

Psalm 11-12

Unfortunately we don't have the back story to each and every Psalm and so we don't always know exactly what was going on in the life of David or perhaps another when they wrote the Psalms that they wrote. So to a certain extent it's simply educated guess work, but in reality what was going in their lives personally is peripheral to what God is communicating to us specifically. It doesn't really matter what was going on in their lives so much as it does what God is seeking to communicate to us through the situation or the circumstance. and I think that there's a reason that for the most part we don't know the exact situation surrounding a particular Psalm and that's because as humanity we can have a tendency to be rather narrow in our application of a situation. What I mean by that is if this Psalm was written when David was in flight for his life from Saul, or perhaps when Absalom was seeking to usurp the kingdom (most believe it was one of those 2 situations that brought this Ps out of David) then we would have a tendency to say, "Well, that's neat but how does it apply to me?" Because I'm not being chased by an enemy, I'm not fearing for my life specifically, so what's this mean to me? But because there's no specifics attached to it we're able to draw from it a broad spectrum of application, we don't have "tunnel vision" as it were regarding the Psalm.

This particular Psalm (Ps 11) is really a psalm regarding faith's response to fear's advice. and So anytime we're confronted by fear, for whatever reason it may be, when we're tempted to throw in the towel and take off, tuck tail and run, get out of whatever it is that we're in because we're afraid of how things may turn out; we can be encouraged through the words of David. We don't have to wait until someone is pursuing us personally trying to end us physically before this Ps has any real meaning to us specifically. We can draw application from this Ps in any # of situations. and So with that we read, "To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David."

Vs 1

Evidently a serious crisis had surfaced in David's life, and again whether it was before he was on the throne and Saul was seeking to kill him, or Absalom was seeking to overthrow him and his life was in danger we don't know. The point is that David had a problem, a crisis had arisen and this was the counsel he was getting, "Hey man, you've got to get out of here, you need to take off and save your skin."

and There's a # of things we could stop to consider here, #1 His counselors no doubt meant well, they were trying to help him out, make sure he stayed safe and all of that. But what they were doing in reality was only discouraging him from trusting in the Lord. and There's a couple things with that, 1st of all we need to be very careful when it comes to giving people advice. and Even before that we need to be especially careful to avoid being busybodies nosing into other people's lives uninvited. Generally speaking if someone wants my advice they'll ask for it, if they don't it's not generally my place to offer it. 1 Thess 4:11 says, "...aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands," and When it says, "Mind your own business, that's another way of saying,

“Stay out of other people’s business.” Paul instructed Timothy regarding younger widows encouraging them to remarry because with too much time on their hands they wander about from house to house as gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not (1 Tim 5:13). and So when it comes to giving counsel, it’s important that we 1st learn to mind our own business and stick our nose in where it doesn’t belong.

Something else that can happen is that we can become overly confident of our own perception of a situation. Remember Job’s friends? One of his buddies said to him in the light of his situation, “I will tell you, hear me; What I have seen I will declare,” Job 15:17 and He proceeded to fill him full of wrong advice. Oh, he was seeking to help, thought he had a line on the situation, but all he did was harm. He had a good intent, the motive was right, the advice was wrong. and We can easily fall into that position of right intent, wrong advice. Such was the situation here.

Not only do we need to be careful about the advice we give, we need to be careful concerning the advice we receive. and It doesn’t matter if it comes from a Pastor, a “professional counselor” or even simply a concerned friend we have the responsibility to weigh it in the balance of the word of God. Am I receiving godly advice, or ungodly advice, is this something that is founded in the word of God or has no scriptural basis whatsoever?

The general thrust here that we’re to glean in Vs 1 is that we’re not to run from our problems. “You need to get away from it all.” Hey, I’m all about rest and relaxation, taking a break from the insanity of a busy schedule, but you can’t run from your problems. You need to deal with them in the light of God’s word, don’t fear, have faith. That’s what David’s resolve is here.

Now don’t misunderstand me, there are times when getting away, running, fleeing is a proper response. We’re to flee temptation, we’re to flee sexual immorality, we’re to flee idolatry, youthful lusts, covetousness. We’re not to try and fight them or seek to stand and struggle against them; we’re to flee from them. Just like Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife. We’re not to become volunteer martyrs, Jesus said, “When they persecute you in this city, flee to another.” Matt 10:23 and So what we’re doing here is drawing the line between tempting the Lord and trusting the Lord. We’re not to tempt the Lord, put ourselves in harms way unnecessarily in order to see if He’ll come through for us. However we are to trust the Lord with all of our heart. We don’t abandon our post simply because there’s a problem, Nehemiah was called to a task and he knew God had called him to finish it. and So when a crisis came to fruition he rejected ungodly counsel and stayed the course, he trusted in the Lord. and That’s the difference between a hireling and a shepherd, the hireling flees when the wolf approaches the sheep, the shepherd stands his ground to defend and steady the sheep.

David here says, “How can you say to my soul, flee to the mountains? I trust in the Lord.”

Vs2-3

Good question... Now you need to understand that what he's not talking about is the foundation upon which your faith stands. That is what the bible refers to as a "sure foundation," or a "solid foundation." It's like building on the rock, yes storms will come, winds will blow, there'll be times of struggle and stress, but you'll be found still standing in the end because you've established your house on the rock solid foundation of JESUS CHRIST, the Word of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. The foundation he's talking about here is the foundation of government in the land, when those things that are set in place to protect you in your freedom to worship God, or pursue righteousness begins to crumble. If this was written when Saul was on the throne the idea would be, "Hey man, Saul's throne was established in righteousness, but he's falling apart you gotta get out of here, he's not looking to honor the righteous, or the upright, he's got you in his crosshairs." (There in Vs 2 where it talks of bending the bow, making ready their arrows to shoot in secret at the upright in heart is like saying, "Dude he's just looking for the opportunity to do you in, he's setting you up, trying to take you out.").

The meaning would be similar if it was written while Absalom was coming against David, "David you gotta get outa here man, he's assembling an army, things are crumbling from underneath you. What can you do?" and Again it's meant to help David, like Peter when he told the Lord to not go to Jerusalem so that He wouldn't have to go to the cross, he was trying to help, but was being used of the enemy.

As David responds here in essence he says in answer to the question, "What can the righteous do?" "Hey, what can't the righteous do when their trust is in the Lord?" We have a tendency to be alarmist, we get scattered in our minds, we feel like we're hanging on to the frayed ends of sanity, we forget that God's not freaking out, He's still in control and still on the throne.

Vs4

Now there's something we need to see here because I think that a lot of times we miss this, we think that if we're trusting in the Lord we'll be protected from problems or hedged from hard times. But to trust in the Lord doesn't grant general amnesty from difficult days, doesn't guarantee a life of ease, as a matter of fact it brings "testing to the righteous" (vs5).

"His eyelids test the sons of men." Now the enemy will tempt you to bring out the worst in you, the Lord will test you to bring out the best in you. We often refer to it as the refiner's fire, that process of testing metals to remove the impurities that what remains might be pure and genuine. God wants those impurities in our lives to be released from deep down in there and be drawn to the surface (as it were) that He might scoop them up and throw them out. But God is forging you, breaking you down, that He might build you up, remember He's the Master Potter, we're the lump of clay, that He forms and fashions with His hands. and Often times He will form us through times of testing, but ultimate intent behind it is our good and His glory, that we might be made more like Christ and less like ourselves.

But the idea here in Vs 4 seems to simply be, “Hey, the Lord is on the throne, He’s not going anywhere and neither am I, He knows what’s going on, He sees it all.” Jer 23:24 says, “‘Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?’ says the Lord; ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ says the Lord.” and We brought this up last time, people make the mistake of thinking that darkness hides them, or that somehow the Lord doesn’t see them and won’t require an account of them. They deceive themselves, He’s on His throne, and His eyes behold.

But we glean a bit of application here because when problems arise I can do 1 of 2 things. I can either focus on them or I can focus on the Lord, I can look around, or I can look up. I can think about my problems and become overwhelmed, or I can pray and cast my cares upon the Lord knowing that He cares for me and receive God’s peace as we trust Him by faith.

Vs5-6

The familiar image of the “cup” used throughout the scriptures to speak of God’s judgment being brought to the full like water fills a cup. and The wine cup of the wrath of God is filled to the full with the sins of the people and when it’s filled to the full God presses it to the lips of the wicked and makes them drink it to the full. and When we’re reading here of fire and brimstone, burning wind and coals, the idea here is that of the ultimate eternal judgment, not a temporary punishment. The persecutor of the righteous will be punished for eternity.

Now I want to address something here briefly because again I think we can miss understand it. Because the scriptures are replete with Vs showing and stating the love of God we can begin to get the impression that God is sort of sentimental, lovey-dovey and doesn’t really have a major problem with anyone, yeah He hates sin, but the sinner?

Well, it’s true that God loves mankind generally, and that it’s not His will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, but the bible is very clear that there are people who are enemies of God. “The wicked (Vs 5) and the one who loves violence His soul hates.” Now if you want me to soften that for you, I just can’t. God has loved you so much that He’s given His only Son to save you and that’s His desire, but if you refuse to repent, and persist in your sin then you make yourself an enemy of God. Paul told the Romans, “...the carnal mind is enmity (or hatred) against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” Rom 8:7 Now the difference is that you and I can’t hate in a non-spiteful, wishing harm on someone kind of way. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but He will deal with and judge the one who loves violence, the one who refuses to repent.

Vs7

“Hey, I’m walking after Him, seeking to submit my life to Him, I’m trusting in Him, I know He’s got my back, He’s watching over me, lifting up His countenance and causing His face to shine on me.” Faith’s response to fear’s advice, don’t run from your problems, rely on the Lord.

Ch 12

“To the Chief Musician. On an 8 stringed harp. A Psalm of David.”

Vs1

Once again we're uncertain as to the situation surrounding this Psalm but the feeling is a familiar one. It's what we might refer to as the “Elijah syndrome” feeling like you're the only one left who really wants to serve the Lord, or honor the Lord and you're all alone. and It's never true yet sometimes you just get to feeling that way. But once again we give David credit in that even though he felt like he was a dying breed and people who were true to the Lord were just disappearing he turned the right way, he cried out to the Lord. When Elijah felt isolated, he fled for his life and hung out in a cave all despondent and in despair; he didn't call upon the Lord the Lord called out to him. Here David simply says, “Help, Lord!”

He didn't get all wordy, didn't try and wax eloquently, he just said, “Lord, help me!” Jesus said that the heathen thinks he'll be heard because of his many words, that if they just talk long enough it'll get God's attention or somehow impress Him. The bottom line is that the length of prayer doesn't constitute the strength of prayer; some of the most powerful prayers in all the bible are amazingly brief. God knows our needs before we ever even speak them, here David is just feeling lost and all alone and he cries out to God for help. God is always open to the cry of the righteous, those who love Him and seek to serve Him.

Vs2

The bible has much to say about flattery, and none of it is good. Here in this Vs as you can see the word, “and” is in italics which means it was added by the translators for clarification. In reality it's not there in the original language, he's not differentiating between flattering lips and a double heart, he's saying that the one who flatters has a double heart, they're 2 faced (as we might say today). Simply saying what people want to hear for their own advantage, one has said that flattery isn't communication, it's manipulation, and that's true. The Proverbs say, “A man who flatters his neighbor Spreads a net for his feet.” Prov 29:5 Is simply setting himself up for entrapment, he'll ensnare himself. Paul told the Romans, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.” Rom 16:17-18 Flattery is deceiving speech; one uses it to pursue their own ends.

Vs3-4

See, it all comes back to pride; it's such a wicked sin. Why do people say what they want when they want and think they'll never have to answer for it? Pride, but David here is calling for the judgment of the double hearted, the one who uses words like poison to accomplish their own agenda. There's no fear of God in that person.

But that's what this phrase, "May the Lord cut off all flattering lips" is in reference to. That there's going to come a day when Jesus will judge the world in righteousness, when the wheat will be separated from the chaff and gathered into the barn. Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" Matt 25:31-34 He went on to say, "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Matt 25:41 The wicked will be "cut off" separated, placed in a different category and removed altogether from the righteous.

Vs5

This sorta takes us back again to the previous Ch whereby David came to the conclusion that God seen the situation and would come to the defense of His own. "Now I will arise, says the Lord; I will set him in the safety for which he yearns." and That word, "Safety" is pretty cool, it's the word, "yesha" the basis from which comes the word, "Yeshua" or "Joshua" or as we're more familiar with the Greek, "Jesus." "I will set him in the safety," or "the salvation" "for which he yearns."

But one thing we're no doubt going to see over and over again you guys as we sort of slowly make our way through the psalms is the fact that the only thing that seems to recalibrate these people, refresh them and renew their perspective to that which is proper is their time spent seeking after the Lord. As they're in God's presence, worshiping Him, humbling themselves before Him and crying out to Him, they're changed, they're reminded of the proper perspective and encouraged to carry on. You get out there on your own there's no telling where you'll wind up, we have to stay tucked in tight to the Lord, He's given us the promise of assurance (ultimately) in His word. and His word isn't like the word of the double hearted, the flatterer, notice.

Vs6-7

The proverbs say, "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him." Prov 30:5

Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of God lives and abides forever, His word endures forever. and God's Words aren't idle words, they're not flattering words, He's not "double tongued" (if you will). He speaks words of truth and reason, His words are defiled or polluted, they're pure and refined, like silver purified 7 times. Or another way to understand that "completely pure" not an ounce of impurity in the word of God. We spoke of the refining process earlier, he's saying here that God's word isn't like a single smelting process whereby the impurities have been lifted from the precious metal.

It's like the metal that's had the impurities lifted from it over and over and over again until there's literally nothing left about it that's impure. God's word is completely pure, totally flawless. How ironic that society today sees the Scriptures as something relatively worthless and yet pays huge amounts of money to those who manufacture deception and flattery. Be it in Hollywood, or in the media, politics or whatever. How we need to study and know the truth, that we won't buy the lie of deception and flattery.

Vs 8

The wicked run rampant when worthlessness is exalted. I'm not sure when or where exactly the transition took place, but somehow what used to be considered gross and immoral crimes have become common entertainment. Vileness has been exalted in our nation, the wicked run rampant and lead the way, using manipulative techniques and flattery of speech. But the Word of God is true, it's salt and light, in a dark and decaying generation. God help us to share it, to teach it, and to walk in the reality of it that more might see Him, and come to know Him, turning from worldly and wicked ways, to the true and living God.

Prayer Points:

Father may we be the salt and the light that You've called us to be. We thank You for the truth and the purity of Your word, now may we honor it and walk in it, and bring glory to You through it. We pray for our community, we pray for our nation, Father forgive us, we give awards to those who promote ungodliness and vile standards and we shun the sharing of your word in the hearing of others. We promote things that pollute humanity, and seek to snuff out the salt and light of Your word. But Your word is pure, it's true, and may it be the plumb line of our lives. May we lead our lives according to the principles and precepts of Your word. and May we trust in You more and more each and everyday.