

Talk It Over

SMALL TALK

1. When did you first learn about “praise” and “worship” and what was that introduction like?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Psalm 34.** This psalm has 2 parts. Where do you think the dividing line is? What subtitle would you give the first half? The rest?
3. Why is “praise” always to be on our lips? (34:1) Why is praising God “together” important? (34:3)?
4. How could David “taste and see” that the Lord is good? (34:8) Is he saying that the “righteous” will never die of hunger? (34:10)

GETTING PERSONAL

5. How does your life with God through Jesus “taste” to you: Sweet? Sour? Spicy? Salty? Bitter? Bland? Why? Or have you only sampled God? Why is that?
6. What do you think it means to “take refuge” in God? (34:8, and 34:22)

PRACTICE!

- a. What are you grateful for?
- b. What is something God has been showing you this week (in His Word or some other way)?
- c. About the people you are interacting with who do not yet follow Jesus, how can we join you in prayer?
- d. What is keeping you from having a better answer to questions a - c?

January 24, 2021

Happy How?

Week 3: Psalm 34

Today is an invitation to experience the goodness of God, and it will be an experience that will make you happy.

So many people think they will be happiest when they pour into their own life what they think will make them happy. But sometimes it doesn't work the way they expect.

Explain or show **Children's Church Illustration: "Pouring into Self"**

There's a better way to find happiness.

Psalm 34:8 (CSB) Taste and see that the Lord is good. How happy is the person who takes refuge in him!

I. RECIPE for happiness

Psalm 34:1 (CSB) I will bless the Lord at all times;

First ingredient: Pour one full measure of YOU

"I will bless the Lord" I will PRAISE the Lord.

Listen, my friend. Nobody can praise God for you. Church attendance is not a spectator sport. If you don't praise God, you have robbed yourself of one of the greatest joys and one of the greatest blessings. And also, you have denied God the glory that belongs to Him.

Psalm 34:1 (CSB) I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

Next step in the Recipe for Happiness: Pour one full measure of YOU...through praise on your lips

Do more than think it. Say it! Open your mouth to lead your heart!

When will I do it? Oh, here's the secret: "at all times", "always"

The meaning here is not just “frequently” but it also means

- **Next step in the Recipe for Happiness: no matter what happens**

Praise God at all times, always, no matter what. You will feel something shift inside when you decide to do this! Transformation inside begins.

RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS:

- Pour one full measure of you
- Through praise on your lips
- No matter what happens

II. **How will this (recipe) make ME happy?**

- **This blesses God (v. 1) and others (v. 2)**

Psalm 34:1 (CSB) I will bless the Lord

Psalm 34:2 (CSB) I will boast in the Lord; the humble will hear and be glad...

There is a better way to experience happiness than pouring into self and coming up empty.

Explain **Children’s Church Illustration: : “God’s Cup blessing us**

Psalm 34:3-4 (CSB) Proclaim the Lord’s greatness with me; let us exalt his name together. + I sought the Lord, and he answered me and rescued me from all my fears.

- **This (recipe) strengthens faith & strangles fear**

The praise that lifts its voice in solitude is beautiful, but God also asks of us to praise him in community with others.

34:3 let us exalt his name together.

We learn from Jesus that HE is powerfully present when we intentionally gather together in his Name to honor Him. “Whenever two or three of you meet together in my name, there I am with you”

I mentioned before that according to one study, every group’s mental health was perceived to have dropped except one grouping. What group’s mental

health improved during 2020, those who were committed to attend worship services every week!

Do you want to strengthen your faith and strangle your fears? *Proclaim the Lord's greatness with me; let us exalt his name together.*

- **This (recipe) fills you with radiant joy**

Psalm 34:5 (CSB) Those who look to him are radiant with joy; their faces will never be ashamed.

Some people brighten up a room just by leaving it.
Stop spreading gloom! Spread praise!
What is praise? Praise is faith turned inside out.

- **This (recipe) protects you**

Psalm 34:6–7 (CSB) This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him from all his troubles. 7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and rescues them.

When you praise God, you are drawing near to God and he becomes especially near to you.

There is power in praise.
Focusing on your troubles amplifies your troubles.
Praising God magnifies him before our eyes!

- This blesses God and others
- This strengthens your faith & strangles your fear
- This fills you with radiant joy
- This protects you

III. Results:

- **Happiness by experiencing God**

Psalm 34:8–10 (CSB) Taste and see that the Lord is good. How happy is the person who takes refuge in him! 9 You who are his holy ones, fear the Lord,

for those who fear him lack nothing. ¹⁰ Young lions lack food and go hungry, but those who seek the Lord will not lack any good thing.

The result of Praise, is more praise!

Now, suppose you tell me that God is not good. Good luck convincing me, because I have experienced his goodness! Your arguments don't match my experience. I mean, suppose I had just had a bite of homemade coconut cream pie, and you tell me that coconut cream pie is no good; and that it doesn't taste good. But I've got evidence from my experience. I love coconut cream pie, in fact just thinking about it, I can taste it!

My experience is the best rebuttal to your argument!

No such thing as God, you say. There is just no way that is true. I know him, and he is very good to me, and every time I'm with him, he adds joy and strength, and love, and every good thing to my life. "Taste and see that the Lord is good." for yourself.

- **Lasting Joy**

Psalm 34:11–12 (CSB) Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. ¹² Who is someone who desires life, loving a long life to enjoy what is good?

- **Personalized CARE**

Skip to

Psalm 34:15, 17 (CSB) ¹⁵ The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry for help... ¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and rescues them from all their troubles.

How do we know *God's ears are open to our cry for help?* We experience answers to our prayers!

- **INTIMACY with God**

Psalm 34:18 (CSB) The Lord is near the brokenhearted; he saves those crushed in spirit.

When we praise him no matter what, we experience his nearness in the form of his comforting presence.

Psalm 34:19 (CSB) One who is righteous has many adversities, but the Lord rescues him from them all...

We still experience troubles and adversities, but God works them out to strengthen us rather than harm us, and so we can trust him to work things out for our good in the long run.

- **FOREVER**

Psalm 34:22 (CSB) The Lord redeems the life of his servants, and all who take refuge in him will not be punished.

- Happiness by experiencing God
- Lasting joy
- Personalized care
- Intimacy with God
- Forever

Only God can fill your empty tank, and only through Jesus' sacrifice will you be **redeemed** and **purified** so that God will take up **residence** in you, and you with him forever!