

# Staying Strong When Others Panic

*Psalms Series*

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 11

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It's been very interesting to me to study and teach on the Psalms because we spend one week on one Psalm and then we move into something else and on Sunday mornings when we're going verse-by-verse through a book, you kind of have a context and you're building on that context. Here we're in one week and we're out the next and that's a different way of learning the Scriptures together, I guess you could say. But as I've said before, there is a unifying theme in all of the Psalms that we've studied so far together and it's found in that verse in Psalm 1:6, "The LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." Every Psalm that we've studied with the possible exception of Psalm 8 so far, has simply been an application of the truth of that one verse and so we go through and we see the way that David applies this in different situations but what I want you to see, what I want you to understand because it is so fundamental and formative to your spiritual life, is that all of these Psalms that we've studied together, it's like there's a hub of a wheel with different spokes coming out but they're all connected to that same hub and the same hub, the same axle is "The LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." Now, in a sense, while we're studying a different Psalm week-by-week, we're actually seeing the same theme played out over and over and over again.

This should teach you something. It should tell you something and what it should be sinking in on you is that this principle, "The LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish," has a unifying effect, it has a simplifying effect on the way that you view life. It is because that principle is true, both sides of it, it's because that principle cannot be violated, that there will be no exceptions to that at the end of time, therefore, there are great consequences to the way that you think about life and the way that you go through life. Ultimately, if we are consistent with what we believe to be true about that verse, that verse gives a deathblow to anxiety. It gives a deathblow to fear. Not only that, it gives a deathblow to the fear of man, the fear of those who persecute us; those who would wrong us; those who are unjust in leadership. It takes all of the worry and concern and angst about that away because we realize that there are unseen certain principles that govern the moral universe that can never be violated and if the wicked prosper, it is only temporary. It comes out badly for them in the end. If we are righteous, if we are united by faith to Christ, if we are living lives of integrity and seeking to be true to the Lord who saved us, it can do nothing else but come out good for us in the end.

So I say this sympathetically, I say it pastorally: those of you that live lives that are gripped by anxiety, understand that one of the reasons that the Lord has brought you into this realm of teaching week-by-week saying the same thing over and over and over again is that there is something here that you are supposed to get and have it change your life because Christians should not be those who are dominated by anxious thoughts. Christians are not meant to live that way. There is nothing distinct about a Christian testimony that everyone knows is riddled with anxiety and fear and worry over the future, worry over what politicians are doing, worry over what else is happening in the world around us. It is not supposed to be that way and in the Psalms and including Psalm 11 here, we find the key that unlocks the chain that binds our souls. So I'm very grateful to the Lord that he's given us opportunity to study together like this. To be able to go through the Psalms like this is one of the greatest blessings that the Lord has ever given me in my life and I'm very grateful to him and I'm grateful to you to care enough about God's word that you want to be here and be a part of it.

Psalm 11 teaches us to trust the Lord when we walk in the midst of threats from men you could say, very generally. But there is a particular aspect to Psalm 11 that will do wonders for your discernment and do wonders for you to sort through the competing voices for your attention, affections and for your money even, because Psalm 11 teaches us not only to trust the Lord when we walk in the threats of wicked men, it also teaches us this and this is really the primary point of Psalm 11: it teaches us to reject the carnal counsel from friends who look at circumstances rather than at our God. This is immensely practical to us. There are no shortage of people who claim the name of Christian who are more than happy to give us their thoughts about what we should do and how we should think in the midst of particularly difficult times but what you must see and understand, what Psalm 11 teaches us is that you must be discerning and discriminating about the counsel that you receive. The advice that we receive even from well-intentioned friends may be that which leads us away from a full-throated trust in God. We need to realize that. We need to think about that and to realize where we are going to anchor our heart. The group of Christians and the group of Christians who actually give us good counsel, those two groups are not side-by-side, they are not coextensive. Good counsel is actually a smaller subset of those who claim to be Christians and we need to have our discernment skills sharpened and Psalm 11 is going to do that for us tonight.

David wrote this Psalm in a time of crisis. Some think that he was under assault from King Saul or perhaps his son, Absalom, when he wrote this because it talks about, look at the end of verse 1, "Flee as a bird to your mountain." When he was under attack from Saul, when Absalom was rising to power, David was fleeing and so some commentators including very good, reliable, trustworthy commentators say it's in that kind of environment that David was writing this Psalm. I don't agree with that and if that makes me a bad commentator, then so be it. It's not easy to disagree with some of these men but I think it's unlikely that this Psalm comes from such a time as that. This Psalm does not come from a time when David is on the run because in Psalm 11, David is refusing the advice to flee. He is refusing the advice to run for safety. So instead of a time where

David is on the run, we have a Psalm of broad application when we're being threatened and people are giving us counsel, how do we sift through the counsel that we should listen to and more particularly to ask this question: how is it that we stay strong when others around us are in panic? How is it when people are worried and trying to pull us into their worry, how is it that we resist and stand firm against it? Because if a Christian is anything else, he should be a man of courage. He should be a man of strength. If what we just sang about our God being our help, our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend. If we believe that really, then it should have a transforming impact on the way that we think and approach life. It should change the way that we respond to difficulty. It should change the way that we feel when it comes time to deciding, "Do I stay in the midst of the battle? Or do I run away?" Psalm 11 directs us in that path.

There are three things that I want to show you from this Psalm this evening. We're going to kind of view this from David's perspective. First of all, if you're going to take notes, this is the first heading of the first point. I want you to see the panic of his friends. The panic of his friends. Understand when you read Psalm 11, David is facing two different kinds of threats. He's facing the threat from wicked men who actually want to take his life and he's also facing a more subtle threat, the subtle threat of receiving bad counsel from people who are actually on his side. David is responding to both of those in this Psalm 11 but he's primarily responding to the bad advice that he's getting from his friends and that's what we're going to see. We're going to see how he responds to the panic of his friends in Psalm 11.

Now, David opens this Psalm with a response to recent advice that he had received and the very opening line of verse 1, in a very emphatic way, he is stating the position of his soul. He says, look at it there in verse 1 with me,

1 In the LORD I take refuge.

That's the governing theme of this Psalm. It flows from the same understanding of Psalm 1:6 that we've been talking about. "I take refuge. I find my strength. My confidence as I look to the future is found in the person of Yahweh, in the person of the LORD himself." So David is saying, "I know who this God is. I know that he is one who knows the way of the righteous. I know that he is the one who brings the way of the wicked to perish and that's where I find my confidence. That is what will be the framing conviction of my entire approach to life is that I believe these things to be true about the Lord, that he is good, he is a covenant keeping God to his people. He can be absolutely trusted no matter what the world around me looks like." And he stands like a pillar of granite as he opens this Psalm. That is the framing conviction of everything that you see in Psalm 11. It sets the theme. David is saying, "I trust the protection of my God and that will frame my reaction to everything else."

Now, notice one of the things that we start to see and understand about the Psalms is that a lot is said in a short period of time and then the whole nature of the focus can change even within the same verse sometimes and that's what happens here. David makes a

statement, "I take refuge in the LORD," and now he immediately turns and addresses those who have been speaking to him. He says,

How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain;

And so we're kind of coming into the midst of an exchange, a dialogue between David and his counselors here and they have said something before Psalm 11 is written. They've said things to him that we're going to see in a moment and David starts out and expresses his trust and then he turns to address the substance of their advice to him. "I trust in the Lord. Now, let's talk about what you just said to me." That's what's going on here and he says, "When I am taking refuge in the Lord, how is it that you can say to me," look at the end of verse 1, "Flee as a bird to your mountain?" It goes on in verse 2, they said,

2 For, behold, the wicked bend the bow, They make ready their arrow upon the string To shoot in darkness at the upright in heart.

They're saying, "David, you're in danger and you need to get out of here. You need to run because there are wicked men in hiding that are after your life," either with their words and their secret conspiracies to bring harm to him or perhaps literally seeking to physically harm him. It's not clear enough to be dogmatic on that point but David's counselors, his well-meaning friends are saying, "David, there is danger. You've got to run. You've got to take off like a bird. You've got to fly away like a bird gets out of danger by flying away and running away from that which would attack it. David, hurry! David, run!"

They go on in verse 3,

3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?"

"David, society is crumbling. Culture is falling apart. These men are gaining ascendancy. What can you do except flee? Run? Fly to the mountain and hide so that you will be safe." So David has powerful men that are seeking to harm him but this Psalm is not really about that threat. This Psalm is about the more subtle threat from his friends' advice. His friends are in a state of panic. They are concerned that everything is falling apart. "What are we going to do? Run! Hide! These guys are going to get us."

Now, I want you to make an observation about those first three verses after David states, "In the LORD I take refuge." And when in a time of danger, there is a certain pragmatic appeal to an argument that says, "Get out from the danger." But notice something and let this train your antenna of discernment here in the world in which we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: notice that in the rest of those first three verses there is no vertical dimension to their counsel whatsoever. There is no appeal to God. There is no mention of his name. It's part of the reason why we think that his absence of any reference to the Lord in those first three verses is an indication that David is quoting everything that his friends have said rather than interacting with it in verses 2 and 3. They say, "Flee. The wicked bend the bow. They make their arrow ready. What can the righteous do?" Notice the completely

earthbound nature of their perspective. They're not urging David to trust God. They're talking about what the threats are, what the conspiracies are and how everything can go wrong in a hurry. "Traacherous men are on the rise, David. They are destabilizing the nation. They are after you. Run! Run! Run!"

And yet when you step back from it, when you step back from the pressure of the situation, you step back from the pressure of urgent advice, you have to realize it for what it is: this is an ungodly perspective. When I say "ungodly" what I mean by that is that God is not a part of it. They are simply viewing things horizontally through what they can see with their physical eyes and they're looking to themselves and to their own ingenuity to produce refuge. David says, the perspective of his response to the panic of his friends is this and, beloved, this is the kind of man and woman of God that you need to become, that I need to become. This is serious business what we're talking about here because we're talking about the inner character of one who trusts God knowing that as the Scriptures tell us in 1 Samuel 16:7, the Lord looks on the heart. Men look at the outward appearance, God looks at the heart and what we want to do is have a heart that is anchored in who he has declared himself to be and shape our response to life accordingly. David says, "Why are you talking to me this way? Why are you encouraging me to panic? Why are you encouraging me to run in the face of a threat? I'm a man. I have put my confidence in the Lord. I have taken my refuge in him. He is my protection. How can you tell me to be afraid of men in light of that?"

So he sweeps away their advice and in his statement of trust there is an implied rebuke of their panic. "How can you be this way in light of whom I have put my hope?" Charles Spurgeon comments and I quote, "How craftily will Satan seek to run us by distrust. He will employ our dearest friends to argue us out of our confidence. He will use such plausible logic that unless we once for all assert our immovable trust in Jehovah, Satan will make us like the timid bird which flies to the mountain whenever danger presents itself." If everything that we say out of Scripture about the nature of God and his faithfulness to his people is true, then we cannot be those who respond to life with a sense of panic. We can't be fearful people. The very nature of God, by saying we have put our confidence in this God and in what he has revealed himself to be, if those things are not a fable, if those things are actually true like we say they are, then they change the way that we respond to life and they change the nature of the counsel that we will receive and respond to. When people tell us, "You need to be worried. You need to be afraid. Look at what men are doing," we put a wall up around our soul and say, "I'm not going to listen to that. I'm not going to let my life response be shaped by that because it is a man-centered approach and I am someone who has rested my confidence once and for all, I have put my immovable trust in the God of the Bible and I will not be shaken." That's the kind of men and women we're supposed to be.

It's not always from people outside, is it? Sometimes it's the anxious thoughts that multiply within us when we're opposed by men, when we're facing difficult trials, when great uncertainty is just ahead of us. We get tempted this way from outside, we get tempted this way from inside. The way that you respond is the same either way. You go back. You go back to this fundamental principle, "No. No. No. No. Out upon the

suggestion of fear. Out upon the suggestion of flight. I've taken my refuge in the Lord God Almighty and I am going to be, no matter what everybody else does, I am going to be a man of courage. I am going to be a fearless woman in the face of life because I know who my God is and I rest right there and nothing can contradict that." This is a Psalm about courage. This is a Psalm about spiritual strength.

Now, what I just said there is really important so that the Psalm is not misunderstood. I'm going to say something that's going to sound really odd until I explain what I mean by it. This is not a Psalm about geography. This is not a Psalm about physical relocation and saying that we never move or that we never relocate or that we never change life's circumstances in response to threats. That's not the point. Easy enough to prove that from Scripture. Joseph and Mary took their young child, Jesus, into Egypt when Herod was threatening to kill all of the babies. They didn't stay in that place. The Lord had told them to move. When you read the account of the church in the book of Acts, the early church, when persecution came, it drove them out geographically. They moved into places of safety and took the Gospel with them. So Psalm 11 is not giving us a statement that you never, ever, ever relocate or you're being unfaithful to the Lord. That is not the point. That would not sustain scriptural scrutiny. It's teaching something far more valuable and something far more heart-searching than that. Psalm 11 is confronting fear. Psalm 11 is about courage. It is about spiritual strength which far transcends the concept of geography. It's about where you take the cues of life from. What forms and shapes the way that you think about life. That's what it's talking about.

What Psalm 11 ultimately is saying, what David is saying in these first three precious verses of Psalm 11 is that the man of God refuses to panic over the fear of man. The more that men threaten us, the more that we are tested by the threats that come from outside, the more resolved, the more courageous we should be in response because the threats of men are an attack on your faith and the people who try to tell you to succumb to that fear, to run in fear, to run away from the challenge, those people are also a threat to your spiritual life. They're telling you to distrust God and the man of God says, "No. No. To run, to be afraid, would be inconsistent with the resolution of my heart, with the defining presupposition of why I exist. I exist to trust this God. I exist to display his faithfulness to me in life. Therefore, I will not run. I will not be afraid because that would be to violate the very purpose of my existence." And the godly man, the godly woman, is going to be displayed most brightly when the threats of earth and the taunts of men are at their strongest.

So just recognize that when this comes and when you're tempted to fear and people are telling you, "You need to get out of here. You need to run," realize that a spiritual battle has been engaged and the opportunity has just been handed to you to live like a David, to live like the Christ of our salvation who did not flinch in the face of those who would crucify him. Who resolutely set his face to Jerusalem knowing crucifixion awaited him there. When they said that Herod was after him, he said, "You go and tell that fox that there are 24 hours to a day. I am on God's appointed timetable and I will not be moved." That's what we're supposed to be like. That's the kind of strength that we're supposed to manifest.

How can you be that way? How can you live that way? Why was David steadfast? Well, understand and kind of tying this into very loosely to the things that we said on Sunday about election and free will, understand that that kind of spiritual strength, that spiritual steadfastness does not come from a resolution of your own heart. It is not expressed by the power of your self-will. That is not going to sustain you and give you the discernment to reject advice like that. The power is not intrinsic to our human fallen nature. Why was David steadfast? Let's look at point 2 and see the power in his heart. The power in his heart. We saw the panic of his friends. They're saying, "David, run!" David says, "No, I have taken refuge in the Lord. Why would I run? I mean, that's just silly. That doesn't even make sense. Why would I do that?" Well, how can he respond like that? We see the power of his heart. As I said earlier, David's faith is an indirect rebuke to their fear. How can he be that strong? How can he be steadfast when snipers have their rifles trained on him and when his very friends are saying run? He's standing alone. You know, I want to tell you something. This is a little bit of a sideline but more and more as I go through life, you just start to realize that there are times when the man of God, the woman of God, is going to stand alone. You're not always going to have people affirming you to be strong and to be courageous and you're going to have to stand alone against that. You're going to have to say, "I have to reject their counsel and I have to reject my inner temptation to fear," and you're standing alone on the promise of God to be faithful to you. Don't run from times like that. Embrace it. Love it. Say, "Finally, I've got an opportunity to stand alone and to be faithful simply to what I know to be true about God that he's revealed in the Scriptures." The way of the godly is rarely lined with cheering throngs as we walk down the street. If that's what someone's after, the narrow path of righteousness and following Christ is not for them. We don't expect the applause of men. We don't expect the crowds to congratulate us for trusting God and we're okay with that. We embrace that because of what we know to be true.

Where do you find that kind of spiritual power? What was it that made martyrs sing when the flames lapped around their legs? What was it that gave them strength to as Stephen did in Acts 7, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," as the stones are raining down on his head? Where do you find that kind of power and strength? It has to be something about God, right? Because it can't be us. That is supernatural. That is not human. Well, what we see in Psalm 11, the way that David plays it out here, is first of all, he looks to the fact that God transcends men. The power in his heart came from the knowledge, the certainty, that God transcends men. David is calm because his worldview is anchored in the reality of the God of the Bible. Look at verse 4. This is such a stunning rebuke to his panicked friends. All they can see in their vision is that the wicked are ready to attack and all that David can see in his vision is something completely different. He says in verse 4,

4 The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven;

The parallelism of that portion of verse 4 indicates that David is talking about the transcendent nature of God, that while these things are happening on earth, God is sovereignly reigning from heaven where wicked men cannot reach him, attack him or violate his purposes. David says, "Why would I run from men when God is on his

throne? And when God knows the way of the righteous and has said that the way of the wicked will perish? God reigns in heaven and in his omnipotence, he has the power to deal with the situation. In his omniscience, in his all-knowing mind, he understands the situation. The conspiracies of men may be hidden from my mind but they are open and laid bare before my God. Why would I be afraid? The Lord is in heaven. He is reigning from his throne."

Look at the end of verse 4 there. You just see this transcendence of God.

His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

It has the idea of God's precise omniscience. He is scrutinizing everything that happens and he's not missing a single detail. The many commentators believe when David says, "His eyelids test the sons of men," that he's referring to the fact that if, and we all do this, if you're wanting to really zero in on something, you want to focus in on someone's face when you're talking to them or if you're looking at something that needs real precise attention to detail, what do you do? You squint your eyes. You look at it and you focus and your eyelids move and narrow to focus on what's immediately in front of you. That is how precise, that is a picture of how precise God's knowledge is and how precisely he scrutinizes the actions of men. Here's the point and understand that what was written in former times was written for our instruction so that through the encouragement of Scripture we might have hope. This is not just about David. This is about the way you and I are supposed to live and it is one thing, it is a good thing, to affirm the omniscience and the omnipotence of God. To have that level of understanding of theology and have a lofty view of God that says, "He is all-powerful and he is all-knowing." Good for you. If that was a theological exam on life and that was all you said and I was the instructor, I'd give you a C+. You say, "A C+? You just stated something that was perfectly accurate? How can you mark me down? That's not fair." You see, theology is meant to be lived. Theology is meant to shape the way that you think and respond to life and so it's not just that God is all-powerful. It's not just that God is omniscient. You are meant to say, "Therefore he knows everything about my situation, even about these threats that I am in my own self powerless to defend myself against. Therefore he knows about my physical weakness. Therefore he knows about the difficulties in my family. Therefore he knows the financial distress that I'm in and he's omnipotent and he has the power to deal with that and that and that." Now you're getting up into B, B+ range. You're taking that theology and you're applying it to your life. Good for you. You might make honorable mention like that. Go all the way. Go for the honor role of faith. Go for acing the exam of life with your knowledge of God and say, "Omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. Sovereign God." Good for you. "Therefore he knows my situation and has power over it." Good. Good. Good. Keep going. Take it the rest of the way. Take it the rest of the way in your heart and say, "And therefore based on who God is and what that means about my situation, therefore I will respond to this life challenge with courage and trust and I will not be afraid." There's your A. There's passing the theological exam of life.

You see, my loved ones, one of the reasons that I wanted to go through the Psalms together with you, one of the reasons among many that I wanted to do this was so that



you and I would have it impressed upon our minds week after week after week just given by the nature of the Psalms and what they're like, that you and I would understand and let the Scriptures search us so that we do not take a detached theoretical approach to Christianity. That we're not content simply to recite doctrine while we're living in sin and that we would not accept that disconnect. It's my prayer for Truth Community that we would be a people that make that string of therefores when we accurately state theology. "God is like this." Good. "Therefore it means this. Therefore I must respond to life like this." If you believe what you say you believe about God, those of you that have filled out your written applications and affirmed the theological affirmations that are wonderfully stated in 1689, then understand that that has implications for the way that you respond to life and it's glorious. This is not a burdensome duty. All of a sudden, a whole vista of the way that we live life is laid before us by what we say that we believe and then everything in life becomes an opportunity to demonstrate by our faithful trusting response to it, our refusal to panic, our refusal to be afraid, everything becomes an opportunity to manifest and to aspire after the lofty goal that, "My life will manifest consistency with what I say I believe."

A worrying, trembling, fearful response to men is inconsistent with what we say we believe and listening to people who tell us to fear men is inconsistent with what we believe. We choose our counselors with wisdom. We weigh what they're saying. Where is the confidence in God in the midst of what you say? David took that standard, looked at what was being said in the first three verses and said, "That's not for me. I have taken my refuge in the Lord." Part of the reason that he could do that is because he knows that God transcends men, God understands the situation whether it's on a personal level in our lives or - listen to me - or on a global level with leaders of nations. It doesn't matter at what level you're talking about this. If it's your personal circumstances or news of a global catastrophe or the outbreak of nuclear war or ground troops in WWII, the situation for the Christian, our position is utterly unchanged because nothing has moved God off his throne and that is the cornerstone from which we evaluate all of life. Jesus said you'll hear of wars and rumors of wars, don't be frightened. David's counselors were worried over men who were in secret. David was confident because his God transcended those men. He saw them. God knew the difficulty. God will not fail ever! So it changes the way that we live. What can I say?

Now, God transcends men. In verse 5 David says that God tests men. He tests men. Look at verse 5 with me,

5 The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates.

This word for "testing" is a word that's often used to refer to refining metal by fire and what he's saying is that the righteous may go through trials but the Lord will approve those who trust him. They don't need to fear the outcome and so the fire of your trials is simply a refining element to show on the other end that your faith is purified, that you're the real deal. He tests the righteous in order to show them approved. So beloved, in

whatever the midst of your trials may be tonight, you don't need to be afraid of the outcome. You don't need to tremble in fear.

Spurgeon asked, "If we trust this King of kings, is this not enough? Can he not deliver us without our cowardly retreat?" Look, let me lay an opportunity, a challenge, before you. I don't like that word "challenge" so much. It sounds too confrontational and I mean this to be an encouragement to you. Look, in the midst of what is frightening you, that which has made you tremble and shake over the past few days or weeks or months or whatever, I want you to change your perspective on it. Scripture calls you to look at it differently now in light of what we've seen. Stop looking at it like this is what is going to be the end of you and that which is going to ruin you and stop being afraid of the future and start viewing it as, "Now I understand that what this life circumstance that I have, this is an opportunity. This is a providentially catered for me opportunity to display the kind of trust that I see David displaying in Psalm 11. This is not my earthly end. This is my spiritual opportunity and therefore," see the therefore's keep coming up, "therefore I am going to rise to the occasion of it and I am going to be a courageous woman of God, I'm going to be a courageous man of God. I am not going to flinch in fear." Be that kind of person. Stand out from a fearful, trembling world of pseudo-Christianity and show that your faith is the real kind. Your faith is the kind that manifests courage when you're under threat, when everything that you hold dear is at stake. That's when your merit, that's where your valor is proven. Look beloved, a soldier is not proven in times of peace. The valor of a soldier is proved in battle. Your trials are the occasion for you to display the valor of your faith which is simply a reflection of the great valor of your God and you say, "I know him. I believe him. I trust him. Therefore I'll be strong here and I will be unshaken and undiminished by those who panic around me."

If the trials come from wicked men who lie about you and misrepresent you, look at verse 6.

6 Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.

This verse has echoes of the sudden judgment that God brought upon Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. God may delay his judgment on wicked people but he doesn't deny it. They will drink the full cup of judgment that God has for them and therefore, therefore, therefore, I look at it and why am I afraid of this? Why does the gathering storm on the horizon of men frighten me? This is an allusion. This is a mirage that they might actually prevail against the people of God. That cannot possibly be true because God is on his throne. Because God sees. God transcends men. God tests men. He will judge the wicked and therefore I am not going to respond to them in fear. Their wickedness, their sinful attacks, are simply going to ultimately prove to be a self-inflicted fatality because God knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish.

We're confident of that. We believe that. And it's because David believed these things to be true that he had power in his heart. It's because he knew, he was anchored in the reality

that God transcends men, that God tests men. The righteous to approve them, the wicked to one day cast them aside because those principles of the moral universe cannot be violated therefore this has to come out well for me in the end. There can be no other outcome as one who belongs to God through faith in Christ. And you let the final outcome shape the courage that you display in the present. That's what David did.

There's a final thing if you want to make it point 3 in your notes, feel free. Remember your future glory. Look at verse 7. Remember your future glory.

7 For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face.

What a glorious conclusion to the Psalm. What a refuge for the trembling soul tonight. God is righteous. God will not allow wickedness to stand. Eventually the truth will prevail over lies. Eventually righteousness will prevail over sin. Eventually Christ will be exalted though we don't see him that way physically with our eyes right now. He's righteous and he loves righteousness. He loves it when his people respond in faith and trust him. When his people live with integrity even when people are counseling them to distrust their God. The Lord loves that. Those of you that are walking with him tonight, the Lord loves that. The Lord is pleased with that. He takes delight in your obedience and trust and the outcome for you and for me is stated there at the end of verse 7. Here's the outcome, it's your future glory, "The upright will behold His face."

I believe that David is saying more than simply that they will experience spiritual blessings in this life as some commentators will try to restrict it to. No, I believe that David perhaps in shadows, perhaps not with the fullness of understanding that would come in the New Testament, David was looking forward to the reality that God's people will one day truly see him face-to-face. Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." 1 John 3:2, my favorite verse in the Bible says, "we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." We are going to when we sift through the petty trials of this life, after just a little bit longer of the suffering of this sod, we are going to find ourselves gazing upon the glorious face of our God. That's the outcome for you and me that know Christ. We will see his face and, beloved, in that glorious moment when the glories of heaven are resounding upon all of our senses, when the booming thunder of "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty," is ringing in our ears and we see our God, whatever that's going to be like, when we see Christ face-to-face, there won't be any memory of the wicked. There won't be any memory of the trials of this life. There won't be any memory of the sorrows. There won't be any memory of the conspiracies. You as the upright, not that you've never sinned but you're one who has submitted yourselves to Christ and you've lived a life of integrity. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

That's the outcome and it's going to be such a time of magnificent glory and rejoicing and worship and the transcendence of God which we know by faith now will be on full display before our very physical eyes. That will be the final triumph and it will be the glory of God over all and we will be there and we will see him face-to-face and we will belong there. That will be home in a way that nothing on earth ever has been because

nothing on earth has been that for which we were eternally appointed by God before the foundation of the world. When we are there face-to-face, finally the feeling of being a pilgrim, the feeling of being a transient in this life is going to be over and there is going to be this triumphant sense, "I have arrived at the great destination and it's never going to change. I'm here forever. I belong here. I belong to Christ." And you come back to earth. It's always so hard to leave the mental realm of heaven, isn't it? You come back to earth with that faith fully informed, with that faith strengthened by what God has declared he will do for his children and by his declarations of who he is and you look around and say, "Pfft, wicked men are plotting against me? I spit at their feet. I reject their taunts. I am unmoved by their mocking because I will see him face-to-face."

So how can you stand firm when others panic? You just trace it all the way back: the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish. God will honor his saints.

Let me just close with a word of application about this and I'm not good at this but I'm just going to trust the Spirit of God to help you take my weak words and apply it to your hearts. Think about the nature of life, the nature of the environment in which we live and realize where these threats to distrust God and take your attention off future glory come from. The 24/7 news cycle beats this into your head: fear. Look at what's happening over here and look at what this guy did. Do you realize the 15 dangers that are about to take your life from your living room closet? Fear. Fear. Fear. Fear. Fear. They whip us into that. Let's be honest: there are plenty of so-called Christian ministries whose voices often do little more than point out the problems in the world, the violations of the US Constitution, how atheists are trying to take us over, and they urge us to action and they urge you to fear. You know, it's funny, think about it: it's funny how scaring you is good for their business. Look through it. See through it and don't cave into that fearful mindset. As faithful people of God, as those who know God, as those who are destined for glory, we cannot and we will not submit to their agitation. We will not give in to their calls to fear.

What can the righteous do in answer to verse 3 of Psalm 11? We may not change the world but we can do something that's even better. You know, there is something that is more eternally significant than you and I changing the world. If we could have that victory it would be temporary because God's going to bring this world, this earth to an end in fiery judgment so even if we change the world, even if we got all of the politics right to protect the US Constitution, it would be temporary. It wouldn't last. It wouldn't be eternal. We may not change the world but you and I can do something that's even better than changing the world. You and I through a true knowledge of the living God can display a courage that shows forth the glory of our God and by our refusal to panic, by our refusal to fear, by our trusting courage when everyone around us has knocking knees, display in a living manner, in a way that is supernatural, that this book is true and the God of which this book testifies is the God who reigns and in him I have taken my refuge.

A final word from Spurgeon tonight. "There is no room or reason for retreat. Advance! Let the vanguard push on. To the front all you powers and passions of our soul! On! On in God's name, on for the Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge."

Let's pray.

*God, give us grace to live exactly like that. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

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