



Sermon Discussion Guide

January 4th, 2025 | Psalm 34 | Pastor Greg Doty

Series // Christmas @ Willow Creek

Summary

Psalm 34 invites us to experience Jesus as more than facts and figures, calling us not just to know about Him but to truly know Him in relationship and community. David urges God's people to "taste and see" the Lord, pointing to a lived, personal experience of God's grace rather than mere information. Experiencing God means living in light of His unmerited grace. His kindness, mercy, and favor that cannot be earned. David begins the psalm by looking back on God's recent deliverance in 1 Samuel 21, remembering how God protected him even while he was in great danger. This remembrance leads David to praise and worship, highlighting Scripture's repeated call for God's people to remember what He has done. The psalm also calls us to take refuge in God in the present, trusting Him especially in times of brokenness and temptation. Rather than seeking refuge in sinful or destructive things, we are invited to turn to the Lord, who is near to the brokenhearted and attentive to our cries. This experience of God is meant to happen in community, as believers remind and encourage one another to look to Jesus. Finally, Psalm 34 points forward to future grace fulfilled in Christ, particularly in the promise that none of His bones would be broken. Through Jesus, the righteous one who bore God's wrath for us, those who take refuge in Him are promised freedom from condemnation.

Discussion Questions (Read Psalm 34):

Remembering the grace of the past

- David looks back on God's deliverance in his life before offering praise. Why is remembering so important to our faith?
- Can you think of a moment from the past year where you can now see God's grace or protection, even if it was hard at the time?
- How does remembering God's past faithfulness help us trust Him in the present?

Knowing the grace in the present

- What are some common things people turn to for refuge instead of God?
- Why is it difficult to trust God as our refuge, especially when we are hurting or uncertain?
- How does knowing that "the Lord is near to the brokenhearted" shape the way we approach Him in prayer?

Hope in the grace of the future

- How does Psalm 34 point forward to Jesus and the cross?
- What does it mean that those who take refuge in Christ are “not condemned”?
- How does this future hope change how we live and suffer in the present?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

- Where is God inviting you to taste and see His goodness right now?
- How can we help one another turn toward Jesus rather than unhealthy refuges?

Take time to thank God for His **past faithfulness**, ask for **trust in the present**, and rest in the **hope we have in Christ**.