

## **I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES**

**Psalm 34** (is subtitled "The Happiness of Those Who Trust in God/The Lord Delivers His Own"). Those two subtitles could be summed up in what is **Proverbs 3:5-6**, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." That is, if you want to bless God and be blessed by God and to be a blessing to others. This is also said to be "A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech [Achish], who drove him away, and he departed." **1 Samuel 21:11-13**, tells us of that time, "And the servants of Achish [aw-keesh] said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?" Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard." It is no coincidence that David reacted that way as King Saul had felt threatened by that saying about David and likely Achish would have also. As David presumably wrote in **Psalm 146:3**, "Do not put your trust in princes, [he's not saying to disrespect them, just don't put your trust in them] nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help." David knew where his help came from, personally, that is, individually as well as collectively, that is, with those he went to war with. **Psalm 18:1-3**, David says, "I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies." Sounds to me that David was doing as Jesus said was the Great Commandment of God, to love Him with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind." (**Mark 12:30-31**) To add, Jesus said the second commandment was like it, to love one's neighbor as one's self. Before we have even gotten to **Psalm 34**, we have already found what it means to bless the Lord at all times!

Where we are going with this message, this passage of Scripture, is summed up nicely for us in the first verse and is then the title for our message today. "**I will bless the Lord at all times.**" Hopefully, for all of us, God will put that in our hearts and minds, to want to bless Him at all times! Based on us getting a proper understanding to who we are and are intended to be according to God's will and ways, that is going to determine whether we have a happiness from being blessed by God, that then blesses us as well as others or whether we are just after our own happiness. Before we look at **Psalm 34**, let's try and put a definition to happiness. Happiness is really just relative to one's own perspective. What makes one person happy may not make someone else happy. One may be happy eating a rubeen sandwich with corned beef and sauerkraut, mmm, or you may be like me and go "bleah"! Webster's Dictionary defines happiness as being

delighted or pleased by experiencing pleasure or joy, having a favorable outcome in one's life.<sup>1</sup> As I've mentioned in the past, Biblically speaking, happiness is a byproduct of something else and is entirely different from the joy of the Lord. The joy of the Lord is **of God**, as the Holy Spirit works in the children of God. "[T]he fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) Yet there is also a worldly joy that is not a joy of the Lord. And as we look at the Word of God, there is a worldly happiness and a godly happiness. There is a worldly joy and a godly joy. There is also a wisdom of this world and the wisdom that comes from God. That is not based on opinion. That is just the way it is. Those who are not born-again, children of God, through believing on Jesus as being the Christ, the Son of God, and receiving Him, can too experience and operate in what they would describe as happiness, joy, or wisdom. Joy is defined in Webster's Dictionary as a "feeling of great delight or happiness". In contrast then, is that happiness or joy is different for each of us, based on our world-view or our God-view, and whether one has the Holy Spirit working in them or not. Then, our happiness or joy, may be attributed to our relationship with God and His people, or not. Some persons would describe themselves as being happy by getting inebriated (drunk) or high and/or maybe listening to their version of what is enjoyable music. I will say this, if one thinks they need either of those things to get closer to God, to have fellowship with Him, or to have happiness in Him or to have the joy of the Lord, that is not Biblical. On the topic of booze or drugs, we are warned throughout the Word of the dangers of that. The Apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**, he says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators [ pornos ], nor idolaters, nor adulterers [ moichos-adultery ], nor homosexuals [ malakos-effeminate, implying a lack of self-discipline or moral fortitude. It is used to describe individuals who are morally weak or indulgent, in this case sexually speaking ], nor sodomites [ arsenokoites-in bed with another male ], nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards [ methusos-describes individuals who are characterized by a lifestyle of drunkenness, which is then associated with moral and spiritual degradation (dissipation) ], nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Regarding music, I'll just say what is quite obvious. It can affect a person and one's soul, so it is important for us to be careful in what we listen to and subject ourselves to. One does not need music to have fellowship with God. Jesus tells us, "**God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**" (**John 4:24**) Not emotion, not that emotions aren't involved-but in spirit and in truth.

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1 Random House Webster's Dictionary, Ballantine Books, New York, 1996.

One may say that they are most happy when they are with their friends doing whatever they enjoy doing together. Some may find their happiness within their family life or in their professional life, etc. I'm speaking of happiness on a macrolevel more so than a microlevel. On a microlevel one may be happy they got their hair cut or they trimmed their nails, or they find a quarter on the ground, or that the sun is shining and it's not raining or bitter cold or blazingly hot outside. Biblically speaking, happiness is determined more specifically based on one's faith. No one may be able to "prove" that the Bible is the "Word of God", yet the spoken and then written Word of God speaks for itself, as the Holy Spirit guides us into God's Way, Truth, and Life, that is in Christ Jesus, as Jesus proclaimed that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no one comes to the Father except through Him. (**John 14:6**) First of all then is having the faith that the Holy Bible is the Word of God. If one does not have that belief, then one can determine for themselves what is truth, what is important in this life that we have on this earth, and in what one should concern themselves about, and what makes them "happy". The Apostle Paul told Timothy, that "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to **make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for **instruction in righteousness**, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped** for every good work." (**2 Timothy 3:15-17**) If you believe that, your perspective should change as to what is happiness, joy, and wisdom. The book of **Proverbs**, referred to as a book of wisdom, the wisdom from God, was mostly written initially by King Solomon. I say it like that because, for instance **Proverbs 25** is said to have been copied, that is, Solomon's writings, by King Hezekiah's people, long after the reign of Solomon. Solomon of course gained much of that wisdom from his father, King David, who wrote for us, it is believed, 73 of our 150 Psalms (and two are attributed to Solomon). In the book of **Proverbs**, I did a word search on happy and seven verses came up. **Proverbs 3:13**, "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding." Of course Solomon is speaking of the wisdom that comes from God. The Apostle Paul tells us, "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." (**1 Corinthians 3:18-20**) Speaking on the wisdom of God, Solomon tells us in **Proverbs 3:18**, "She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and **happy** are all who retain her." Another bit of wisdom from Solomon as it pertains to one's happiness, **Proverbs 14:21**, "He who despises his neighbor sins; but he who has mercy on the poor, **happy** is he." **Proverbs 16:20**, "He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the Lord, **happy** is he." One more from **Proverbs**

**29:18**, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law." The translation in the KJV says "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he". That gets quoted by preachers frequently, just saying, "Where there is no vision, the people perish", implying we need a fresh vision from the Lord. Yet once again, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" And our "revelation" is in Christ Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Jesus tells us, in **Matthew 11:27-29**, "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**" "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, **I have overcome the world.**" (**John 16:33**) In Christ, we too WILL overcome! And we too follow a law. Not the Mosaic law that was in the Old Covenant that God had with Israel. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the **Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus** has made me free from the law of sin and death." (**Romans 8:1-2**)

That "revelation" of Christ Jesus, makes it clear to us that GOD is doing the work, we are putting our trust in Him and resting in Him! "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) As a child of God, Jesus IS our happiness, our joy, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and our redemption! (**1 Corinthians 1:30**) You want happiness according to what the world gives you? At best, that is what you will receive. You want the happiness, joy, and wisdom that God gives through faith? The Apostle Peter says, "that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls." (**1 Peter 1:7-9**)

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**Psalm 34:1-2 I will bless the Lord at all times;** His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad.

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We find just that in the "Great Commission" that Jesus gave to His disciples and has been passed on to us. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20) Combine that with the "Great Commandments", gives us the phrase that we are sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus. THAT is how we bless the Lord at ALL times.

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**Psalm 34:3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.**

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We're just getting warmed up! We're practicing so to speak, for that great day! Hopefully it is genuine in each of our hearts to have happiness and joy in the Lord in our exalting His name together! As we are told, "After these things I [John] looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9-10) "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! (Revelation 19:1) "Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Revelation 19:5-7)

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**Psalm 34:4-7 I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.** They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

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The angel (malak: messenger) could very well mean "THE MESSENGER, THE WORD OF GOD". As Jesus promised, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—" (John 14:15-16)

He was speaking of the Holy Spirit. Right after that Jesus stated, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."

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**Psalm 34:8** Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

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Jesus spoke to that by saying, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." (John 6:53-58) Explaining Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. [John 6:66] Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:66-69) "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"

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**Psalm 34:9-10** Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.

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Sound familiar? Jesus, in part of His "Sermon on the Mount" said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21) He then went on to address the worrying about what one will eat, drink, and wear, He said, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:31-34) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." "I will bless the Lord at all times." We love Him because He first loved us!

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**Psalm 34:11-22** Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken.

Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

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Jesus tells us, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) So, until He takes us home, we are to be, as Jesus had said, about our Father's business, sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus, that we may bless the Lord at all times, having a kingdom of God and His righteousness perspective, for the glory of God!

"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." (Isaiah 11:10)