

Vacation with Jesus: Renewal

Psalm 34:1–9. June 28, 2026

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I talked about my worst vacation last week, the near death car crash and camper incident in Georgia. Today you're going to hear about the vacation that collapsed. The year was 2010 and we invited our sons and their wives, some grandkids, my mother and my in-laws. This was year three of everybody meeting in one place and sharing a house. This was the year that Lonie and I hosted in our very big, three bedroom home outside of Chicago.

On Saturday my mother arrived. On Sunday afternoon we drove to Midway airport and picked up one son and daughter-in-law. Then Monday we went to the zoo. That's another three hours of white knuckle driving mixed in with trying to keep track of everyone while we looked at the animals. Tuesday we made the same trip to pick up another son, daughter-in-law and two grandkids. That's days of three hours of white knuckle driving through Chicago in the summer or what is also called orange cone season.

On Wednesday we drove thirty minutes away to the train station. We rode the commuter train into the Chicago. We walked from the train station to what was once known as the Sears Tower. Then we took the subway north and walked to Gino's East pizza. This is the home of Chicago Deep Dish pizza. Gino's East is a brownstone in the heart of the city. Its famous not only for the pizza, but for the autographs on the walls. Every patron signs-in while at their table. It is a living history of people who have eaten there.

From there we walked to the "L" or elevated train and rode to Wrigley Field. The Cubs were out of town but the guys walked all the around Wrigley Field and took in some of the rooftop bleachers. The ladies stayed in the A/C at a souvenir shop. That's what I thought they were doing. We all walked back to the "L" rode the train to Grant Park on the lake front. Everyone walked around looking at the fountains, the prairie grass, and the big bean. Somewhere in the midst of all this the ladies decided to go home. Normally, not a big deal, but I had purchased tickets for nine people to attend the Chicago White Sox game. All the couples huddled, then I was told that the ladies were going home and the guys could go to the game. I now had six tickets to sell outside the stadium. The White Sox lost.

Thursday my in-laws arrived. I had arranged with a friend for their 5th wheel camper to be placed behind the house. Another friend agreed to run electrical wire to the camper. The camper had a 30 amp fuse. The not really an electrician friend installed a 50 amp fuse. This shorted out the electrical system on the 5th wheel camper. I spent most of the day trying to solve the problem. I remember throwing something across the yard and embedding it in the side of the garage.

Friday one son and daughter-in-law flew home, another three hour trip through the orange cones. Saturday we were going to go mini-golfing, but as we got into the car a midwestern late afternoon thunderstorm opened in the skies above us. I'm not one to panic during a storm. I'm also not one to be bothered by driving with the wipers going at full speed and still not being able to see the road. But this time my chest was pounding, I could hardly breath, I was sweating, and my hands were shaking. I was on the verge of a full blown panic attack, the first one in my life.

Psalm 34:1–3 (ESV) I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!

Regardless of what you are doing, work or vacation, give praise to the Lord. My hand is not on my back, but held in the other and my head bowed in adoration and praise. My mouth is open and words of submission and gratitude flow forward. The Lord, God Almighty; Savior and Lord; indwelling Holy Spirit are worthy of all praise. I am merely a fool and a sinner who is always in need of God's grace and power.

My vacation collapse is the perfect example of who not to be and how not to act. Bad thinking and bad attitudes of pride and selfishness lead to my collapse. I had nothing to do with God in the midst of it, and God left me to my self-induced consequences. My desire to be and do all the things brought me shaking to my knees. I was put to shame, I was humiliated. I was not perfect, I collapsed.

But, this entire experience brought me to Jesus. I had no where else to go. I had done everything myself, to myself, and to others. My only choice was Jesus. God allowed me to walk this path. The Lord didn't interfere but kept me from harm.

God did this not for me, but for His glory. That is not selfishness. When you are the Creator of all things and the Giver of life having the expectation that His creation would glorify Him is not selfish.

My deliverance out of my vacation planning pride, and my vacation selfish control, brought God glory. It is my testimony of God's grace and God's power; of the renewal that only God can provide. We plan vacations, we go on vacations to release our stress, find rest, reconnect, and be renewed. When we live without releasing our stress to Jesus, we are wasting our time. When we go from day to day and don't rest in Jesus, we are exhausted. When we awaken each day, go through the day without connecting with Jesus, we are in trouble. When we work or plan without being renewed, we will collapse.

King David spoke these words having faced persecution and death threats. On more than one occasion David was trapped. He would complain to the Lord about his problems. He would whine about the situation. He would cry out for the destruction of his enemies. David was human just like each one of us. David had bad vacations, so to speak, times he didn't go to work. He thought, on more than one occasion, that he was smarter than God.

The Lord loved David and waited for David to come back to Him. Have you realized that my story is about me moving away from God? The Lord blessed David each time David came back to Him. The Lord blesses me each time I come back to Him.

Psalm 34:4–6 (ESV) I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

We are ashamed, humiliated, and fearful when we don't seek out the Lord. Our testimony isn't always the ways that God delivered us, but how we failed to trust Jesus even though He loves us. In other words we need to speak and share the times we have done the stupid thing and not trusted Jesus. We need to speak it first and foremost to Jesus. We need to also share those moments with one another. We will never find renewal unless we do. We will never leave our pride and selfishness behind.

I have discovered that some people who are most pride-like aren't really proud. They are actually insecure in their own thoughts and ideas about themselves. The pride factor enters when they are unwilling to trust what God can do in them and through them.

It's always about surrender and submission with God. Those are two negative words in society. We think of surrender as giving up. We consider submission to be degrading. We might admire the wealthy servants if they are humble. But we aren't very willing to humble ourselves at the foot of the cross and the throne of God.

However, this needs to be our testimony. I am willing to share my life experiences to help others see how to trust Jesus. I'm not boasting in myself, but in what God has done through me. Anytime I boast, get too full of myself, let my plans overrule God's plans, the Lord just lets me run with it until I collapse. This has happened more times than I can count. Thank you Jesus that you are always there to pick me up and put me back together in an even better way. I'm not saying look at me. I'm telling you to look at what God can do. There is nothing that is impossible for Him.

The Lord molded you and made you the person you are with a personality that is unique. You have skills that no one else has. But, you can think too much of yourself or even too little of yourself. The Lord will let you go until you collapse. In your collapse you have the opportunity to humble yourself, allowing God to put you back together again.

Psalm 34:7 (ESV) The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

It is amazing what happens when we put God in the place of highest respect. In my vacation story the problem was never my friends, my family or my circumstances. The problem was always me. Did I tell you that during the vacation the temperature was in the nineties? It was midwestern, Chicago hot. The weather forecaster said stay inside. Family said let's stay home in the A/C. Joe said, let's get ready and go.

Walking around in Chicago when it's in the nineties is like living in Florida. It's hot and muggy. It's irritatingly, smotheringly, cranky weather. Under any other circumstances I would have said let's stay home. But, I was foolish, prideful, and selfish. God let me collapse. I was due for a collapse. I was in over my head. I was no longer treading water, but flailing like a fish out of water.

God saw this. God blessed me by letting me get to the end of myself, collapse and then pick me up. He has changed my attitude. He has given me a new way to think. That thinking is more often than not to give thanks and to praise Him. The new thinking is more often than not to trust God when I take action. The new attitude is more often than not to seek out and listen to the Lord before I start moving. The lesson was hard to learn, but more often than I not I put it into practice.

If the angel is an angel or if this is the presence of the Holy Spirit, thank you Jesus for your deliverance. Many times in the Old Testament the Angel of the Lord is the Holy Spirit. I'm not saying that there are no angels sent from heaven. I'm not saying that angels aren't helping us. I am saying that Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit entered the world, encountered people to protect, empower, and encourage them. God gets the glory. God deserves the glory. God is worthy of the glory.

It is when we keep God in the place of highest respect that we see His handiwork. If we don't think God is actively working, we won't see the results. If we don't believe God can change our world,

intervene in our lives, we won't be blessed. Everyday of your life you are being delivered from yourself, your pride, your sins, and temptations. Give God the glory. Shout out words of adoration. Offer cries of praise. Say over and over thank you to the Lord.

Psalm 34:8–9 (ESV) Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!

Give your vacation days and work days to the Savior of the world, Jesus. To fear the Lord is to hold God in the highest respect as your Creator, the One who Sustains and blesses your life, and who saves you from your sins. God is doing all of this everyday. You can be on vacation, but is still God. You can be in the car, but is still God. You can be at a concert, but is still God. You can be at work, but is still God. You can be at home, but is still God. You aren't.

You and I need to trust the Lord of all life by giving Him everyday. Day in and day out give your day to Jesus. Hour by hour give your life to Jesus. Minute by minute put Jesus in charge of your life.

When God is in the place of highest respect you are trusting Him with everything. You are fearful to be without Him. You are in such awe of who He is that you want Him to take charge of your life. You have a fear of what being absent from Him will be like. You have an overpowering fear of what God can do. This is the healthiest fear that you will ever need in your life. The fear of the Lord will keep you calling out to Him. It is the fear of God that will draw you closer to Him. It is through your fear of God Almighty that compels you to surrender control of your life to Him. When you surrender to God through faith in Jesus you will be in His hands forever.

To taste and see is to choose the salvation, redemption and deliverance of God's Son, Jesus Christ. You can't take a sample size of God. You can't just nibble at the fruit, you need to eat the whole thing. God has done more than a small thing. God knowing you would do your own thing, go your own way, created you and gave you life. God knowing you could never trust Him fully came to earth to show you how to live – by faith.

Jesus, God's Son, entered our world, the world of sin and selfishness. Jesus showed us what it means to trust God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Jesus showed us who to love our neighbors.

Jesus was tempted to take an earthly kingdom. Jesus trusted God. Jesus didn't follow His own plan. Jesus took time to get away releasing the human pressures of daily life, Jesus rested in God's plan, in God's mercy, in God's grace, in God's power, in God's love. Jesus connected over and over again with His Father Jesus found renewing power by trusting the Lord, God Almighty.

When the time came, when the vacations were over and the greatest temptation came upon Jesus, He didn't collapse. He was faithful. He willingly surrendered to God as a sheep being lead to the slaughter. When Jesus died on that cross, every time you have failed to trust God was placed upon Him. He became our sin. His death paid the price for us to be saved and redeemed us from our sins. Then the greatest thing happened, Jesus rose from the dead. He promised He would do it and He did it. Every person who believes in Him is delivered to a new life.

In your new life you can find love, mercy and grace. You can receive hope, peace and power. You can walk through any and every circumstance. Make the decision to trust Jesus. Taste and see that the Lord is Good.