

## LEARNING ACTIVITY: ANALYZING PSALM 34

### I. PSALM TYPE: THANKSGIVING

Psalm 34 is a thanksgiving psalm written by David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech. It was David's appreciation of God's mercy upon his life and thus he gives thanks to God for what He has done.

As Fee and Stuart pointed out in their book in page 226, a thanksgiving psalm has five elements that are as follows: introduction, distress, appeal, deliverance and testimony.

In Psalm 34:1-3, David writes his introduction to the thanksgiving psalm by bursting out in praise with the desire to do it at all times and continually, not just individually but also corporately.

His distress in verses 3 to 7 are unspecified, but can be read before the beginning of the psalm mentioning that this was written when he was living with the Philistines and pretended to be mad before the king.

David's appeal shows up in verse 6 stating that when he called, the Lord delivered him from his troubles. He praises God for He graciously responded to his call for help. Another kind of appeal is seen in verses 11-14 when he turns his appeal from God and moves toward God's people to embrace the fear of the Lord by turning away from evil and doing good.

The Deliverance section of the psalm is seen in verse 7 when David makes a declaration that the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them from trouble. Furthermore, this can be seen in verses 17-18 where David declares that when the righteous cry for help, God delivers them from their troubles for He is near to the broken hearted and saves those crushed in spirit.

Towards the end of the psalm, we see David giving a testimony of God's goodness and mercy. Verses 19-22 describes the plight of the righteous. Though they may have afflictions, God delivers and redeems them for they take refuge in Him.

## II. IMAGERY

In Psalm 34:8, David declares, "Taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him." We see the imagery of the goodness of God compared to delectable foods. He is so certain of God's goodness that he could taste it!

In Psalm 34:18, David depicts people in trouble as those whose spirits are crushed. This is a powerful imagery for when a person is in trouble, it would seem like one's spirit to move forward is squashed and flattened.

Furthermore, Psalm 34:5 describes that the faces of those who look to God are radiant. It's a powerful imagery for it expresses how one's face beam when looking to God which was similar to Moses' after meeting with God face to face.

## III. PARALLELISM

In the video lecture of Dr. Abernethy, he describes parallelism as the intentional correspondence between words and lines. A subsequent line after the previous one will advance, intensify, specify or indicate consequence.

In Psalm 34:1, David writes the second line to intensify what was said in the first line. He desires to bless the Lord at all times and intensifies it by saying that God's praise will continually be in his mouth.

Similarly, in verse 3, his desire to magnify the Lord corporately is intensified by the subsequent line that invites others to exalt God's name together. The psalmist intensifies his call to everyone to give honor to God by the repetition of a similar thought.

David appeals to all in Psalm 34:13 to keep their tongue from evil. He intensifies the first line by giving a particular and specific example of how that looks like in the second line by saying "keep ... your lips from speaking deceit."

An antithetic parallelism can be found in Psalm 34:10 which says that lions suffer want and hunger but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. David compares lions with those who seek God. But the comparison is antithetical which means that it is opposite of what was just said.