



**HELP! – My Grief, His Comfort**  
Psalm 34

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## **HELP! – My Grief, His Comfort** **Psalm 34**

You got problems. I got problems. We all got problems. Life is filled with worry and stress. That's normal these days. On top of the daily wear and tear of worry and stress, many of us are dealing with other really big problems.

Maybe you hate your job or you've lost your job. Maybe you suffered a miscarriage or can't have children at all. There may be tension in your marriage or tension with your kids. You may have money problems or health problems. Whether it's a big problem or a small one, it wears on us. And that's when we cry out to God.

When we cry out to God, what do we want Him to do? We want Him to fix it! We don't want a Bible verse; we want Him to fix the problem. And why do we believe He will fix it? Because of Bible verses like Psalm 46:1. Psalm 46:1 is not just a Bible verse; it is a promise of God's help. ***“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”*** God gave His word that He would show up when we need Him most. He promises His comfort, His strength, His guidance, His help, and always His love. He promised! Each week, we're looking at a promise from Scripture, learning how to pray that verse, and learning how to trust Him to help. So, whatever you're going through, and whenever you cry out to God for help, you can know that ***He promises to be there when you need Him most.***

But what about when something fatal happens? What can God do then? What can God do when what happened is irreversible? What can God do when we experience grief? That deepest despair. That greatest loss. The death of a loved one. The death of a marriage. The death of whatever it might be. Grief is the worst emotion of all.

Here is how one father described the grief of losing his son.

“When you've lost a child, it's no secret the day parents dread most is the child's birthday. That's the day that represents all that could have been. Since my son died at the tender age of 10, that list is massive. My boy will never learn to drive. He will never go off to college. He will never fall in love and get married. He will never know the incredible joy of holding his own child in his arms. And there are things I will never get to see him do. I taught him how to throw a baseball, how to ride a bike, and how to build a jet fighter out of Legos, but there are so many other things we will never get to do. Yes, today is his birthday, the day of all those “could have beens.”<sup>1</sup>

And here's how a wife described the loss of her husband.

“I am still so angry that Erik died so young. I'm angry that my kids have to grow up without their father. I'm angry that Erik is no longer on this earth. He was such a good man; a good friend, a good worker, a good husband, a good father. When I see how his death has hurt my kids, I am so angry! I know I shouldn't let my anger rule over me, but it's taking longer than I thought. Grief seems to be never-ending. It's always there in one form or another.

It's a hole that can never be filled. It's the empty space where Erik used to be. A friend encouraged me to write about that hole, and here's what I put down on paper."

*There's a hole in my heart, it's been here since you went away  
Nothing seems to fill it, just have to learn to live with it  
We can laugh, but you won't be there to laugh with us  
We can play, but you won't be there to join us  
We can cry, but you won't be there to hold us  
We can live, but you won't be there to see us  
There's a hole in everything, nothing's as it used to be  
There's still a me, but there's no more you  
How can I ever make it through?  
There's a hole in everything I do<sup>2</sup>*

That's grief. And all of us have, or will, experience grief in one form or another. A couple of weeks ago, you wrote down your hurt, your pain, your worry, and your problem on a card. The elders and the staff prayed over every one of your cards. It broke our hearts to hear what breaks your heart. And we put those cards in this vase, as a reminder of the promise in Psalm 56:8, which says, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle" (NLT). These are our tears. These are our hurts, our pains, our worries, our problems. And God knows about every one of them. Not only does He know what you're going through, He promises to help. ***God promises to be there when we need Him most.***

#### WHEN YOU GRIEVE, REMEMBER HIS GOODNESS

David wrote Psalm 34 from a place of grief. He described himself as "brokenhearted" and "crushed." Saul was the king of Israel, but the Lord announced that David would be the next king. Saul was enraged with jealousy. So much so, that he wanted to kill David. So David fled for his life, and sought refuge with the enemy. The Bible says, "David kept thinking to himself, 'Someday Saul is going to get me. The best thing I can do is escape to the Philistines. Then Saul will stop hunting for me in Israelite territory, and I will finally be safe'" (1 Samuel 27:1, NLT). David did not run to God for safety; he ran to a pagan, enemy nation. The Philistine king Achish was aware of David's reputation as a great warrior. So David "pretended to be insane, scratching on doors and drooling down his beard," so as not to pose a threat (1 Samuel 21:13, NLT). When life was at its worst, David sought refuge with the enemy. He forgot God's promise that he would one day be king.

But somewhere in his grief, he remembered the goodness of God. That's an important lesson for us as well. ***When you grieve, remember His goodness.***

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its boast in the Lord; the humble will hear it and rejoice. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears ... The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!" (Psalm 34:1-4, 7-8, NAS).

Did you hear David? “I will bless ... I will praise ... I will boast ... I will rejoice ... I will magnify ... I will exalt.” From a place of brokenness and grief, came a burst of praise. David was saying, “Through ups and downs, through all my mistakes and failures, God has never wavered. He has always been good to me.” David turned to God in his deepest grief.

And he said, “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” When life tastes bitter, God’s presence is always sweet. That’s what David experienced.

### **WHEN YOU GRIEVE, REMEMBER HIS PROMISE**

Can we experience that too? Will God show up in our deepest grief? He says He will. ***When you grieve, remember His promise.***

“The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry ... The righteous cry, and the Lord hears” (Psalm 34:15, 17, NAS). His “eyes” are always watching. He sees what we’re going through. His “ears” are always listening. He hears our crying and moaning. He sees and He hears the brokenness of our hearts. Every card in this vase is a hurt, a pain, a worry, a problem. Every card is a cry for God’s help. And He knows what you wrote on your card. “You keep track of all my sorrows,” David believed. “You have collected all my tears in your bottle” (Psalm 56:8, NLT). He hears, He sees, He knows, He empathizes. But He does more than that.

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all” (Psalm 34:18-19, NAS). The Lord promises to hear, and He also promises to come near. He promises to rush to us when we are “brokenhearted” and “crushed.”

Nothing is more painful than grief. Worry is for a season. Stress comes and goes. Problems are often solved. But grief comes when something fatal has happened, when something irreversible has happened. Grief shakes us to our core. It’s shocking. It rips a gash in our hearts. Grief is the deepest pain. And when we are “brokenhearted” and “crushed,” “the Lord is near.” That’s what He promised.

Who promised? The Apostle Paul answered that question. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, ESV). Yes, our pain is real, the loss is real, the grief is real, but so is His comfort.

The Apostle John was allowed a peek into heaven, and allowed to see the future. “I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, ‘Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.’ And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’ ” (Revelation 21:3-5, NLT).

Listen to the promise of His comfort.

- Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4, ESV).
- “Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5, NLT).
- The Lord says, “I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned ... I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior ... You are precious in my eyes ... and I love you ... Fear not, for I am with you” (Isaiah 43:1-5, ESV).

### KEITH & DAMON

I want to invite two familiar faces to the stage. Keith Tooley, our Missions Pastor, and Damon Andrews, our Executive Pastor. What you may not know is that Keith and Damon are volunteer chaplains with the Cedar Park Police Department. They don’t get paid for this, and this is beyond their role as pastors in our church. Their experiences as chaplains bring them face to face with grief, so I wanted them to share some thoughts that might help us with the issue of grief.

- Keith, explain the chaplaincy ministry, why you do it, and how God has used you to comfort those in their worst moment.
- Damon, tell us why you became a chaplain and how some of your personal experience helps you in this ministry.

### CONCLUSION

Whatever you’re going through, and whenever you cry out to God for help, you can know that ***He promises to be there when you need Him most.*** Psalm 34 promises that. I urge you to memorize this verse. Pray this verse. And trust this verse.

So let’s declare our faith together. “The righteous cry, and the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:17-18, NAS).

### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Bart Sumner, “Birthdays and the Could Have Beens,” [www.hellogrief.org](http://www.hellogrief.org).

<sup>2</sup> Samantha Sage, “The Hole Left by Grief,” [www.hellogrief.org](http://www.hellogrief.org).