



Sunday, January 2, 2022

Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Psalm 34

The new year presents yet another opportunity to renew our devotion to Christ. There is nothing magical about the date, January 1, and yet the newness of the calendar reminds us of the on-going renewal that the Lord is bringing about in our lives through the Holy Spirit. For those who are in Christ, He is committed to our sanctification and will certainly bring it to completion on the last day.

That being said, it is important for us to press in and be committed to “looking to Christ” or “drawing near to God” through prayer and time in His word. These disciplines can be perpetually daunting or frustrating to establish and maintain, but when we have a sense of the life-giving impact that God has on us when we do draw near, then we will have the motivation to persevere.

So, let us be renewed this year in our commitment to walk with God and to “taste and see” that He is good. And upon sensing His goodness, may we give our lives to Him in humble service and sacrifice for His glory and the good of those around us.

Context

As Pastor Don noted, this psalm was written in response to the way the LORD delivered David from the Philistines when he ended up in Gath after fleeing from Saul. David’s deliverance had been tangible—he was still alive when he very easily could have been killed! The LORD was merciful to him and delivered him in the midst of his suffering. In the same way, the LORD delivered Jesus from death itself. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Jesus, the righteous, was delivered from the ultimate affliction—death—so that His righteousness could be seen and so that we too could be made righteous.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Psalm 34

“A New Look for a New Year”

Psalm 34:5, “Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces will never be ashamed.”

Activity *looking is praying*

Identity *LORD = Yahweh*

How are we to look to Him?

- Desperation *cry to Him*
- Adoration *praise Him*
- Veneration *fear Him*
- Expectation *trust Him*

What happens when we look to Him?

Personal transformation *radiant*

Divine intervention *delivered*

It’s not about how you look—but where you look!

Discuss

- 1) What difficulties do you face when it comes to regularly “looking to the LORD” in prayer and in His word?
- 2) Pastor Don said, “We think God’s attitude toward us is the same as our attitude toward others.” Why might that lead us to shy away from looking to Him?
- 3) What reasons does this psalm give us to look to the LORD?
- 4) What happens when we look to the LORD according to this psalm?
- 5) How can we encourage one another in this new year to be more faithful in looking to the LORD?