

The Good, The Bad, & The Sovereign

Psalm 11

1 In the LORD I take refuge; how can you say to my soul, "Flee like a bird to your mountain, **2** 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; **3** if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" **4** The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. **5** The LORD tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. **6** Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. **7** For the LORD is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.

INTRODUCTION: This Psalm very well could be the theme of David's life. David was called by God "a man after my own heart." I'm going to contend that David was a Christian Hedonist. Hedonism is the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life. Christian Hedonism is...the idea found in the first question in the WSC... David was that kind of man. "You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand are pleasures forever." Psalm 16:11.

ALL OF DAVID'S JOY WAS WRAPPED UP IN THE GLORY OF GOD---ref to "Better is one day"

...you can see that in this psalm...

The Big Idea is that evil is real and painful, but God alone is to be trusted because He is Sovereign over suffering and He works out all things for His highest glory and our highest joy.

- I. **THE PROBLEM OF EVIL (vv. 1-3)**
- II. **THE REALITY OF LIFE (v. 4)**
- III. **THE END OF ALL THINGS (vv. 5-7)**

DOCTRINE:

- I. **The Problem Of Evil (vv. 1-3)**

In the Lord I take refuge;

A.) In the Lord I take refuge (v 1a)

- CONTEXTUALIZE!! ---David is in a struggle for his very existence and he is placing all of his hope in God for deliverance.
- WHAT'S DRIVING HIS STATEMENT????--**SUFFERING**
- Verses 6-7 ground or give the reason for this first verse. Refuge is the idea of taking shelter in the storm--Isaiah 4:6. I take refuge in the LORD because...everything that follows is true.
- This response of David is the very thing that God is testing him (us) in down in verses 4-5 (**read**). David is being tested for response.

1. How does David and other Christian Hedonists pass this test?

a. For suffering in battle... Psalm 91:1-3, 7-8 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. **2** I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." **3** For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence... **7** A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. **8** You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. [GOD WILL DELIVER]

b. For suffering in life... Habakkuk 3:17-19 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, **18** yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. **19** GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. [ARE YOU IN A RECESSION RIGHT NOW?]

2. You are cursed if you place your hope in something else.

a. You are cursed if you trust in man... Jeremiah 17:5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. [YOU TRUST IN MAN = YOU DON'T TRUST GOD]

b. Where does my help come from? [NASB] Psalm 121:1-2 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. [THERE IS HELP IN NONE OTHER]

B.) Alternate reality (vv 1b-3)

These verses provide the antithesis to v 1a. Instead of trusting in the LORD, other options are offered.

1. 'I hear voices...' (v 1b)

how can you say to my soul,
"Flee like a bird to your mountain,

a. David's Temptation... David was being tempted here to put his trust and security in something other than the LORD. CONTEXTUALIZE..His friends..."Cowardice can masquerade as prudence..."

b. Jesus' Temptation... Matt 16:21-23 (Context--Peter confessed Jesus as Christ, Jesus said upon that rock I will build my church) "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. **22** And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." **23** But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." [PETER, LIKE DAVID'S FRIENDS WAS SETTING HIS MINDS ON THE THINGS OF MAN, NOT ON THE THINGS OF GOD]

2. The deck is stacked... (v 2) [HIS FRIENDS ARE NOT DONE YET]

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;

- a. **There is no way David can win...** --Weapons loaded-- --In the dark, secret, unseen, advantageous-- They're telling him "You cannot prevail here..." **But** David's is asking in the previous verse "how can you say to my soul" which sounds like he's asking "On what grounds or reality can you actually say this?"
- b. **The real question is...**, regardless of whether he stays or goes (*because he does go to the mountains at one point*), is where is he placing his trust? [Psalm 33:16-17](#) The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.
[DELIVERANCE CANNOT COME THE WAY HIS FRIENDS ARE OFFERING-APART FROM GOD]

3. What happens when evil prevails? (v 3)

if the foundations are destroyed,
what can the righteous do?"

There are two ways to take this:

From his advisors perspective.. If Saul has destroyed all the foundations of justice in the kingdom, what can a righteous man like you do. To which David answers in verse one

From David's perspective... If the foundations are destroyed: that is my trust in God, what can the righteous do? THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE AT THAT POINT.

SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVIL PREVAILS?

a. At some point a stand must be taken regardless of the cost...There is no place to hide...no place where David or any of us can hide from evil and suffering. David seems to know there is no where he can hide. The point here is not that David refuses to run, but rather: "where can I go that evil will not pursue me?" At some point a stand must be taken...

b. A stand in Daniel's day...(context) [Daniel 3:13-18](#) "Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. **14** Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? **15** Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?" **16** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. **17** If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. **18** **But if not**, [NASB says "But even if He does not..."] be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." [WHEN EVIL SEEMED TO PREVAIL HERE, THEY TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THEY PASSED THEIR TEST]
(how does it end?)

II. (vs. 4) **The Reality Of Life** [THIS IS WHAT DAVID SEES.. AND WHY HE SAYS WHAT HE SAYS IN VERSE 1]

4 The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.

A. God is Sovereign.

1. His control is complete.---EVEN OVER SUFFERING

- a. **His Kingdom rules over all** Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.
- b. **Spurgeon Quote:** *"I believe that every particle of dust that dances in the sunbeam does not move an atom more or less than God wishes--that every particle of spray that dashes against the steamboat has its orbit, as well as the sun in the heavens--that the chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as the stars in their courses. The creeping of an aphid over the rosebud is as much fixed as the march of the devastating pestilence--the fall of...leaves from a poplar is as fully ordained as the tumbling of an avalanche."* [HIS CONTROL IS COMPLETE, AND THIS IS WHAT HE DOES WITH HIS CONTROL...]
- c. *his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.* **Everything is exposed to God:** Hebrews 4:13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good [IF YOU WERE PORN SURFING LAST NIGHT--GOD SEES AND TESTS, IF YOU ARE PATTING YOURSELF ON TH BACK FOR NOT...]

"He is a God that can look through all those fig-leaves of outward profession, and discern the nakedness of your duties through them." Ezekiel Hopkins

B. What does God test things against?

1. He tests all things against Himself. God is the Standard

- a. **His standard is perfection.** Matt 5:48 "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." HE DOES NOT LOWER HIS STANDARD BECAUSE WE ARE UNABLE TO PERFORM WHAT HE COMMANDS. SINCE DAVID KNOWS GOD, THIS BRINGS HIM COMFORT, BECAUSE HE KNOWS HOW THIS STORY ENDS....

III. The End Of All Things (vv. 5-7)

5 The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

A.) The righteous vs the wicked (v 5)

1. Why is one righteous over another? GOSPEL!

- a. **What makes one different?** Two choices: Something in myself or something in God.,

- This text is NOT saying that a person is righteous in themselves...Isaiah 64:6....
Your "good" deeds are actually damning to you if ... Matt 7:21-23
 - "But I signed the card and said the words, and prayed the prayer."
 - You say "it's by my faith".... Hebrews 11 says...."
 - Is that faith self caused or God caused? ANSWER HEBREWS 12:2 "[we fix] our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" The question is not whether I need faith or not, the question is: Do I cause that faith in me and therefore deserve credit, [boasting], or does God secure that in me?
- b. **Nobody is made righteous because of a personal decision.** John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, **but of God.**
- c. **All who are righteous are so because Jesus Christ substituted Himself for them on the cross.** 2 Cor 5:21 "...he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." [expound]

[back to the text...]

2. The LORD tests His own. THIS PSALM IS LARGELY ABOUT DAVID'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S TESTING

- a. **He tests those He loves.** Hebrews 12:5-6 [Middle of verse 5] "...My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. **6** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." WE KNOW WE ARE LEGITIMATE LOVED CHILDREN IF WE ARE BEING TESTED BY THE LORD. "...to test and to love are with God the same thing..."

3. The LORD hates the wicked. (Psalm 5:4-5 says the same thing)

- b. **What about John 3:16?**
- c. **Why are they wicked?**--Because they hate God! Romans 1:30, John 15:18,

B.) Judgment is coming

6 *Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.*

1. In this life

- a. **"God gave them up"** 3 times this happens in Romans 1 in verses 24-28, because they despised the glory of God (vs 23). As a result they..received "in themselves the due penalty for their error"

2. In the everlasting death to come

- a. **"...portion of their cup"** is a reference to inheritance.
- b. Matthew 13:41-42 "The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." **"worm doesn't die, fire is not quenched."** A place of everlasting torment.

C.) God is the ultimate good news. GOD IS THE GOSPEL

7 For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.

1. The LORD loves righteousness because He is righteous... He is the measure of perfection (v4)

2. Those who are born of God get God.

- a. **Christ is foundation of our joy.** 1 Peter 3:18a "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous..." I give Him all my sin, and He gives me His righteousness. This is the ONLY way a person can stand before God. Christ is the foundation for our joy because He's done everything necessary for reconciliation!
- b. **GOD is the Consummation of our joy-- "the upright shall behold his face"** 1 Peter 3:18b "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, **that he might bring us to God..**" **WE GET GOD !!** HEAVEN IS GLORIOUS NOT BECAUSE IT'S A SPECIAL PLACE (although it is) BUT BECAUSE GOD IS THERE. IF GOD IS NOT IN HEAVEN, HEAVEN IS HELL.
- c. **Psalm 73: 25-26** "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

APPLICATION

To the Hedonist: THE REAL STORM IS COMING AND IT WILL LAST FOREVER

Everyone is one type of Hedonist: Blaise Pascal rightly said: "All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves"

If you are **not** seeking after your happiness in God...YOU ARE CURSED! 1 Corinthians 16:22 says "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed."

I referenced Matt 13 earlier when Jesus spoke about Hell...

DESPAIR INCREASES...AND INCREASES...FOREVER. Day after day, year after year, millennium after millennium, age after age. "A drop of hell is terrible, but what must a full cup of torment be? Despair will swallow you up..."

To the Christian Hedonist:

THIS STORM WILL NOT LAST FOREVER

Deliverance doesn't always mean in this life... Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN TESTED YET: WAIT

HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF EVER-INCREASING JOY. FINITE DROWNING IN THE INFINITE.