want to experience the goodness of God and then go and live contrary to the ways of God.

[15:17] Does that make sense? Right? So he asked this question which at first seems like a no-brainer kind of question. Oh yeah, yeah, I want to live, have many days and see good.

Sure. What Bozo would say otherwise. But the question is, do you really want what he's offering? And it gets a little more challenging. So that's the why. Well, yeah, I want to see the goodness of God at work in and through my life.

Well then, what does it look like? What does fear of the Lord look like? How do we do that? How is that accomplished?

And he's not necessarily promising long life. If you just keep the rules, you have a long life. That's not what he's, he's not promising that. But he is saying, if you want to experience God's goodness in your life, this is it.

[16:16] What does it look like? Well, first of all, in verse 13, he's going to zero in on just some really practical matters here. And one is he's going to zero in on speech.

He's going to zero in on your speech. Verse 13, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. So the first line or line A is keep your tongue from evil. Line B is going to get more specific to a kind of evil. Right? Deceit. Verse, or line A is, is general. Keep your tongue from evil. Line B is relational. I'm going to point that out. It's relational. Because when you're lying, you're, you're always talking to somebody. Right? And lies affect relationship. Lies affect the community. I'm going to bring up that idea of the community again in a little bit. So first of all, if you want to experience the grace of God in your life on an ongoing basis, if you want to say, yeah, I genuinely fear the Lord. [17 : 30] Right? Fear the Lord. I'm trusting him. But faith without works is dead. Right? The Lord Jesus lived a perfect life and he did not sin in word or deed.

He starts here with word. By the way, verse 14 is the deed. But let me just read you a couple of sections from Proverbs.

Proverbs 8, verses 6 through 8. This is wisdom personified depicted as a lady. So we say lady wisdom. So lady wisdom says, Proverbs 8, 6 through 8.

Here, listen to me, she says, for I speak noble things and from my lips will come what is right. For my mouth will utter truth.

Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are righteous. There's nothing twisted or crooked in them. Lady wisdom says, I exemplify wisdom.

[18 : 40] I am wisdom personified. It is an attribute of God given voice through Solomon to Solomon's sons. Because Solomon kept saying, my son, my son, my son.

And what lady wisdom says was a personification of an attribute of God. I speak what is right. I speak truth. I abhor lying.

I abhor any sort of twisting of truth. Right? I abhor anything that takes reality and twists it. We live in a society that with its words twists the very nature of reality.

Right? And forgive me for the example. We're kind of sick of it, but it's the one that's in our face all the time when it boils down to what we call people in terms of pronouns.

Right? That's a twisting of reality. And you're like, yeah, that's not an example that works with us because we agree with you and we don't have a problem with that.

[19 : 48] So we're already on the same page. My point is, it's human nature, though, to redefine something in our lives and just rework it, reword it a little bit, play with words a little bit.

Wisdom, godly wisdom, God's wisdom, boots on the ground, biblical wisdom, says, there's a way to speak that reflects the way God speaks.

And it challenges me and as a pastor and a regular teacher and preacher in James chapter 3, I'm warned about use of my tongue.

Be not many teachers for we will experience the greater condemnation because where there are many words, transgression tends to abound.

So this is particularly challenging to me where my mouth is what I do. But it's also how we all conduct our relationships.

[20 : 57] Every relationship we have is mediated through speech, isn't it? And so how we use our mouths. And so the New Testament is filled full of this. How we use our mouths.

How we speak to one another. And James chapter 3 he talks again about yet we can come to church and with one mouth bless God and then turn around and curse someone who's made in the image of God.

So we can come to church on Sunday morning. We can praise and sing and read Scripture and bless the people next to us and promise to pray for each other.

Do you guys say amen when people are preaching? Maybe you don't do that. No? Okay, that's a Baptist thing. No, that's okay. I'm not asking. But you can amen that if that's what you do.

And then leave the parking lot almost get cut off and swear out the driver who just cut you off. You know what you just did? You just denied the existence of God.

[22 : 04] Because that person you just cussed out whether they heard you or not is made in the image of God. I'd say even how we speak about those who deny truth, even how we speak about people we thoroughly disagree with in our national leadership, the way we speak about them, we can inadvertently be unwise.

And my point in bringing up Proverbs 8 is that God cares about speech. Proverbs 12, 19-22, truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

Now, what did the psalmist just say? You want to see many days? Long life? Many days? Check your mouth. What does Solomon say here in Proverbs 12? Truthful lips endure forever.

A lying tongue is but for a moment. It's the same principle. Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.

No ill befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Lady Wisdom just said that. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are His delight.

[23 : 28] If we claim to delight in God, then that should affect our mouths so that we speak in a way that delights God. You see how wisdom, fear of the Lord, moves us to live in a way that pleases God and we want to please God because we fear the Lord.

It's a speech. Verse 14. Our actions. Like I said, word and deed. Word and deed. Verse 14 brings it down to our actions.

Turn away from evil and do good. So you got the negative and the positive. It's not enough to just not do evil. He says, now go do good. So verse a, I'm sorry, line a of verse 14.

It has been a long day, folks. is general. Turn away from evil and do good. Line B, get specific.

Seek peace and pursue it.

And again, we have to, we have to make sure we define our words correctly. What does he mean by peace? What does it, what does he mean by pursuing peace?

[24 : 47] It's relational. It's communal. He's not talking about inner peace, right? Our whole world is concerned with inner peace. This isn't necessarily talking about inner peace.

This is talking about pursuing peace, pursuing the good of the community of God. Proverbs 16, verse 7. When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Psalm 133. The whole psalm is three verses. Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. Peace.

It is like the precious oil on the head running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes. Remember when Moses anointed Aaron with the holy, sacred anointing oil and it smelled sweet and rich and it's made of spices that were extraordinarily expensive and hard to get a hold of and God said, none of you, none of the rest of you are allowed to have this anointing oil.

You're not allowed to make perfume like this. Pour it on Aaron's beard and the smell, the rich, heady, sweet, spicy smell of that anointing oil.

[26 : 06] God says, unity among the family of God is to God like that. Ah, that's rich.

It's like that. Also, the unity among the family. It is like the dew of Hermon which falls on the mountains of Zion for there the Lord has commanded the blessing life forevermore.

In ancient Palestine as it is today, it is an arid place and there is not a lot of rain. They had rainy seasons and then not rainy seasons. They did not live in central New York.

It wasn't green all the time. Water and rain were precious. And so the whole idea of dew, dew from off a high mountain that was high enough to have snows most of the year and water coming down off that mountain was precious and refreshing and not stagnant.

And he says, unity, peace is like that to God. It is refreshing. Or how about this from the New Testament?

[27 : 16] Hebrews 12, 14. Strive for peace with everyone and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Do we fear the Lord?

Do we trust in the Lord? Do we believe that He is good and He is the highest good and we seek Him for our eternal good?

Yes, we all say that. Yes, we have trusted in Jesus Christ. He is like we looked at last week as we ended in Romans 8, verses 31-39. Jesus is the ultimate good.

If we've been given the Son, we have from God the Father the promise of everything else. He is our ultimate good and we acknowledge that and we rejoice in that. But if we say that God is our ultimate good and that we fear Him and we delight in Him and He is our Master and our Lord and our God because He's our Creator and our Savior, then what we're called to do here is then live in a way that reflects the fact that we live under His authority.

Fear the Lord. In everything we say, in everything we do, in every way we talk about reality, in every way we talk about our own, anything having to do with us.

[28:42] Not twisting the truth at all. And in the way we, what we do. Avoid evil, but do positive good. Specifically, it's communal.

We experience that today in the church. Our local churches. Seeking peace. Striving for peace. Ephesians 4.

Paul really got after the Ephesian believers after he had taught them about how Jesus made of the Jew and the Gentile one new man. And then he says in Ephesians 4, I want you to strive for peace. And he talked about the one God and one Father and one Lord and one Spirit and one baptism. The church is the place where we live out our fear of the Lord.

Our unity with each other. Our love for each other and our respective local assemblies is where we demonstrate we truly fear the Lord.

[29:50] I told you that this passage 11-14 is the application of verses 8-10. It's the boots on the ground section.

This is where we're connecting the fear of the Lord that is trusting Him with this fear that points to a specific way of leading. So I'm going to leave you with four additional thoughts.

First, the fear of the Lord that is trusting leads to the fear of the Lord that is obeying. Do you get that? The fear of the Lord that is trusting Him leads to the fear of the Lord that is obeying Him. Does that make sense? Like we said, faith without works or obeying is a dead kind of faith. So that's one. The fear of the Lord that is trusting leads to the fear of the Lord that is obeying.

Second, fear of the Lord is learned like respect and obedience for parents. He uses that old children thing. So there's the fear of the Lord that is I've trusted in God.

[30:58] Okay, great. You've got the right posture. But then there is the ongoing. It needs to be learned. And this is where I ask, whatever your age, we have a few children here and we have some few not children here.

And you may locate yourself in that spectrum wherever you like. I dare say we could all take a hard look at our own life, our own speech, our own relationships, and realize I can still grow a bit.

There's still places where the wisdom of God could teach me something about the way I'm living. So fear of the Lord is learned. Third, verses 13 and 14 are the practical matters of trust.

I need you to follow me on this one. How can we say we trust the Lord? How can we say we take our refuge in Him if we lie and undermine the community of the faithful?

Why do people lie and undermine relationships? Because they're trying to get something, aren't they? They're pursuing something. People do that because they believe there's a higher good that they want to experience by lying and manipulating.

[32:20] That's what he said. Don't manipulate. You're like, oh, I never lied. Do you ever manipulate? How can we say we trust the Lord if our response to life or trials or relationships and relational difficulties, if our response is fiddling with the truth, if our response does not bolster relationships, especially within the community of the faithful, can I honestly say I'm actually trusting the Lord practically if I think I've got to make the problem go away or I've got to solve the problem or I've got to manipulate away the problem?

Or, can I honestly say I genuinely believe God is the highest good if then I turn around and behave in a way that gets me a different kind of good that God hasn't called good?

So how can we honestly say we're trusting in the Lord, fearing the Lord if we're not actively trusting Him by this is going to cost us to tell the truth.

All right, we're going to tell the truth. this is going to cost me my preferences to maintain unity.

Okay, I'm going to let go of my preferences to maintain unity.

And I can't speak to your experience here in this church or in Anglican churches, but I can certainly speak to my experience in churches I've been a part of where preferences become sometimes the end all and be all and destroy things.

[34:03] Can I honestly say that God's will is the highest good if I think my preferences dictate? I've got to disconnect there, right?

So, verses 13 and 14 are the practical matters of trust. Fourth, if I really believe that God alone is the source of good, then I will believe Him that walking wisely as He commands is good.

God, you're my highest good. Okay, I want you to walk this way. I don't know. Well, then let's not say God is our highest good.

You see, it gets really practical. And this is wisdom. Fear of the Lord leads to this wisely lived life.

So you see that the fear of the Lord that is trusting God is good, that is, I'm sorry, the fear of the Lord that is trusting that God is good and a refuge is intimately tied to how we live out that trust. [35 : 13] So what is wisdom? The fear of the Lord that is faith leads to the fear of the Lord that is obedience. That's wisdom. That's wisdom. Do you want to be wise? You fear the Lord. What does that look like?

Lived out in a way that reflects Christ who lived this out perfectly. He was the one who was greater than Solomon. He says in Matthew chapter 12.

So to wrap it all up, the mark of one who is truly trusted in Christ is the wisdom of a life lived in the way Christ called us to live. Let me pray.

Father, thank You for this evening. Thank You for this time in Your Word. Thank You for the challenge, the rebuke that it is to my own life and heart. Lord, I pray that as a group of believers here tonight and though members of different churches in Christ, we're all part of the same family. Help us first to find in You our highest and greatest good. To taste and see that You are good, Father. You are so good. But really believing that, help us then to live Your good way.

[36 : 27] we know we don't earn anything with it. We know we can't save ourselves, but we also know that genuine trust in You means I'm going to trust You for the way of my life too.

And I pray that that would be true of us here tonight. Thank You, Lord, for this time that I got to be here with this church family. Thank You for the blessing of that and their kindness to me and my family.

And I pray that someday, Lord, we'd be reunited in some other way in time. But again, just thank You so much for this. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.