

Words to remember (Psalm 34:1-10, 22)

Psalm 34 is like balm to the weary spirit and nourishment to the hungry soul.

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Remembering quotes, poems, and lyrics to songs has never been a gift of mine. The words of a favorite joke and movie line captivate me when I hear them spoken, but soon after and without notice, the information fades away.

Psalm 34 has given me a reason to work on my memorization abilities. Each time I read the words and say them aloud, a desire to internalize them intensifies. This psalm is like balm to the weary spirit and nourishment to the hungry soul. Each time I read the words, I want to read them again.

"I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears." Such comfort washes over me when I repeat this line. Fear is not an everyday feeling for me. I have been fortunate, blessed, or lucky, I suppose, that I have not had the intensity of fear some feel on a daily basis.

However, in 2020 when the pandemic hit, I contracted the virus. COVID infested my body, and alongside it, so did fear. I spent 13 days with high fever, sweats, and chills. Each day I would Google for information on what happens on the first day, the fifth day, the eighth day. Stories of the lives of people who did not make it were everywhere. It was pre-vaccine days, and people were suffering. I was one of the

lucky ones. After 13 days my fever broke, and I was on the road to recovery.

“O taste and see that the Lord is good! Happy is the one who takes refuge in him!” Taste has taken on a different meaning for me: three years later, my ability to taste has not returned fully. Fear has also taken on a greater significance: I am finally releasing my tight hold with fear.

Fear has a way of infesting the body without notice. It finds a comfortable space and stays there. It waits for an opportune moment to show up, and then just like that it appears—affecting the ability to make decisions, to act on opportunities, to drive on busy highways, to trust in others, and to touch the lives of people again. Letting go of fear takes time, and discovering root causes of fear involves deep internal exploration.

Psalm 34 will be my companion on my journey to release fear. I will let it cleanse my body and provide me the nourishment and strength required for releasing the toxins that find their comfortable spaces. “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”