

Refuge in the Lord

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[0 : 00] We're going to be in Psalm 11, and as you're going there, I'll open this up with a prayer, and then we can take a look at that Psalm. God, we just come before you this evening, and God, I just ask that you would just still our hearts before you, and that as we come and reflect on your word, God, that we would be available to you.

And God, I ask as we pray afterwards and worship afterwards, God, that we would do so with a spirit that is receptive towards you, and that, God, we would do it in a way that is honoring to you, God, in a way that seeks your glory and not our own.

We ask all this in your name. Amen. Amen. Great. Let me read Psalm 11 for us. In the Lord I take refuge.

How can you say to my soul, flee like a bird to your mountain? For behold, the wicked bend the bow. They have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? The Lord is in his holy temple. The Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes see. His eyelids test the children of man.

[1 : 16] The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. Let him rain coals on the wicked. Fire and sulfur and the scorching wind shall be the portion of their covenant.

For the Lord is righteous. He loves righteous deeds. The upright shall behold his face. As we look at the psalm this evening, what I want to put before you is the idea of what do you do in the storms of life?

When the storms of life come? And what is going to be your vantage? What is going to be your perspective? What is going to be your point of view? And think about that. I have a couple of questions for you.

Do you pan is in view. Do you pan on the problem? Or do you pan on the panacea? Obviously, sort of alliteration there with the word P.

But do you pan on the problem? Or do you pan the panacea? It begins in verse 1. And the passage opens up. In the Lord I take refuge.

[2 : 24] Refuge is only needed in a storm. So as this psalm is being written, we can be certain that there is some storm that the psalmist finds himself in.

And in the midst of this storm, the psalmist seeks protection from the Lord. Hence he implores. In the Lord I take refuge. One of the things that we see there in the beginning in verse 2 is that the psalmist also seems to be ruminating on some flawed advice that has been received.

And we see a bit of this flawed advice that has been received. It begins, flee to the mountains. Flee like a bird to your mouth and flee.

And so this is one of the bit of advice that the psalmist receives. And then the psalmist also reflects upon this other bit of information that has been passed along.

For behold, the wicked bend the bow. They have fitted their arrow to the stream to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart. And the passage continues. If the foundations, that's as in the city's foundations.

[3 : 31] If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? And we see the advice that the psalmist has received from others. Is that the city is under attack.

You need to flee. Go to safety. You won't be saved in the midst of this. And even the imagery there of the wicked with the bow that's ready and the arrow that's ready to strike out.

And we see that David doesn't seem to dispute the facts of the situation here. Seems to recognize that he's in a very dire situation. But he does dispute the advice that he has received.

The advice to flee to the mountains. We see that this advice that David is receiving has come from the vantage point of pan the problem.

They have been panning on the problem. They are looking upon the problem. Their eyes are focused on the wicked. They see the power of the wicked. We see that with the imagery of the bow and the string.

[4 : 31] And there seems to even be a certain fear of the wicked. The idea that if the foundations are destroyed, there's an impending doom that has come upon them. And the psalmist there is reflecting upon what can only be described as the lousy advice of others.

That advice, flee! Why you still can! Before your demise comes! We see that the psalmist has eschewed such advice as the passage begins.

In the Lord I take refuge. In the Lord I take refuge. And now we're going to check out the other vantage point of this.

This pan, the panacea. This look upward to God. We see the psalmist there as he looks upward to God. And it says there in verse 4, The Lord is in his holy temple.

The Lord's throne is in heaven. So the psalmist, while in the midst of the storm, He looks and he looks upon God and his throne in heaven looking down.

[5 : 38] And he looks upward to God. Quite different from the advice which he has received, Which is to look outward, but towards the wicked people that are coming towards him.

The passage there continues in verse 4. His eye see. His eyelids test the children of man. His being God's. God's eye see.

God's eyelids test the children of man. Just a point of clarification for you. That the term eyelids there has the idea of seeing with a great amount of insight.

And so as the term is put there, It's this moment of this kind of invasive look into you. It might be the kind of thing, If you were doing something wrong, And someone were to look at you with that intense glare, And say, I see what you are doing.

It's not that they just visually see what you are doing. They have looked upon you, And they have made a judgment about what they see that you are doing.

[6 : 41] And they were reminding you of that. So this idea that God looks and tests the children of man. It's this very intense, invasive look into people.

And with that great insight, We find that God is going to do two things. The first thing that he is going to do, Is that he is going to test people. And we see there in verse five, The Lord tests the righteous, But his soul hates the wicked, And the ones who love violence.

So with that great insight, The first thing is a test. And the second thing that is going to come from that great insight, Is going to be judgment. And there in verse six we see, Let him rain coals on the wicked, Fire and sulfur and a scorching wind, Shall be the portion of the cup.

For the Lord is righteous. He loves righteous deeds. The upright shall behold his face. And so we see God after the test there, He moves into judgment, And makes a judgment against the people. Makes a judgment against the wicked, But also makes a judgment for those who are trying to pursue him. For those who are righteous. So the question I would have for you today, Is in the storm, In the storms of your life, What is going to be your vantage?

[8 : 02] What is going to be your viewpoint? Right? Are you going to look out, And just see the problem that is there before you? Are you going to look up, And try and find a solution?

We see the psalmist is very much looked up, And seeing God, And seeing the solution there. As I was thinking of this idea of, Looking upon the solution and not the problem, I realized it sounded a little bit like, Some sort of self-help manual.

It's not like, You know, The number six step to being the better you. Focus on solutions, Not on the problems. So one of the things I wanted to, Definitely make clear today, Was the difference between, What I would describe as good advice, And godly wisdom.

I think that's one of the things that this psalm provides for us, Is the difference between good advice, And godly wisdom. Now we need good advice, There are certainly times in our life, When we need good advice.

When I am trying to fix my bike, And I can't figure out what to do, I go to YouTube, And I am looking for some good advice, On how to fix my bike. So there are times for good advice.

[9 : 14] But one of the issues that we have with good advice, Is it takes the viewpoint, Off of really what the problem is. So good advice, Is essentially telling you, Hey, You can fix the problem.

There's a problem, And you have the ability to fix it, And now I'm going to give you a suggestion, A piece of advice, So that you can fix your problem. Godly wisdom, On the other hand, Which is what the psalmist displays here, Godly wisdom, Looks upon it, And says that, The situation isn't the problem, Really, You, The individual, Are the problem.

And the reason that, You, Me, The individual, Is the problem, Is because of our sin nature. And fundamentally, We can look to God's work, Through Jesus Christ, And see that God is addressing, Our fundamental problem, That being a fundamental nature of our sin, That separates us off from God.

And so, There through, The work of Jesus Christ, We see that, Through the life of Christ, And through his death, And through his ultimate resurrection, And his defeat of death, That we see God working through, Our fundamental problem, Which is our sin nature.

And in the midst of this, We find that, That godly wisdom, Looks upon, Not the situation, And our ability to solve the situation, But it looks upon, The fundamental nature of the problem.

[10:44] The fundamental nature of the problem, Is that we are sinful beings, And we are going to need, God's great intervention, To adjust the problems, That are of a God sized task. These aren't within our own ability, To address, They must be addressed, Through the power of God.

God's help is needed. I want us to just take a look, As we've looked at this idea, Of godly wisdom, As opposed to good advice, In this passage.

And as we think about that, I think the good advice, That was presented here, Comes at the end of verse one. Flee like a bird, To your mountain. That's the good advice.

Here's this difficult situation, That you were in, And I have the solution for you. That's what someone is saying, To the psalmist, I have the solution for you. You have your own power, Flee to the mountain, Flee to the mountain, And save yourself.

The godly wisdom, Comes in what the psalmist has done, Which is in verse one. In the Lord, I take refuge. In the Lord, I take refuge.

[11:48] The psalmist says, I'm not going to rely upon, My own power, To solve this problem. I'm going to rely upon, The power of God, To solve this. Because God is the one, Who can intervene, And bring actual, And true resolution, To this issue.

So as we think of this psalm, It is what I want you to, Ruminant upon. Is the difference between, Good advice, And godly wisdom. And as I said, There are certainly times, That we need good advice.

But, When we need godly wisdom, Let's not substitute good advice. Godly wisdom, Looks upon it, And says, Sees God as the solution, To our problems.

Whereas opposed to, Good advice looks upon it, And sees us, As somehow having the solution, To our own problems. Let me close this in prayer. God, As we move on, In our time this evening, God, I just pray that, We would be able to, Just still ourselves before you.

God, Still our minds, Still our hearts, And still our souls before you. And that, God is, The message here presented, God, Pray that, As it is helpful, That we might be reminded, Of the words here.

[13:02] We might be reminded, Of your scripture, And it's great, Power to speak truth, Into our lives. We ask all this in your name. Amen.