

## Psalm 33:10-22

- 10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations;  
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
- 11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,  
the purposes of his heart through all generations.
- 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,  
the people he chose for his inheritance.
- 13 From heaven the LORD looks down  
and sees all mankind;  
14 from his dwelling place he watches  
all who live on earth—  
15 he who forms the hearts of all,  
who considers everything they do.
- 16 No king is saved by the size of his army;  
no warrior escapes by his great strength.
- 17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;  
despite all its great strength it cannot save.
- 18 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,  
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,  
19 to deliver them from death  
and keep them alive in famine.
- 20 We wait in hope for the LORD;  
he is our help and our shield.
- 21 In him our hearts rejoice,  
for we trust in his holy name.
- 22 May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD,  
even as we put our hope in you. (NIV)

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### **DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE**

Today is a day that we celebrate independence. For the last 234 years, the Fourth of July has been a celebration of the ratification of the Declaration of Independence and the birth of our great nation. Independence and Freedom are two of the concepts that founded our country and they are concepts that we struggle to defend still today. Our military fights for us to defend us from those who would seek to take that freedom away from us, and today we pause also to thank them for their great service to us.

Independence is an idea that is all round us. Anyone who had been blessed to be a parent sees the thread of independence in their children from a young age. Already before they are two, they start to pull away from needing mom and dad's help. They like to be able to do things on their own. And that desire for independence shows up in various forms well into their teenage years. Getting a driver's license is a milestone of independence. The first job marks the time that they can begin to pay for some of their own things and begin to save for the future.

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With the elections coming up again this fall, you are going to hear debates about energy independence. It's not good to have to be dependent on foreign countries to provide our energy. It's far better to be independent.

Our world preaches free spirits and "make it on your own" mentalities. The way of our world is that dependence is bad and independence is good. But today, I pray that you will go against the grain. Today I'm going to ask you to do something that flies in the face of modern society. Today I will ask you to join with me and make a **Declaration of Dependence**. As we join in God's house to worship him and as we look at the words before us from Psalm 33, let's declare our dependence on God and our thankfulness for his protection and care.

The words of Psalm 33 would have been incredibly meaningful for the OT believer.

- <sup>10</sup> ***The LORD foils the plans of the nations;  
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.***  
<sup>11</sup> ***But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,  
the purposes of his heart through all generations.***  
<sup>12</sup> ***Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,  
the people he chose for his inheritance.***

Consider how many plans of the nations were thwarted by the Lord in Israel's history. When Pharaoh didn't listen to Moses, the Lord thwarted his plans and drowned his army in the bottom of the Red Sea. When the nations stood in opposition to the Lord and to his plans, look at the great victories that the Lord won for his people. The walls of Jericho fell at the sound of the trumpets. The nations were defeated in absolute victory. ***Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.***

The psalmist goes on to speak about a specific character trait of the Lord.

- <sup>13</sup> ***From heaven the LORD looks down  
and sees all mankind;***  
<sup>14</sup> ***from his dwelling place he watches  
all who live on earth—***  
<sup>15</sup> ***he who forms the hearts of all,  
who considers everything they do***

We call this trait of God his omniscience - the fact that he knows everything and sees everything. Each year in Confirmation class as we study the First Article, I have a discussion with the class about the attributes of God. I'll ask you a question that I ask them. "How do you feel about God's omniscience? How does it make you feel when you consider that God knows everything?" It can be a comforting thing to know that God is in control, that he knows my needs and knows how to fill them. It can be a great comfort to know that God knows all. But God's omniscience can make a person feel differently as well. "God knows all my thoughts!" Yikes!!! God knows what you are thinking as the beautiful woman walks past you on the sidewalk or crosses by on the movie screen. God knows the motives of your actions as you plot revenge against someone who has hurt you. God knows the anger that fills your heart and how you refuse to work things out with your neighbor. He sees how we swell with pride and that even the outwardly good things that we do are ruined by the self-righteous attitudes about ourselves that those actions cause. It can be a downright frightening thing to consider that ***he who forms the hearts of all ...considers everything they do.***

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There's no hiding anything from God. He sees it all. So as we consider our sinful desires, our vengeful attitudes, our human arrogance, let's quit hiding it. Let's not bottle it up as if God doesn't see it. Let's lay it before him in humble confession and repentance. Let's look to God as the only source of forgiveness and grace. Let's acknowledge that we can't make it on our own and that we are totally dependent on him for life.

And after we have confessed our sins, and pleaded with him for forgiveness. After we have declared our utter dependence on him, only then can the gospel words that follow shine in their true glory.

*But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,  
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,  
<sup>19</sup> to deliver them from death  
and keep them alive in famine.*

The God on whom we rely for physical life provides us so much more. We depend on him for food and shelter, for air to breathe and our bodies to function. If he were to withdraw from our lives for just one minute, we would surely die and the world would turn to chaos. He is there beside us, providing for our physical needs, but that is the least of it. He who delivers us from physical death, delivers us from a greater threat – spiritual death. He delivers us from death with his unfailing love. Even though we turn from God everyday in sin, he brings us back to his side. Even though we fail him all the time, he showers us with his unfailing love.

It was God's unfailing love that came to Adam and Eve in the garden. God announced to them that even though they had lost the perfection that he had given them, he would restore them through one of Eve's offspring. It was God's unfailing love that slowly unveiled the curtain through 4,000 years of Old Testament prophecy – pointing them forward to the Lamb of God. It was God's unfailing love that identified just the right time to bring forth his Son and brought him into our world through Mary's womb and Bethlehem's manger. It was God's unfailing love that gave us perfect Jesus to remedy our imperfect lives. It was God's unfailing love that arranged for Jesus to pay for our sins. It was God's unfailing love that brought together on that cross law and gospel, sin and grace, life and death. In his unfailing love, Jesus paid the full price of our sins and gave us an everlasting hope. He gives hope and assurance that his victory is ours – Hope and assurance that death has been defeated – Hope and assurance that we too will rise and join him in the everlasting joys of eternity in heaven.

Mindful of the salvation that God has worked for us, we can live our lives confessing our dependence on him. He is with us and continues to provide physical and spiritual blessings today. He enables us to live Christian lives of service, as we use our gifts to glorify and praise him. Those gifts can be used as we faithfully carry out the station in life that he has given us – whether that is student or teacher, employer or employee, citizen or governor. God is served as gifts are offered to his church – as generous first-fruit offerings are presented, as time is dedicated to working together to carry out our mission to reach the lost, as skills are used in teaching and encouraging the saints, in leading and advising, in upkeep and repair of the property. Wherever God has put you in life and whatever skills he has given you, use them to show your dependence on him. Use them to glorify their name.

God's church is not a cookie cutter church. His people come in different shapes and sizes, they live in different countries, they have different color skin, and they speak many different languages. But the one thing that they all have in common is that they've **Declared Dependence** on the Lord. Just

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like the Declaration of Independence brought together the 13 colonies 234 years ago today, so these words bring together generations of Christian people who confess their faith in God.

<sup>20</sup> *We wait in hope for the LORD;  
he is our help and our shield.*

<sup>21</sup> *In him our hearts rejoice,  
for we trust in his holy name.*

God is our help and shield, that's why we rejoice in his love. That's why we trust in his name. That's why we can without shame *Declare our Dependence* on him. Amen.