

# Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



## Weekly Sermon Series

### **Seasons of Discipleship: Worship Psalm 34:1–8; Hebrews 13:15–16**

Psalm 34 expresses praise for deliverance from trouble. It is a psalm worshipping God who delivered God's people. Have you experienced a time in your life when something dreadful was overcome and good news came to you when you were expecting the worst? What was that like?

I visited an elderly patient in the hospital who was in intensive care. When I arrived, the physician came to explain that she would need to stay longer in order to have a medical procedure done that would be quite difficult. I could see the furrow on her brow as the doctor was explaining this to her. He concluded that he would need to confer with another physician about the proposed procedure and would return. I sat with this woman as we pondered what the surgery would mean for her. There was a feeling of uncertainty and dread surrounding her. Within a few minutes the physician returned. He had a smile on his face. He had conferred with the other physician who determined that the procedure would be unnecessary. Not only that, she should be allowed to be released from the hospital into the care of her family as soon as possible! The smile that broke out on her face was enormous! What relief was felt! At that

moment she could have risen up from her bed and danced. She was in the mood for celebration and worship.

As we live into our later years we have many memories of life experiences, struggles, difficulties, and challenges that have been faced. When we review our life, we can see that somehow through it all we have survived.

We are still here to remember. We have lived through and overcome many challenges. What challenges and difficulties have you survived? How were you delivered from the trouble you faced? What feelings do you have and what lessons learned do you cherish?

Many of us experience a profound sense of gratitude when we look back and review our life experiences. Gratitude comes for good things received and difficult things overcome. This is the heart of worship for us. We express our gratitude and thanks to God. We recognize our blessings that have come from God. So we give worth to God, we value our relationship with God. We feel connected to God's grace, mercy and love. In worship we offer praise to God. Hebrews 13 reminds us that as we worship God we also continue to do good deeds that are pleasing to God. Worship and work are connected. So as long as we can breathe and praise God we do what is good in building up the community as we share what we have with one another.

Thank you, God, that you have saved us from destruction and despair. Help us show love for our neighbors each and every day that you grant us to live. Amen.

-- Week of February 1, 2009