

**Cultivating our Appetite for God**  
**Praising**  
**Psalm 34, Mark 14:22-28**  
**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** God is an acquired taste. Praising him in all circumstances is part of how we cultivate our appetite for him.

**I) We cultivate our appetite for God by praising him in all things**

**A) Psalm 34.1-3, 8**

*...at all times...continually in my mouth...O taste and see....*

**B) What does this mean?**

- 1) Not mindless and exclusive repetition of praise words
- 2) Not perpetual euphoria in denial of life as it is
  - Jesus at Lazarus' tomb (John 11)
  - Flight from Saul and feigned madness as the setting for Psalm 34
  - Psalm alludes repeatedly to difficulty
- 3) Rather, a choice repeatedly made
  - Our home address
  - Sometimes in good circumstances
  - Sometimes in difficult ones

**C) Jesus on Maundy Thursday**

*Mark 14.26: ...sang a hymn*

The Egyptian Hallel (Psalms 113-118)

- *Ps 118.25: ...Save us [Hosannah!], we pray, O Lord*
- *v.26: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*
- *v.27: ...he has made his light to shine upon us...*
- *v.28: You are my God, and I will give thanks to you*
- *v.29: O Give thanks to the Lord...his steadfast love endures forever.*

**II) Is praise just a 'feel-good' gimmick?**

**A) Are we really supposed to believe all the promises in Psalm 34?**

Is praise really no more than a vain effort to change our perspective so that we can cope?

**B) Aligning our hearts and minds with what God has actually done**

*Ps 34.22b: ...None of those who take refuge in you will be condemned*

What about Jesus?

What was going on?

*Ps 34.22a: The Lord redeems the life of his servants*

### Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Read Psalm 34:1-2: How regular ought praise to be in our lives? Should it be private?
- 2) Clearly God invites us to express ourselves in ways other than praise (with laments, petitions, confessions, and prayer requests—at least). This being the case, what then does it mean to praise God ‘continually’ (Ps 34.1)?
- 3) What were the circumstances (for David) that occasioned this psalm (look at the heading of the psalm and read 1 Samuel 21.10ff)? What does this suggest about the sorts of settings in which praise may arise?
- 4) Read Mark 14:22-28, noting when the events described here happened. V. 26 tells us that Jesus ‘sang a hymn’—most likely Psalm 118, which together with Psalms 113-117 (the Egyptian Hallel, or ‘Egyptian praise’) were routinely sung at Passover. Read the Hallel through and imagine what Jesus was thinking and feeling as he sang Psalm 118 right after instituting the Last Supper.
- 5) Reflect on the fact that Jesus chose to sing praise to God on the eve of his terrible death. Thank him for showing us so vividly what it looks like to praise God in the face of adversity.
- 6) How would you respond to someone who says that praising God in the midst of life as it actually is (particularly when it is hard) is a ‘feel-good’ gimmick, a denial of reality, naïve and even absurd?
- 7) Derek Kidner (IVP Commentary on the Psalms) writes, “The Christian can echo the jubilant spirit of the psalm with added gratitude, knowing the unimagined cost of 22a and the unbounded scope of 22b.” What does he mean?
- 8) Why did Jesus sing Psalm 118 on Thursday night, knowing that Psalm 34.22b would not be true for him the next day? Spend some time thanking Jesus for what he has done?