**Title: What does God look Like to You?**

**Text: Psalm 34:1-4, 138:1-8**

**This morning, we read Psalm 138, we see who God is, we ponder David’s own description of God. And it’s summed up in verse 6: “Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.”**

**This is David’s God. He’s a great God, who loves little people. God may be way up high, but He’s not so far away that He can’t listen to the humble prayers of the people.**

**Reading this psalm, a word came into mind: extreme. The word “extreme” seems to be especially popular in the language of our day. You hear of extreme sports, extreme diets, extreme programming, and there is even a band with the name “Extreme.”**

**We see Extreme shown in terms of who God is in the Bible: God is “high and lifted up” and yet reaches down to forgive a sinner.**

**God dwells in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit. God is “Our Father in heaven” and he is concerned about our daily needs. And now, David is testifying that this is our God, “You are here, you are with me.”**

**Most likely, life is portrayed as a “walk”. David says and sings in v. 7, “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life.”**

**The “walk”, the picture of life, in that verse reminds one of Psalm 23. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”**

**The Bible speaks of God’s might and power. At the other extreme is the Bible’s central assertion and assurance of amazing grace and love of God: God’s concern for humans and the earth and its creatures, in the incarnation, God taking human form in the person of Jesus the Christ.**

**Some biblical scholars think that this psalm was written by David after the Ark of the Lord had been brought to Jerusalem. The ark of God is something to symbolize God’s presence, “God is here.”**

**And also, the meaning of the presence of the ark was declaring to the nations that Jerusalem would become the center of religion, politics, economy, culture and all things in the land of Canaan.**

**It was a very important event for the spiritual and political life and leadership of the king David. That’s why he rejoiced with leaping and dancing not even recognizing that he was disrobing before people. Until the ark would be brought to Jerusalem, David had to get through the battles against the enemies and challenges constantly happening in and around Israel.**

**According to the commentaries, the wealthy local landowners and the powerful local families or clans probably made a strong voice against the ark moving plan and the policy of David. So David, the king of Israel, had to get through great reaction against him. He was probably struggling with so much stress, pressure, and fear.**

**V. 7 says, “Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.” It sounds like gentle, humble, peaceful and short. But, the overpowering bitterness of David comes through suffering is fully stated in that verse.**

**And at the same time, the verse is showing a great understanding of God and living knowledge about God that David learned and experienced through suffering.**

**It’s interesting to find the original meaning of the biblical words such as tribulation, trouble, and trial, in the Old and New Testament. They are very similar to one another in original meaning.**

**They refer to an extract from crops or fruits: you put the crops or fruits in a gin, or tool or machine to press, crush and squeeze them. Then juices or liquids come out from there. If you put some grape, grape juice comes out. If you put some olives, you get olive oil.**

**It means that the tribulations or the suffering we go through in this world are not meaningless. God works in our suffering. He uses our sufferings produce some valuable and pure extracts from us, from our faith, from our Christian life, to make you more complete. There is God’s will and guidance in all of the sufferings of Christians.**

**At times, God makes the pure and precious extracts run out from you through crushing, pressing and squeezing. He wants you to be more complete through trials and trouble.**

**God who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion through your difficulties and distresses. That’s why David testifies to the very God in v. 8, “”The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever.”**

**We read Psalm 34. Look at the title of the psalm: “Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away and he left.”**

**He was dribbling at the mouth before Abimelech and many people. If I were him, I would be very discouraged and angry with God, asking Him, “Why did you do this to me?”**

**It was written by David when he was in one of the most difficult times for his life. However, David says, “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.”**

**It means that, even though the dark rises, thunders roar, and the wind of trials blows to me, I will never stop blessing the Lord, never give up worshipping and praying to God. And later, what happened to him at last? The answer is in v. 4. “… he delivered me from all my fears.”**

**This morning, you look into a private world of David. You can almost feel the still peace and confidence running deep in his soul.**

**Ex) Jimmy Durante, one of the all-time great entertainers, was asked to do a show for the World War 2 veterans. He said he was very busy, but he’d agree if he could do one very short monologue to take 3-5 minutes, and leave immediately afterwards.**

**When the time came, Durante got onstage, went through the short monologue-and then kept on going. After 30 minutes, he took a final bow and walked offstage. A staff stopped him and said, “I thought you had to go after a few minutes. What happened?”**

**Durante answered, “Look at the front row.” Sitting there were two veterans, each of whom had lost an arm in the war- one his right arm, and the other his left. Together they were able to clap, and that’s exactly what they were doing, loudly and cheerfully.**

**Having a rough time, many Christians come to withdraw from the place of worship service, the seats of praise and prayer. They are very angry and so upset with that tough situation. And they can say, “You would never like to have the worship service things if you are in such a circumstance I’m getting through now”**

**They move back, step back from the spot of worshipping life. You can sometimes want to quit serving and worshipping God, or living that kind of spiritual life. We all one another know that, experience that, understand that.**

**However, we cannot stop, can never quit worshipping God, praising to God and pleasing to God because the life of worship, praise and prayer is the strength and power to make us overcome all sufferings. They are the valuable and powerful “extracts” coming out of the sufferings we go through.**

**Don’t back off from the life of worship. Stick to the tree of Jesus our Savior. He’s our Shelter, Healer, and Savior. We are the branches of the living tree, the giving tree, Jesus God. We are supposed to be nourished and provided from the root of the tree giving life.**

**Then, you will take the word and the promise of God Who is working on your lives, and working out your salvation.**

**Like those little kids, when asked what God looks like, you will see what God looks like to you. You will profess and proclaim who God is to you, who God is in your “walk” in this world. Amen.**

**---------------------------------------------------------------------**