

Bless Him Wherever You Are (Psalm 34:1-8)
Cumberland UMC
April 5, 2020

1 I bless God every chance I get; my lungs expand with his praise. 2 I live and breathe God; if things aren't going well, hear this and be happy: 3 Join me in spreading the news; together let's get the word out. 4 God met me more than halfway, he freed me from my anxious fears. 5 Look at him; give him your warmest smile. Never hide your feelings from him. 6 When I was desperate, I called out, and God got me out of a tight spot. 7 God's angel sets up a circle of protection around us while we pray. 8 Open your mouth and taste, open your eyes and see - how good God is. Blessed are you who run to him.

How appropriate it is to be exposed to this biblical passage today! Through the eyes of one who knows what it is like to be afraid, anxious, and distraught, we have a word of hope. We are reading and have a chance to live out what he lived out in his dilemma as we continue to deal with the epidemic of COVID-19 or the Coronavirus. Essentially, we have been confined to our homes due to the epidemic. David and others also experienced a type of confinement. Writing from a cave in Adullam, David shares words of hope for anyone needing comfort in times of duress. I suspect all of us would be able to say Amen to David if he were to share this message to us in a typical worship context that we are normally accustomed to being in. Like David, we are not able to gather in a temple, sanctuary or church building today.

One could really say that we are in our homes/caves. We are confined to them for the most part unless we feel the need to gather a few things from the grocery store, or need to run a few errands to satisfy our comfort levels as we attempt ride out what I will term the storm of COVID-19 or Coronavirus.

What led to David seeking refuge in the cave at Adullam? Sources I conferred with state that David was fleeing Saul who wanted to kill him. The cave was not his first attempt at escaping Saul but proved to be a place that he found comfortable. Initially David went to city of Gath which was connected to Philistine. He had an encounter with a king who did not

view David in a positive light and the only way he was able to escape harm from this interaction was by acting as if he was insane. We may not be there yet, but some of us might begin to feel insane as David falsely exhibited to the king to avoid harm . We are struggling to keep our sanity right now. We are tired of being confined to our homes for the most part and want to regain a sense of normalcy. Our current reality is extremely uncomfortable and we want out!

If that's how you feel, then join me in embracing what David exclaimed in Psalm 34:1-8 of the Message Bible. Will you bless God every chance you get in your home/cave as you deal with the epidemic that has disrupted the lives of persons throughout the world. You might not be able to get to the church for a Holy Week service this upcoming week but you can still bless God every chance you get. You'll probably miss being a part of a Good Friday service this year but that should not prevent you from praising God. Follow David's lead and live and breath God. Spread the word via the home telephone, cell phone, text message, facebook post that you are still blessing the Lord because you realized that God is worthy of all the praise that you or anyone else has to offer God.

If God could meet David more than half the way in his time of stress and duress as he fled Saul, surely God will meet each of us more than half the way as we attempt to stay safe from the epidemic we have been confronted with. We still have our ongoing fears and doubts because we are not comfortable with where we are as a people of faith. That's human nature and that's why I am glad we have David as a source of reference to speak to us today.

David is encouraging us to look to God right now for safety and sanctuary. We will not always have what we are comfortable with but we will always have a God who comforts us in all situations! Communicate with God! God will meet you where you are just as God met David and others in the cave they chose as a place of safety and sanctuary. Bless Him Always!