

Psalm 11 When the Foundations Are Being Destroyed, What Can the Righteous Do?

In the Lord I take refuge;

How can you say to my soul,

“Flee as a bird to your mountain”?

2 Look! The wicked bend their bow,

They set their arrow against the string,

To shoot in the darkness at the upright in heart.

3 When the foundations are being torn down,

What can the righteous do?

4 The Lord is in His holy temple,

The Lord’s is on His throne in heaven;

His eyes observe,

He focuses on the children of Adam.

5 The Lord is righteous,

He really hates those who love violence.

6 On the wicked He shall rain down fiery coals and sulfur;

A scorching wind will be the cup given to them.

7 Indeed, the Lord is righteous,

He loves righteousness;

The upright will view His face.

We pray: Dear God and Father, give us and renew in each of us a love for Your Word.
Amen.

My dear friends in Christ Jesus.

As we gather to worship our God and Lord at Resurrection on these Sunday mornings, we are considering some of the Psalms as the basis of our messages. These 150 psalms were written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by David, Moses, Solomon, and others.

Today we consider Psalm 11 written by David, the shepherd boy, the warrior, the king, the adulterer, the murderer, the forgiven child of God.

This psalm was written by David probably around 1,000 B.C. or about 3,000 years ago. We do not know exactly why it was written, but a couple possibilities

come to mind. Perhaps it was when, after being anointed the future king of Israel by the prophet Samuel, David was being forced to live on the run because he was being hunted like an animal by godless King Saul. The foundations were being shaken evil was winning the day. (I Samuel 27)

Another possibility is that David wrote this psalm after he had become king. He may have written it when his son Absalom had turned against him and was trying to overthrow him as king. Absalom had actually managed to drive David out of the capital city of Jerusalem and forced him to flee for his life. Besides that, one of David's most trusted advisers, had turned traitor. The foundations—the things on which David thought he would always be able to depend—were being destroyed—David's career was going down the drain, his family life was clearly in shambles, his friends were turning on him. They advised him as we hear in the psalm, **“Flee to your mountain like a bird. Look! The wicked bend their bow. They set their arrows against the string to shoot in the darkness at the upright in heart.”** Yes, evil was winning the day. What could the righteous King David do?

What do you do when your foundations are being destroyed? What do you do when the things on which you have come to rely, the things in which you find security, what do you do when they suddenly seem as unreliable as quicksand?

What do you do when the foundation on which you built hope for the future—your job, your career, your retirement savings—what do you do when that is being destroyed?

What can you do when you go to the doctor and find out that the good health which

formed part of the foundation of your life is being destroyed?

And what do you do as a Christian when you look at the world around you and sense that the moral foundations on which you had hoped society would always be built—what do you do when you realize that those are being dismantled brick by brick—and sometimes even by dynamite blasts? What do you do when you realize that the word “Christian” in our day is spoken with a sneer by many?

What do you do as a Christian when you look at state of the visible church in the world, at Christianity itself and sense that the foundations are being destroyed—that the biggest Lutheran church body in our nation hardly even deserves the name “Christian”, much less “Lutheran”? What do you do when churches, church leaders and pastors are denying the fundamental truths of Holy Scripture such as the virgin birth of Christ; denying that Christ was true God-true man; denying our Lord's miracles; denying His bodily resurrection from the dead. Yes, what do you do when so many in the visible church have stopped even attempting to discern what the Bible says because they have rejected the notion that there is such a thing as an inspired, inerrant Word which serves as a foundation for our faith.

Yes, when the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? Yes, what can we do?

Some people retreat from it all. They give up, curling into a ball and waiting for the seeming inevitable.

Others figure that if you cannot beat them, you ought to join them.

Job’s wife thought she had the answer. You remember Job. He was a righteous, God fearing man in the Old Testament. One day he is living life feeling that the ground

beneath him is pretty solid. The next day pretty much everything that a person would consider as constituting the foundations of his life had crumbled beneath Job and been destroyed. First Job loses his wealth—his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his camels, and his servants. Then he loses his family as all his sons and daughters are killed in a tornado. Then Job loses his health—being afflicted with painful and ugly sores *“from the soles of his feet to the top of his head” (Job 2:7).*

Then he loses the support of his wife—although in parting she does give him her answer to the question, “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?” She says to Job, **“Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9)** In other words, the only thing to do when the foundations are being destroyed is to lash out at God and blame Him for it.

Perhaps that is what you are tempted to do when your foundations are being destroyed—to become angry at God, to shake your fist at Him and to tell Him that this is terrifically unfair of Him because you do not deserve this. We may know of people who no longer walk with Christ because of something which happened in their lives—the loss of a child, the injustice which they see in the world, etc.

David in the psalm goes on to say, **“He (God) observes the sons of men; His eyes examine them.”** God is well aware of what is going on down here. And much of what God sees He “hates.” That is a pretty strong word, but that is what David says: **“The wicked and those who love violence His soul hates.”**

Although it may seem sometimes that the wicked are prospering in their wickedness, God is still ruling in the heavens. Though the Lord is high above us in the majesty of heaven, the earth is not removed from His scrutiny. Nothing is escaping His detection-

no theft in the night, no adultery or fornication behind closed doors and drawn curtains, no unsolved murders, no slanderous whisper.

Though the Lord is over all things, nothing is too trivial for His attention. The Lord sees the deeds of the ungodly and He will punish them fully in His own due time. The Lord hates evil and loves righteousness. When He comes in judgment, He will punish every sin and every unbeliever. That overthrow will be as devastating and complete as the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah in fire and brimstone. But those who are righteous through faith in Christ Jesus will dwell with God in eternal happiness. To see Him their Lord and Savior will be their greatest joy.

Even when the foundations of society are being undermined, the assurance of God given through Isaiah remains true, **“The Lord will be the sure foundation for your times”** (Isaiah 33:6) Even when wickedness and falsehood flourish, “God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with His inscription” **The Lord knows those who are His,”** and **“Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness** (2 Timothy 2:19) The remedy for evil times is not flight or surrender. It is faithfulness and endurance. It is to seek refuge in Him the God of our salvation, the God of all grace and mercy.

My friends and fellow redeemed we must remember that **“the Lord's throne is in heaven”, “the Lord is in His holy temple”**. Yes, in the Lord we can put our trust. Yes, know, remember, recall to mind, ponder anew that He still loves us, that He wants the best for you, for me for time and for eternity. In other words, we must do what David did: take refuge in the Lord. Our God, the Triune God is He is a sure refuge. He is a refuge whose foundations will never be destroyed. You can be sure that the Lord who **“is on His heavenly throne”** has all power and will use it for our benefit and blessing, to

bring us at last to eternal life.

Listen if you will to His Word, some of the promises of our God in the Psalms which reminds us that of this truth,

“But let all who take refuge in You be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread Your protection over them that those who rejoice in Your name may rejoice in You. For surely, O Lord, You bless the righteous, You surround them with Your favor as with a shield.” (Psalm 5: 11-12) and again,

“The Lord is the refuge of the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know Your name will trust in You, for You Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You” (Psalm 9: 9-10) and again

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...Be still and know that I am God. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” (Psalm 46: 1-2, 10-11)

You can, “if the foundations be destroyed”, stand tall—not because of who you are, but because of who God is and what God has made you—one of His righteous, beloved children, through faith in Christ Jesus who died, who rose again and overcame sin, death, hell and Satan

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I do not know everything what is crashing down in your life right now—health, relationships, finances—and I do not know which of those foundations will be destroyed in the future. But as individual believers, we must make Christ our foundation, our refuge, our fortress, that will never be shaken. As individual Christians, as a congregation, as a church body, we must take refuge in the Lord who is the head of

His Church.

And even though the Bible tells us that one day the very foundations of this earth—the ones that were laid by God thousands of years ago—will be shaken and then destroyed (2 Peter 3:10)—when He comes again with His glorious second coming, even then, we may be confident, knowing that we will be in heaven, where we will behold Him, who loves righteousness His countenance beholds the upright”

And thus, we have the answer to the question, if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Amen.