

Virtual Bible Study of Psalm 33

Hello, everyone. Welcome to our online study of the Psalms. Today we are on Psalm 33. It's a general Psalm of thanksgiving to God for helping His faithful people in all kinds of distress and not letting them perish. A wonderful thing to think about during this Lenten season, as we think about how much we have done that goes against the will of God and how much God has saved us, even when we don't even realize it. So let us begin.

This is what Luther has to say on Psalm 33.

The 33rd psalm is a psalm of thanks to God in general for His blessings, for helping His faithful people in all kinds of distress, and for not letting them perish. He is able to help because He made all things and still creates all things with a word, so that nothing is impossible with Him. God is also so good and true that He will help and willingly helps, as He has promised in the First Commandment: "I will be your God," that is, I will be your comfort, help, salvation, life, and all good things, and I will stand against anything that would do you harm. That's what it means to "be God." But the psalmist particularly thanks and praises the mighty blessing of God, that He guides the whole world, even the hearts, thoughts, intentions, anger, and fury of the kings and princes, not as they will, but as He wills. And He finally frustrates all their intentions, so that they accomplish nothing as they really want. What they intend to do against the righteous He immediately turns aside and overthrows. This is the particular joy and comfort of His saints against the arrogant and overweening insolence, the thrashing and threats of the raging nobles and the ruthless tyrants, who suppose that they can with threats devour all the saints of God and hurl God Himself down from heaven. But before they have half begun, they lie in the dust. Consider the people of Sodom against Lot, Sennacherib the King, and our tyrants today—how totally countless intentions have been dashed up till now.

Psalm 33.

- ¹Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!
Praise befits the upright.
- ²Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;
make melody to Him with the harp of ten strings!
- ³Sing to Him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.
- ⁴For the word of the LORD is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
- ⁵He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.
- ⁶By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.
- ⁷He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
He puts the deeps in storehouses.

- ⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him!
- ⁹ For He spoke, and it came to be;
He commanded, and it stood firm.
- ¹⁰ The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He frustrates the plans of the peoples.
- ¹¹ The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.
- ¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom He has chosen as his heritage!
- ¹³ The LORD looks down from heaven;
He sees all the children of man;
- ¹⁴ from where He sits enthroned He looks out
on all the inhabitants of the earth,
- ¹⁵ He who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.
- ¹⁶ The king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.
- ¹⁷ The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.
- ¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
- ¹⁹ that He may deliver their soul from death
and keep them alive in famine.
- ²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD;
He is our help and our shield.
- ²¹ For our heart is glad in Him,
because we trust in his holy name.
- ²² Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

All right, so this is Psalm 33 and it begins with such joy, "Shout for joy in the Lord, oh you righteous. Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with a lyre, make melody with a harp of ten strings. Sing a new song." It's all about the praise and glory and righteousness of God because He has done marvelous things. He has filled the earth with his steadfast love and He made all the heavens and the earth through His Word. He keeps the waters in the deep and stores them and He lets everyone be in awe of Him for what He has done. Not only that, He brings the council of the nations to nothing, and I think that is where we find some great comfort and knowledge. It may seem very often that evil succeeds. But in the grand scheme of things, there have been many, many nations, many peoples, many conquerors, who have tried to wipe out the church of God, who have tried to suppress Christianity, and yet Christianity always survives, and even often flourishes in

the midst of persecution, in the midst of hardship because it is in those midsts of persecution and hardship where we learn very clearly that the only hope that we have is in our God and our Savior Jesus Christ. And so hardship and persecution are meant to destroy the church, but what they actually do is strengthen the church. Now for any one individual, it may be that you suffer for the sake of the Gospel. But we count all as loss, as Paul says, and we consider that Christ Jesus Himself gave up His life for our sake, and we are called to take up our own crosses with joy and thanksgiving for what God has done for us. That we get to suffer for the sake of our Lord, because we know that suffering produces endurance, endurance -- character, and character -- hope. Through our suffering, we learn that we can endure and that we can stand firm because God's Word holds us firm. And when we endure, it produces a character, a character that trusts God, a character that turns to God readily in time of trouble and in time of joy to thank Him for what He has done and to praise Him for the opportunity to serve Him in hardship and the confidence to know that God will provide a way through anything that we may face. And so that produces character. And all of that produces the hope that we know that this world is not our hope. We hope in the Lord. We hope in everlasting life in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We hope for that time when we are free from the bondage of sin and the pain and sorrow of this world. And so, yes, it may sometimes feel like for a season, evil rules and evil overthrows, but in the grand scheme of things, in God's plan, He is always victorious and He always saves His children, and so we can rest in confidence in that.

Let us pray.

We thank You, Lord, for all the good that You have shown us from the days of our childhood. Continue to multiply Your mercies upon us, keep us in Your fear and favor, cause us to walk in Your praise, protect us from all enemies, both visible and invisible, and grant us, like Simeon of old, to depart in peace, through Christ, our Savior. Amen.