

# O Magnify the Lord with Me

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Date: 27 March 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] along with the forgiveness of all our sins. Amen. Well, I want to turn with you to Psalm 34 this morning.

Our half of the text is Psalm 34 and verse 3. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

It's a good thing to look back. And it's especially a good thing to look back in order to remember.

Remember especially the goodness which God has shown to us.

In the land of the living. I like the way the Jews who returned from captivity in Babylon look back. To remember the great deliverance that God had wrought for them.

And in Psalm 126, which so happened to be the psalm that we were meditating upon last Lord's Day, when John Angus preached to us morning and evening from this psalm, it was not merely Cyrus, the king of Persia, who had released the Jews from the captivity in Babylon by his royal command.

[ 1 : 35 ] But it was the Lord in whose hand the heart of this mighty king was who had released them.

Because when they composed Psalm 126, they say, When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, We were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, The Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us.

Whereof we are glad. It was the Lord. It wasn't Cyrus, the king of Persia. Ultimately, it was the Lord who had done great things for us.

And I want to turn your attention to the 34th Psalm and to tease out the meaning and significance of these words in verse 3.

[ 2 : 42 ] Where David, after a remarkable deliverance, says, Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

And as I say, these words of David written in that psalm commemorate a remarkable, great deliverance that God the Lord had wrought for him when he was humbled by circumstances, when he was downtrodden, as we might say, when he was utterly all alone.

And if you read through the psalm and just pick out some of the things that we're told, almost incidentally, we'll see that he was a man who was full of fears, or more accurately, full of terrors.

The word is that strong. His life hung by a thread, humanly speaking. He was, as we say, on that occasion, between a rock and a hard place.

The rock being King Saul, who sought his life, and the hard place was Abimelech, or Achish, the king of the Philistine city of Gath, into whose territory David had fled to escape the persecutions of Saul.

[ 3 : 59 ] Achish's men recognized David. David, after all, was the thorn in the side of the Philistines, who had wreaked so much havoc and devastation on their armies.

And they brought David to their king. He was in their hands, we're told, in the passage in, I think it's 1 Chronicles that tells us this story.

What would Achish do with this prisoner? Would he kill him there and then, and put an end, once and for all, to the troubler of Philistia?

Or, would he extradite him to Israel, into the hands of the power-crazed tyrant, King Saul, so that Saul might put him to a grisly end?

In a moment of blind panic, it seems, in terror of his life. David feigns madness.

[ 5 : 06 ] He pretends to be a lunatic. He foams at the mouth and he makes strange scratchings and marks on the doors of the king's court.

And the ruse proves successful. Achish, Abimelech, is disgusted by David's behavior and he says to his courtiers in effect, Do I not have enough madmen of my own that you have to bring this madman to me as well?

And so the king drives him out of his royal presence and sends him away. Sometime later, we don't know exactly when, but on reflection, the escapee realizes that God's hand was over these events. And though David's behavior, this feigning of madness was not something that is to be condoned, for it was sinful, nevertheless, in the words of this psalm, the eyes of the Lord were toward this righteous man and his ear toward his cry.

When this righteous man cried out for help, the Lord heard him and delivered him from all his troubles. Broken-hearted and crushed in spirit, though David was at this low point in his life, he found out by experience that the Lord was near him.

[ 6 : 39 ] And though many were the afflictions of this righteous man, the Lord delivered him out of them all. in fact, the Lord kept all his bones intact.

Not one of them was broken. Yes, the Lord had redeemed the life of his servant. And this servant of God who take refuge in the Lord was not condemned to death.

And so, is it any wonder then that the psalm begins with such marvelous words of heartfelt resolve what David says, I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord. Let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

Why? Because I sought the Lord and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

[ 8 : 01 ] And as we pause, as we reflect, as we look back on our lives, some of us have longer to reflect upon than others.

Do we not want to take up these magnificent words? What a wonderful text this is. And to use them as our vehicle of thanksgiving and praise and to say together and to one another, Oh, magnify the Lord with me.

Let us exalt his name together. Here's a great answer by the way. Speak to a neighbor or an unconverted family friend or member.

What did you do on Sunday? What did you do on Sunday morning? This is what we did. We magnified the Lord together and we exalted his name with one another.

That's what we do when we come to church. It's not just something we do as a matter of form, routine. We come to magnify the Lord, to exalt his name together.

[ 9 : 20 ] God has been good to us and it is only natural then as we were trying to teach the children earlier on for those who have tasted and seen this goodness of God in action to say to others oh taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. What we have found out by our own personal experience blessings. The richest blessings that we have come to know and personally enjoy.

We want others. We want you to taste, to experience and to enjoy along with us.

to dwell on these words of this verse this morning and to help us do so to ask three very straightforward very simple questions.

They're almost embarrassingly simple so please forgive me for being so simple this morning.

Question one who is to be magnified and exalted?

[ 10 : 38 ] the Lord is to be magnified. His name is to be exalted. Now when we remember the incident that forms the background to this psalm we might be tempted to think wow what a man David was.

What a great man he must have been. What a remarkable piece of quick thinking and cunning he displayed when he was in that tight spot before Achish in the hands of his enemies literally and think of where it was he actually was arrested and brought into Achish's presence.

It was in Gath the city of Gath which was the hometown of who? Goliath the giant that David slew with a slingshot and a single stone and whose head David cut off with the giant's own sword.

David completely fooled old Achish or Abimelech as his royal title was. Indeed he escaped from his clutches and he lived to fight another day and in so doing ensured the defeat of the Philistine armies and the later avenging of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.

But friends it wasn't David's cunning or courage or quick thinking on his feet that was the reason or the cause of his deliverance from what was almost certain death on that occasion.

[ 12 : 26 ] No it was the Lord's doing and it was marvelous in David's eyes. The Lord David is saying in the psalm the Lord and not me is to be magnified his name not my name is to be exalted.

Listen to what he says I sought the Lord I sought the Lord and it was the Lord who delivered me from all my foes and surely you will notice how that theme runs through the whole of the psalm both in the first half which Spurgeon in his treasury of David calls a song and in the second half of the psalm which Spurgeon calls a sermon in one form the song or sermon or another the psalmist emphasizes what the Lord has done for him and this message is so clearly placarded throughout psalm 34 that even as my dad used to say a blind man on a galloping horse wouldn't see it couldn't miss it it's so obvious we all ought to see it and to say with the psalmist in another place not unto us O Lord not unto us but unto your name be glory O magnify who the Lord with me he is the one whose name is to be exalted that brings us to the second question who is it who is exhorting us to magnify the Lord it is David of course as we've seen and while I don't want to labour the point let me just show you how David portrays himself in this psalm because we tend to think of David as this heroic larger than life figure the greatest of the kings of Israel but that's not how David viewed himself in this psalm in this psalm he is every man if you like a mortal frail human being just like you and me look at verse six how does he describe himself this poor man he's a poor man and the word conveys the idea of a downtrodden man in the words of

Alec Mateer the Old Testament scholar a man who was at the bottom of life's heap that's how he viewed himself at the bottom of life's heap David says also that he knew what it was to be broken hearted broken hearted crushed in spirit as well surely those are feelings that some if not all of us have experienced at some stage of our lives and perhaps at this moment there is someone here listening to the sermon who can identify with David here because your heart is broken and your spirit feels crushed that's how David felt and then what should we think of David when he talks about his fears in verse 4 literally his terrors terrors or his troubles in verse 6 or his afflictions in verse 19 the experience of being hated by his enemies in verse 21 despite what some false preachers tell you that if you turn to

God you will be always healthy and wealthy and prosperous this psalm tells us that many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivers him out of them all and David is a man who knew fears troubles afflictions and the experience of being hated by his enemies these are the kind of things that Christians here and around the world in the past and in the present have in common and these things may be exacerbated precisely because they are Christians the faithful and compromising followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who said to his own disciples in the world you will have tribulations and those words remain as true today as they were when they were spoken 2000 years ago and yet this very man who knew all of these things is the one who exhorts us to magnify the Lord with him and to exalt his name together with him and as the opening lines of this psalm teaches us there are no circumstances in life and David experienced them all in which we should not or cannot bless the Lord because he says

[ 18 : 26 ] I will bless the Lord at all times not just sometimes not just in the good days but at all times in the hard days in the bad days in the sad days and you notice also he will not praise the Lord just with his lips as if in those hard days bad days sad days he's feeling this is the thing I must do and I'll do it through clenched teeth as it were no no his heart his heart was fully engaged in the worship of his redeemer for he says in the next place my soul makes its boast in the Lord his praise will continually be in my lips but not just in my lips this is worship from the heart that comes up from the heart and out of the mouth it's possible to worship

God with their lips only these people draw near to me with their lips only is not what Jesus said quoting the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Pharisees and the scribes and the teachers of the law in his day but their hearts were far from me but not David at all times he will praise the Lord God's praise will continually be in my mouth but my soul for my heart will make its boast in the Lord the writers of the metrical version of psalm 34 captured the spirit of David ever so well when they penned because there were two of the writers they were 17th century Puritans with the marvellous names of Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady imagine being a man who wrote a psalm called Nahum well this man could hum and he penned these beautiful lines through all the changing scenes of life in trouble and in joy the praises of my God shall still my heart and tongue employ all the changing scenes of life in trouble and in joy heart and tongue together will praise the Lord so in his trials afflictions fears and troubles David experienced the Lord's deliverance and protection which to him was something so very wonderful that he wants to tell the world of God's goodness

and grace so that others in his circumstances might also have hope as well do you want your face to be radiant and beaming no point going to boots and looking at the creams on offer at terrific prices just look to the

Lord they looked to him and their faces were radiant like Moses when he came down from the mountain his face shone and he didn't know it was shining but those who looked at him could see the glory of the Lord in the face of Moses this this is the experience of those who look to the Lord their faces will be beaming do you know one of the things I can't stand is stereotypes you know there's a stereotype of the Scotsman isn't there I'm on shaky ground here being an Ulsterman but and there's a stereotype of the free church Christian or the Scottish Presbyterian and dear help those who have fueled and fed into that stereotype because it's not true it's not true if you read of some of the most persecuted people in the history of Scotland the Scottish Covenanters they were men and women yes they knew trouble dreadful trouble but they had a joy in the Lord and a vibrancy of zeal for God and they their faces were radiant when we sing the Psalms sometimes we sing I'm not blaming any of the presenters but sometimes we sing Psalms that are joyful but as if we're going to a funeral that ought not to be this Psalm cannot be sung as if we're going to a funeral the joyful Psalm should be sung joyfully the Psalms that are plaintive and prayerful should be sung thoughtfully and considerately and sometimes slowly but we should never sing

[ 24 : 33 ] Psalms as if we were told to sing them at two speeds dead slow and stop they ought to reflect the the words the teaching the experience of the psalmist himself and when we look to the Lord our faces beam with joy and do you want to know the indescribable blessing that only God himself can bestow then this psalm says take refuge in him because the person who takes refuge in him will be blessed do you want to experience that inner satisfaction that this world with all its riches can never ever supply you with then seek the Lord for those who do so lack no good thing in other words let's learn from what the Lord did for

David in his extremity of need and respond to David's exhortation to magnify the Lord and to exalt his name together with him he did it for David and David is saying he can do it for you no matter who you are no matter what you're going through and then the third question very briefly to whom is the exhortation of verse three addressed the answer I think is found in the second half of verse two where David says let the humble hear and be glad David's heart goes out in the psalm to the humble because he has stood in their shoes he knows what it is like to be at the bottom of life's heap as we've seen he knows what it is to be friendless and helpless and all alone and in circumstances beyond his control with one foot in the grave but David has something that can lift up the humble that can cheer them and make them glad truly and everlastingly glad what the Lord has done for me David is saying he can do for you as well and as we give thanks to the Lord for all his mercies goodnesses deliverances salvation it is our hope that the humble will hear and be glad when we were young and in Sunday school and good news club we were taught a little chorus that went if you want joy real joy wonderful joy let Jesus come into your heart well my friends there is joy and there's real joy and there's wonderful joy to be found in David's Lord but we have to take very careful notice of this truth because life and death are at stake here and if we miss it if we miss this little piece of information and knowledge it can end disastrously for us it is only the humble who will taste this goodness who will personally experience it it is only the poor man the person who knows and who feels his poverty of spirit who will lift up his voice in prayer and cry out for God to save him out of all his troubles and terrors so that's an important thing to realize scripture tells us that God resists the pride what terrible words are these God resists the pride do those words not send a shiver down your spine and look at verse 16 of psalm 34 the face of the Lord is against those who do evil to cut off the memory of them from the earth and verse 21 affliction will slay the wicked and those who hate the righteous will be condemned but the Bible tells us that God gives grace to the humble he resists the pride but he gives grace to the humble and knowing that truth James the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ says humble yourselves unto the mighty hand of God and he will exalt you in due time what a message this is for ordinary mortals people who are subject to death and dying here's a message of hope here's a message of joy here's a message of life oh magnify the

Lord with me and let us exalt his name together may God bless his word to us let us pray our heavenly father we thank you for your word and we thank you for the psalms and we thank you for showing us in David and in his life and experiences your grace love and mercy you are the God

who resists the proud but you're the God who gives grace to the humble may we come to you like that leper and cry to you for mercy and when you show us that mercy and make us whole and well may we come and fall at the feet of Jesus

[ 31 : 21 ] Christ and praise God with a loud voice and magnify the Lord and exalt your name with others we ask these things in Christ's name Amen us us■■ love nos ah ah unTOR like let's those