

DAVID . . . and the madness which suggested psalm
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(PSALM 34: 6-8; 1 SAMUEL 21: 13)

David sat in the cave of Adullam and quietly watched the surrounding countryside. The days were perilous, and a price had been placed on his head. Away through the trees, rugged men guarded the trails; in the secrecy of their stronghold, other men prepared a meal; but all the while their brave young leader dreamed and watched. In thought he still saw the hazardous flight into the country of Gath, and he involuntarily shuddered as he recalled the narrowness of his escape in that foreign land. David smiled when he remembered his desperate acting. In retrospect it appeared strangely comical; but then, grim tragedy had stalked his every movement. The enemies had watched as he clawed at the walls; they had frowned with disgust as his spittle ran down his beard; and the immature actor had been forced to better displays of theatricals. He had traced fantastic patterns on the walls, and his laughs had been those of an idiot. His actions had been grotesque and revolting, and finally his enemies had pronounced him insane. They had driven the lunatic away, but had failed to see the relief which suddenly appeared in his eyes. David took his writing material, lifted his face to the sky, and as gratitude filled his soul he wrote Psalm 34.

David's Great Salvation

Slowly he wrote his testimony-" This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Maybe he paused awhile and put down his pen, for he realized that statement fitted many episodes in his eventful career. The words "This poor man seem to indicate that every vestige of David's self-confidence had disappeared before an overwhelming sense of personal need. Desperately he had cried to God for help, and his petition had been heard.

Verse 6 suggests a proposition. A man must recognize his need before God can save him. This is one of the basic laws of Holy Scripture and human experience. When a man has unlimited confidence in his own ability, he feels no need for God. A sense of insufficiency begets a desire to pray, and prayer is the key which unlocks heaven's resources.

David's Great Security

David's pen is moving again. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Once again the scenes of recent days appeared before David's eyes. But for the explanation provided by his own words, how else could he have escaped from his enemies? King Saul was probably an expert javelin thrower; but in any case, a child could not have missed a sitting target at that distance. David had been playing at Saul's feet. Then the escape from Gath had been most providential. That a one-time shepherd boy should without rehearsal develop into a first-rate actor seemed impossible. Even David could scarcely believe his own memories. Surely in his successive hours of need, the angel of the Lord had encamped round him. God had been his refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Verse 7 suggests another proposition. God is never far from a man who is needing help. And that is as true today as it was

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in David's day.

David's Great Satisfaction

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." The story of testimony halts as this spontaneous expression of praise rises unchecked from a thankful heart. God had been exceedingly kind and gracious, and David knew the blessedness of the man whose trust is in the Lord. Eventually, before he laid aside his pen, he wrote, ". . . none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."

The birds were singing in the trees, and the sun, a ball of flaming glory, had filled the sky with crimson. The evening meal was ready, and the men were waiting. David stood up. He was a prince indeed, for his meditation had taken him into the presence of the eternal King. Yes, all was well . . . and he went to join his followers. In thought we watch him; and then, recalling his third great statement, we recognize our final proposition. Concerning the things of God, to taste for a moment means to trust for ever.

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