

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Trinity 6, July 28, 2019**

✠ ✠ ✠

(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 10, 39:5, 27, 428, 427: 1.

Lessons: 1 Samuel 21: 10-15, 1 John 3: 1-9, Matthew 22: 23-33

Sermon Text: Psalm 34: 1-10.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the Name of Jesus Christ, dear Fellow Redeemed:

Young David, who had been appointed by God to be king over Israel, was being chased by Saul in our Old Testament lesson today. Saul hated him, and had tried to kill him, and then David made a poor decision. Yet these beautiful words of our text resulted from that poor decision. The heading of this Psalm says ‘Of David’ – that is, David wrote it ‘When he pretended to be insane before Achish, who drove him away and he left.’ Achish is another name for Achish, the Philistine king of Gath. In our Old Testament lesson this morning, we saw that David fled, he ran away from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath. But what the servants of Achish, the king of that pagan city told David made him apprehensive: Here is an Israelite, the anointed king of the Israelites, and he had fled to a Philistine king for help! Surely, a stupid choice, as we look at it now. But to David, at the time, it seemed to be the right thing to do. The servants of Achish said ***“Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?’”*** 1 Samuel 21:11 (NIV) What they said made David fearful for his life. He originally thought he would be safe there. In the Philistine city, he thought he would find protection and refuge from Saul. But he did not. It took David this lesson to learn that

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TAKES REFUGE IN GOD.**

- 1. David's thanks for deliverance**
- 2. An invitation to join David in praise.**
- 3. The marvelous things God did for David.**
- 4. The application of this truth to all believers.**

David said in our text, after leaving Achish, ***“I will extol (I will bless, I will praise) the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the LORD.”*** When David heard the servants of Achish (Achish), he became very much afraid. So he pretended to be insane in their presence so that the king said ***“Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?”*** The introduction to this Psalm tell us that this Psalm was written after Achish ‘drove David away’. In that way, David as a young man learned a lesson which we see repeated in our text. Now because he was just like all the rest of us, we know that David fell into sin again and again – just as we confess that we sin daily and much, and we plead guilty of those sins before God. We are guilty of sinning in thought, in word, and in deeds. Yet we do find forgiveness for our sins, just as David found forgiveness and refuge and help. He says ‘I will praise the Lord at all times, – not only will his praise be on my lips, that I will be willing and ready to tell others about the great things that God has done for me, but my soul will boast in the Lord.’ His whole being wanted to rejoice in the Lord and thank the Lord for the beautiful deliverance that God had provided for him. God had delivered him out of the hands of the Philistines, where he thought he would find a safe place. But it didn't turn out that way. So David says ***“let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.”***

David has a message: he said ‘I was afflicted. I thought Saul was going to kill me and I fled to the pagans. I didn't find the refuge there that I wanted and thought that I would find. It is only in the LORD that I find refuge.’ ***“Let the afflicted hear and rejoice.”***

Which of us isn't afflicted? Surely we all have some kind of physical ailment that afflicts us – pains, aches, illnesses. But more troubling to the child of God are our spiritual aches and pains – our sins and wickedness that disturb us. But the invitation here is 'let all who are afflicted hear' – hear what? Not the words of the pagans, but the Words of God! Then truly we will have cause to rejoice and say 'Blessed is the man who takes refuge in God, and I want to be one of those who takes refuge in God'.

David invites us ***“Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.”*** Isn't that exactly why we are here today? To glorify God's name! To praise God's name! Occasionally people will get together to praise some great leader, or have some kind of testimonial dinner to talk about what a great person someone is. But you have been blessed with the opportunity to gather together every week to glorify the Lord to thank him for the marvelous things he has done for you; to ask for his deliverance and help during the next seven days; to confess your sins, and to be told every week that the Lord forgives your sins. The invitation is always there: Come and glorify the Lord! Let us exalt his name together! Let us praise his name because he is the one who deserves praise for delivering David and he is the one who deserves praise for delivering us.

Listen to why David praises God: ***“I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”***

At the time David wrote these words, he had been delivered. We don't know his exact age, but Saul was still king although David had been officially anointed King. He was a young man, and he said ***“I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”***

How does the Lord talk to us today? Sometimes we wish the Lord would make lightnings in the heavens with answers like 'YES' or 'NO' in answer to our concerns and questions. Sometimes we wish that he would tell us very directly what we are to do with our lives. But it is in the Word of God that the Lord directs us. In the Bible is where you are going to find answers to those things that are troubling you. There are the answers to the sins – to all our wickedness – that weighs upon us. And what is the answer to all our sins? The answer is Jesus Christ. God sent his only son, Jesus Christ to earth to become a human being. Jesus had every opportunity to sin, but he did not. He obeyed God's law perfectly. In every one of the commandments, we must admit 'Lord, I haven't obeyed you. As much as I want to, I haven't. And as long as I am here on earth, I know I will have my sinful flesh.' But God sent his Son Jesus Christ, to obey his law, and to pay the price for sin – for every single one of those sins that we have committed. The Lord has paid the price. He gave as a sacrifice his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus gave up his life so that we might live eternally.

David says ***“I sought the LORD, and he answered me.”*** He answered David directly, and occasionally, he answered David through the prophets. The Lord speaks to us in his Word. We have the answers there.

From time to time, we use the order of the confession of sins on page 48 in the front part of the hymnal. In going through those questions, it asks us to ponder: Do I believe I am a sinner? Yes, I am a sinner. Am I sorry for my sins? Yes, I am sorry for them. Do I repent of my sins? Yes. Do I want to change my sinful life? Yes, with the help of God I want to amend my sinful life. We go through those questions as an opportunity to think about the confession of sins, and especially, the forgiveness of sins, when we can say and rejoice: He delivered me! David, too, says ***“he delivered me from all my fears.”*** At that point, David was fearing for his life, and he points back and says 'The Lord delivered me.'

But the Lord delivers you, too, from the fear of being punished for your sins. That comes from faith in Jesus Christ, believing what God tells you about Jesus Christ. We have nothing to fear, really, because the Lord has paid the price for our sins.

David says ***“he delivered me from all my fears.”*** I think that if each of you were to look into your lives, you could probably find times when the Lord delivered you from some physical injury, or perhaps even from the risk of death; whether it was a close call in some kind of accident, or a delivery in case of surgery, or whatever. Truly, we all could say 'the Lord has delivered me'; not only from those physical things, but more importantly, from eternal damnation.

David says in our text ***“This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.”*** Then he gives a picture that was very familiar to the Israelites. He says ***“The angel of the LORD***

*encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.*” An army would march as a group, and when they would make camp for the evening, they would post sentries all around the camp so that no one could sneak up on them. David says *“the angel of the Lord”* surrounds them, and would watch, guard, and keep them safe. And the angels of the Lord – the invisible creatures God has created for our help – surround us and protect us, too.

So *“Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.”* They have nothing to be ashamed of. The Lord takes away their sins. So we, whose sins God has taken away for Jesus’ sake, can stand before God and know that God has forgiven our sins. Sometimes it may seem like fellow human beings, particularly those outside the church, are still going to shake their heads and fingers at us and try to shame us because of our sins. But we know that when we have confessed those sins before God, the Lord has taken them away.

That picture of the faces being radiant is a beautiful picture. I think of a little child who has received a special gift. You’ve all seen that, haven’t you? How that child’s face is lit up in appreciation of the special gift? That’s how the child of God is when he truly thinks about the forgiveness of sins – a special gift! – for me! So we can say that believers in Christ have radiant, shining, glowing faces that are never covered in shame.

Then we see the invitation: *“Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.”* Children especially sometimes don’t like to try new foods. They have to be encouraged to taste them. So they may never learn how good some foods are if they don’t taste them. And so the invitation to all men is *“Taste and see that the LORD is good.”* Read his Word. Taste his Words. There are 66 books in the Bible, and surely you can find things to meet your needs if you *“taste”* the books of the Bible and see what God has to tell you in the Bible.

*“Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.”* We’re talking particularly about spiritual blessings. What’s a game refuge? A place where birds and animals are safe from being hunted, harmed and killed. I’ve been told by hunters that sometimes animals seem to know the dividing line between a refuge and a place where they could be hunted and killed. The child of God knows where to find a safe place, a refuge. That place is in God. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in God. We can safely hide in him. We can find comfort in him, in his Word, by searching his scriptures, by reading them, and making them part of our daily lives. When we take refuge and hide in the Word of God, we share in the blessings promised and delivered in God’s Words. We will find all of the good things he wants us to hear.

*“Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.”* Luther uses that word “fear” in his explanation for the first commandment. We are not to ‘be afraid of’ God, but rather we are to “respect him and give all glory to him as our God and place his Word and command above every other word and command.” Respect *“the LORD”* and give all glory to *“the LORD, you his saints.”* Place his Word and command above every other word and command, *“for those who [do these things] lack nothing.”* The devil can’t harm us, the world can’t harm us, and our own sinful flesh can’t point at us and say ‘Guilty!’ We can look the devil in the eye and say ‘Yes, I am a sinner, but Jesus Christ takes away my sins so that I can have everlasting life.’ Those who fear God lack nothing. And all who believe in him are his saints, his children.

God gives one more illustration about how those who trust in him lack nothing. He says *“The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.”* The lion, the king of the beasts, the king of the jungle, is the animal thought of as the strongest, most powerful animal. But we know that they do go hungry at times and grow weak when there’s not enough food. That’s exactly what God is telling us here. Even the most powerful creatures in the world may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. Does that mean the Lord is going to make us wealthy and give us all sorts of earthly possessions? Not necessarily. Sometimes it seems that the wealthy of the world are among the ungodly. We aren’t among the wealthy of the world. But what has God given us? We lack no good thing, because God gives us every good thing that he wants us to have. The best of those gifts is Jesus Christ, so that by believing in Jesus Christ we may have everlasting life. So we rejoice with the hymn writer as we sang:

“Oh bless the Lord, my soul! Let all within me join  
And aid my tongue to bless His name Whose favors are divine.  
Oh, bless the Lord, my soul, Nor let His mercies lie  
Forgotten in unthankfulness And without praises die!  
‘Tis He forgives thy sins; ‘Tis He relieves thy pain;  
‘Tis He that heals thy sicknesses And makes thee young again.” (The Lutheran Hymnal 23)  
Lord, make us young again in heaven! Amen.