A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. [1] I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. [2] My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. [3] Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. [4] I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. [5] They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. [6] This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. [7] The Angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. [8] Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! [9] Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. [10] The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing. [11] Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. [12] Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? [13] Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. [14] Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. [15] The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. [16] The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. [17] The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. [18] The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. [19] Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. [20] He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken. [21] Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. [22] The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

Text: Psalm 34 Thanksgiving 2026 Philip. 4:11-13, 19-20 Mt. 6:25-34 Ps. 136 Psalmody: p. 26 WS
Hymns: 744, 246, 36, 657

THANK GOD ALL THE TIME

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

It's easy to thank God when times are good and we're feeling thankful. What about bad times and other times when we're not feeling thankful? Should we thank God also then?

Listen to the heading of Psalm thirty-four, part of the inspired text: *"A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed."* The Holy Spirit inspired David to write this Psalm. It was written before David became king. Saul, who was the king at the time, was chasing David all around, trying to kill him. Saul knew that David was supposed to be the next king, so Saul wanted David dead. David fled to the foreign country of the Philistines, arch enemies of the Jews. Abimelech, the Philistine ruler where David fled, caught him. Abimelech knew that David was the one who had killed their Philistine champion, Goliath. Abimelech wanted to kill David. So David pretended to be crazy. People back then believed that a crazy person was 'touched by the gods.' As a result, Abimelech let David go. David had to flee back to his own country, where Saul was looking for him. Poor David was caught between a rock and a hard place….

It's very significant that it was at this time that David wrote our text, Psalm 34. David begins, *"I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."* David feared for his life. He knew that God had chosen him to be the future king. He didn't know how that was going to work out, with Saul hot on his trail, trying to kill him. David had to be dealing with anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and probably other things as well. And yet it was in the midst of all this that David was praising God.

David says, *"My soul shall make its boast in the LORD…."* David didn't have all the answers, but he knew that God does. David wasn't boasting about how clever he was, or what a good fighter he was, or anything else in himself. His 'boasting,' his confidence, was in the Lord. David knew that God has the answers we need in His Word. David knew that God is omnipotent – all powerful – and that God would somehow make a way for him. David put his trust in the Lord, knowing that God had a plan and that God would work everything out for his good. (Ro. 8:28)

David says, *"The humble shall hear of it"* (of David's example) *"and be glad."* We're encouraged by David's example to place all of our problems and needs into God's hands.

David urges us, *"Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together."* David urges you and me to thank and praise God with him. Our human tendency is to thank and praise God when we're happy and things are going the way we want them to. David is urging us to thank and praise God also when we're not happy and things aren't going the way we want them to. When things aren't going well for us, our natural tendency is to be anxious and afraid, to feel sorry for ourselves, and to be angry (angry about what? about what God is letting us go through?). David says, no, thank and praise God also in bad times. When we thank and praise God also in bad times, He changes our negative attitude to a positive attitude. Do we want to be happy, to be unafraid, to be strong, to be at peace? Thank and praise God also when times are tough, and God will make us happy, unafraid, strong, and at peace.

David says, *"I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."* Four times in this short Psalm David says that God delivered him from all his fears. God promises He'll deliver us from all our fears, too.

David says, *"The Angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them."* Many times in the Old Testament the phrase *"the Angel of the LORD"* is a reference to the Son of God: Jesus. Jesus promises us, *"I am with you always"* (Mt. 28:20). Jesus is always with us, guiding us and protecting us.

Little children won't eat certain things because they're convinced that they won't like them. But if they try something, they may find that they do like it. There are times when we don't want to humble ourselves before the Lord because we think we won't like His will for us. David urges us, *"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"* When we

humble ourselves before the Lord and place our trust in Him we find out that His way is the good way that brings us happiness and strength and peace.

David says, *"The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. ... The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles."* God cares very much about each of us. He's there to help us with our problems and needs. Romans 8:32 says, *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"* God sacrificed His Son to save us. God will help us with every other need we have.

David says, *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all."* God doesn't promise that we'll never have problems in life. Jesus has told us, *"In Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (Jn. 16:33). Jesus is always there for us to see us through <u>all</u> of our problems – <u>all</u> the things we tend to be anxious about.

David tells us that God *"guards all [our] bones; not one of them is broken."* We might break a bone. God is speaking figuratively here, promising He'll never allow us to go through more than we can bear. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, *"No temptation"* (or *"test, trial"*) *"has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted"* (or *"tested, tried"*) *"beyond what you are able, but with the temptation"* (or *"test, trial"*) *"will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

David says, *"The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned."* God is called *"the LORD"* several times in our text. *"LORD"* all in capital letters refers to "Jehovah," the eternal, covenant God. God promised and sent His Son, Jesus, who died for our sins on the cross and rose again. Jesus paid the price to redeem us from Satan and sin and death and hell. Our sins are forgiven.

At Thanksgiving and <u>all</u> the time, thank and praise God for all of His blessings. When things are going well, <u>and</u> when things aren't going well, thank and praise God for all of His blessings. *"I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."* Amen.