

The Poor Person's Rich Legacy

Psalms 34:1-9

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

There is not a single person that at many points in their life will have to crawl through the valleys of trials and tribulations so intense that they will leave them with



“emotional baggage”¹ to carry that it will stretch their bodies, minds, and souls to their breaking points! Who has not experienced the “winter” or “dark night of the soul” of insecurity, fear,

and trembling² that consumes one's every thought with a gut-wrenching dread that peace and tranquility is but a fleeting thought or maybe even a figment of one's imagination! How often during times of trials and tribulations do we insanely

stare and rehearse our bleak circumstances repeatedly until nothing is left in our soul by worry, fear, and dread?³ And when the soul feels like it is about to be crushed in sorrow do we not panic and either try to find our own way out of our valley of death of happiness, peace, and joy,” or seek worldly wisdom that tightens the nose of misery because one has merely applied a bandage, “camouflaging”⁴ but not resolving one's terror?

When we inevitably face “real life dilemmas” we must not forget that we are always “under the eyes of a real living God”⁵ who as our Great Shepherd is more than willing to walk through our dark valleys of turmoil, protect, lead, and guide us to green pastures.

The following sermon is going to review the hymn of King David⁶ as found in the first nine verses of Psalms 34. The first part of the sermon is going to review how despite David sinning against God when he cried out for divine help he was saved. The second part of the sermon is going to review David's invitation for us to praise God both in the good and bad times. The third part of the sermon is going to reflect on how the “poor man's refuge” is to be found in God who

¹ Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1–7.

² Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1–7.

³ Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1–7.

⁴ Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1–7.

⁵ Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1–7.

⁶ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 282.

eliminates fears, shame, and strengthens one in troubles. And the last part of the sermon is going to reflect how receiving divine peace and aid is found in the fear of the Lord!

The Poor Man David's Plight

To truly understand Psalms 34, one needs to know the circumstances in which King David penned these words of great wisdom!⁷ When we think about David's early life, we often think of his incredible strength to kill lions, bears, and the



ten-foot giant Goliath (1 Samuel 17). He became so astute at leading in Saul's army that the people began to sing, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (18:7).

Filled with jealousy and anger⁸ King Saul sought to kill David, so he fled to Nob, "which had taken the place of Shiloh as the city of the priests (1 Sam. 22:19), and was close at hand, about

two miles (3 km) in the direction of Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 10:32)."⁹ When Saul's spiritual advisor Ahimelech asked him why he was alone David lied to him and said Saul had sent him on a secret mission (2).¹⁰ This was one of the lowest points in David's life for in the prior chapter he had just said goodbye to his dear friend Jonathan, is now running for his life, and has no bodyguard, no land to call his own and not even bread to eat.¹¹ After David tells the priest he and his men who are hiding are spiritually clean to beg for holy bread to eat,¹² he then convinces the priest to give him a weapon which ironically ends up being the sword of Goliath which he had slain as a boy (9)! To go where Saul would never expect him to be, David seeks asylum in Goliath's hometown Gath.¹³ It is here that he hoped to become a servant or mercenary soldier for king Achish but is quickly recognized by the people!¹⁴ The servants of Achish ask him "isn't this the king of the land? Isn't he the one who they sing, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (10-11)? In great fear the king would execute him David pretended to be a madman, "making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard" (12-13).¹⁵ David successfully convinced Achish he was no threat and was then able to flee to Adullam in Judah (22:1).

⁷ Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 281–282.

⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 788.

⁹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 8, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 146–147.

¹⁰ Tony Evans, "(PART 5) 'The Blessing of Divine Deliverance,'" in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1–7.

¹¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 294.

¹² Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 8, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 147.

¹³ D. A. Carson, ed., *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 477.

¹⁴ Mary J. Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., and Robert K. Johnston, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 98.

¹⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 293.

An Invitation to Praise

Even though King David failed to initially trust God to protect him from King Saul and even though he lied to the priest, the moment David cried out to the Lord for deliverance his request was granted!¹⁶ When we look to the world for an escape from our tribulations we become “darkened, perplexed, and at a



loss”¹⁷ to find either solutions or peace but when we look to God for guidance, protection and comfort we receive “light of both direction and joy, and our way is made both plain and pleasant.”¹⁸ David invites the afflicted to see how in the

moment of his greatest fears of death itself he only needed to “be sit still, and look towards the hills whence God’s own receive deliverance!”¹⁹ As David praises he invites us to join him in magnifying, glory in and exalt the name of our Lord. “While we certainly cannot make God greater or higher than He is,”²⁰ in our

adoration of Him being infinitely great and higher than the highest we and others can get a glimpse of His glory.²¹

We praise His person, attributes, covenant, promises, works, grace, forgiveness, protection, comfort and for every spiritual blessing we have received; for all “are incomparable, unparalleled, matchless; we cry them up as we please, but we shall never be convicted of vain and empty speech in so doing!”²²

And yet though our righteousness are like rags (Isaiah 64:6) are they not filtered by the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us through wordless groans (Romans 6:26) that are a sweet fragrance unto our Lord? As we are to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17),²³ whether on the mountaintops of blessings of the deep valleys of pain,²⁴ we are to never stop crying out “Abba Father” who releases us from our slavery to fear of our circumstances and death itself (Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 15:55). Surely those who have been purchased at the price of the Son’s life can start practicing what they will do for an eternity, basking in God’s glory, and praising His name!²⁵

¹⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 293.

¹⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 27–57*, vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 122–123.

¹⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 788.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “A Poor Man’s Cry, and What Came of It,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 37 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1891), 135.

²⁰ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 788.

²¹ Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Psalms*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 102.

²² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 27–57*, vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 123.

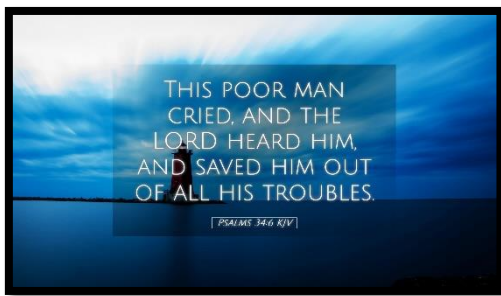
²³ D. A. Carson, ed., *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 912.

²⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 27–57*, vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 122–123.

²⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 788.

The Poor Man's Refuge

King David rejoices that when he was in the lowest point of his life with no place to call home, no food to eat, and in danger of being killed by either king Saul or king Achish;²⁶ the Lord heard his desperate cries and despite his sins saved him out of all his troubles (6). When this “poor man” David²⁷ could have stared bleakly at his dire circumstances and let



worry, fear and terror rip apart his soul,²⁸ he chose to seek the Lord who is always near (Psalms 145) and rely on unmerited grace and mercy from his Good Shepherd who loves

His own and always does good unto them (Romans 8:28). It is often in the “flood of tears, a bitter wail, a deep fetched sigh that our prayers enter into the ears of the most High”²⁹ and in the light of His majesty, grace and mercy are seen for what they truly are conquered by none other than He alone controls all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16). Instead of constantly looking to oneself or the world to “remove horrid

experiences in life as well as the dread of the unknown,³⁰ King David says to bring them to the only One who can grant peace in the darkest of valleys.³¹ While not all of David’s bleak circumstances were immediately removed,³² O what joy he felt to know that despite his sins the mercy seat of grace was still open to the poor man who humbly submits too and puts his/her complete trust in the Lord!

Only someone who truly sees the Lord as their portion can be content with all circumstances because for them “seeking either a restored relationship with Him or, most commonly, information, guidance, or direction from Him”³³ overwhelms them with unspeakable joy and drives fear and self-preoccupation away.

So, as one who had tasted and seen the Lord is good, persevered and had his faith strengthened, King David says to all of us broken, frightened and tribulation sufferers to put our trust in God³⁴ and we will never be ashamed of the confidence in the Son who promises us forgiveness, protection, continuous

²⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1-41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 294-295.

²⁷ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Psalms*, vol. 1, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 255.

²⁸ Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1-7.

²⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “A Poor Man’s Cry, and What Came of It,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 37 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1891), 135-136.

³⁰ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 283.

³¹ Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1-7.

³² James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1-41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 295.

³³ Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms*, vol. 1, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 568.

³⁴ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Psalms*, vol. 1, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 255.

transformation of our souls and blessings both now and, in the life, to come!

The Fear of the Lord

In verse seven David states the manner in which he was saved was spectacular: the angel of the Lord encamped around and delivered him from his troubles! The angel of the Lord “occurs some fifty times in the Old Testament,”³⁵ of which



most of them refers to this being as a “divine messenger mediating communications between God and humans,”³⁶ the administrator of God’s divine wrath or as protector of those who “bear

His image.”³⁷ While the angel of the Lord in this passage could refer to either “preincarnate manifestation of the second person of the trinity, Jesus Christ”³⁸ or an angelic being of Yahweh, the phrase “encamps around” signifies that the angel

was not alone³⁹ but came with other “angelic beings at his command!”⁴⁰ When I hear King David say these words I can’t help but think of God’s deliverance of Elisha and his servant from the armies of king of Aram in 2 Kings 6.⁴¹ Because God had been revealing the military plans of the king of Aram to Elisha who in turn shared them with the king of Israel (9-10), king of Aram summoned his officers and army to Dothan to capture him (12-13). The Arameans surrounded the city by night (14) and in the morning when the Elisha’s servant went out of their small abode his heart was filled with terror and uncertainty as to how they could possibly survive (15). Elisha assured him of deliverance but to prove God was truly with them he prayed, “open his eyes that he may see” and immediately the servant saw the “hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (17)!⁴² Elisha prayed to the Lord and the entire army was struck with blindness and led away (18)! In a similar manner when king David was at his lowest before Achish king of Gath he says it was the angel of the Lord and a heavenly army encamped all around him that led to his deliverance! This kind of divine protection does not happen automatically, says David, but only comes from “evidence of allegiance to God in the form of fear of and strict obedience to His ways”⁴³ that are always higher and better than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9)!

³⁵ Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms*, vol. 1, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 569.

³⁶ Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms*, vol. 1, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 569.

³⁷ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 788.

³⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 296.

³⁹ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Psalms*, vol. 1, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 255.

⁴⁰ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 157–158.

⁴¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 295.

⁴² James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 295–296.

⁴³ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 283.

Fear the Lord you who are His holy people, and you will lack nothing (9)! “Most writers make a distinction between what David meant by “fear” into two categories.⁴⁴ The first category is what most call reverence which means “awe, respect and wonder”⁴⁵ of His holiness, omnipotence, omniscience, justice, grace, and mercy. In awe we look up at the heavens that declare the glory of God (Psalms 19:1-4) who



created and sustains all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16). The beauty and complexity of this universe testifies to God’s eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:20) and yet while we cannot know

the unknowable through His Spirit and word what we can know about Him leads us by the still waters and transforms our very souls (Psalms 23; Romans 12:1-2). Reverence towards God is a sense of profound humbleness and gratitude that He not only knit us in our mother’s wombs as those fearfully and wonderfully made in His image (Psalms 139:13-14; Genesis 1:27), but also atoned for our sin on the cross (1 John 2:2) and in faith in Him provided the means of being eternally adopted into His family as His very own child (John 3:16, 1:12)! The

⁴⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 297.

⁴⁵ Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

⁴⁶ This is not my own quote. Not sure who made this statement .

second category of fear comes from knowing the Lord disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12:4-13). If we want the benefits of believing we must adhere to the truth in which they reside.⁴⁶ In dread of His displeasure that we might receive even an ounce of His wrath, we do what is right in His sight not only according to His holy word⁴⁷ but also in accordance with His will for our lives. King David says reverence of God and fear of His discipline are the foundations of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10)⁴⁸ for it is precisely in our submission to His will that angels are sent to protect us and our souls in even the most difficult of times are not only sustained but divinely enabled to feel unspeakable joy living in this fallen world that is not our own!

So, remember when we inevitably face “real life dilemmas” we must not forget that we are always “under the eyes of a real living God”⁴⁹ who as our Good Shepherd is more than willing to walk through our dark valleys of turmoil, protect, lead, and guide us to green pastures.

Let me finish with one final quote from Charles Spurgeon:

⁴⁷ Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Psalms*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 102–103.

⁴⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 298.

⁴⁹ Tony Evans, “(PART 5) ‘The Blessing of Divine Deliverance.’” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 34:1–7.

“Pay to Him humble childlike reverence, walk in His laws, have respect to His will, tremble to offend Him, hasten to serve Him. Fear not the wrath of men, neither be tempted to sin through the virulence of their threats; fear God and fear nothing else. *“For there is no want to them that fear Him.”* Jehovah will not allow His faithful servants to starve. He may not give luxuries, but the promise binds Him to supply necessities, and He will not run back from His word. Many whims and wishes may remain ungratified, but real wants the Lord will supply. The fear of the Lord or true piety is not only the duty of those who avow themselves to be saints, that is, persons set apart and consecrated for holy duties, but it is also their path of safety and comfort.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 27-57*, vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 124.