

Psalm 11

¹ *In the LORD I take refuge. How then can you say to me: "Flee like a bird to your mountain.*

² *For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart.*

³ ***When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"***

⁴ *The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.*

⁵ *The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates.*

⁶ *On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot.*

⁷ *For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.*

Ill - Hilary's driver
Grief
Possible revolt

David, to whom this Ps is attributed, asked the same question **"When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"**

It is his answer that I wish for us to examine today, that we too may have an answer if we ever find ourselves in the same situation.

Many of us are familiar with David's life, his struggles and persecution before he became King. It may be that this Ps was

written at such a time, as so many others seem to have been written, when David was fleeing King Saul.

Saul had become jealous of David, for David had risen quickly in esteem in the eyes of the people of Israel, even more so than Saul had. David was young and popular, far more so that Saul's son Jonathan . . . and so Saul had determined to kill him, remove him from any hope of ascending to the throne.

And so David had fled from Saul, going up into the mountains of Israel to hide among the caves. He described his fleeing as *"The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea--as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."*

He felt hunted, he felt run down, hounded like a dog needlessly . . . and when he turned to his friends they gave him one common word of advice *"Flee like a bird to your mountain.* Lie low like an envelope, or go into hiding so that you cannot be found. This is not the time to take a stand, to live by your convictions, to draw attention by your non-conformity. Hide. Flee like a bird to **your** mt.

You see, there are 3 mountains we flee to.

The first mountain is the **"mountain of connection"** – the first reaction of many in the day of trouble is to run to the nearest powerful person and ask for refuge and help. We run into a problem with some government process and immediately think *"Who do I know in that department"*, and if I don't know anyone, then *"who knows someone there"*, and if we don't know anyone who knows someone, then we think *"who do I know in another division who either has the power to direct and determine processes in that department or knows someone who knows someone there."* This is natural Kenyan survival reaction . . . even I have naturally reacted to crisis this way.

The second common mountain is the **mountain of inconspicuity**. The word of advice here in times of trouble is– hide, don't draw attention to yourself. This is human wisdom, and it is a good word if all you have to go by is human wisdom, and many times it seems as though this is all we have.

The third mountain is the **mountain of conformity**. To say with the rest of the world – the only way to get out of this trouble is to do what the world does – if it is to bribe – then bribe, if it is to help yourself to the blessings of uhuru, then do it because everyone else is doing it. It's called “natural human survival”– this is the way life is.

But this is not the way it should be for the children of God, for this is not good advice. David's question to those who gave him such advice was “*How can you even think about it? How can you give me such bad advice, don't even think about it!*”

Instead, his determined course of action was Vs 1 - In the LORD I take refuge . . . even when the foundations of the earth are shaken or are being destroyed.

David then gives us 3 reasons why his refuge is the Lord.

1. Firstly is that God is still in control, AND HE IS NOT ASLEEP! ⁴ *The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.*

Don't ever imagine when things seem to go wrong around you that God has forgotten you and gone to sleep. Ps 121 puts it well ^{PS 121:3} He will not let your foot slip--
he who watches over you will not slumber;

^{PS 121:4} indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

^{PS 121:5} The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

^{PS 121:6} the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

^{PS 121:7} The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life;

^{PS 121:8} the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

- The Queens castles in England, and her flag to symbolize her residency.

Look at the imagery there

- *The LORD is in his holy temple;*
- *the LORD is on his heavenly throne.*
- *He observes the sons of men;*
- *his eyes examine them.*

No story more powerfully illustrates this than the story of Job

(Job 1 – 3)

2. The second reason why for David God was his refuge even when the foundations were shaken was because ⁵ ***The LORD examines the righteous.***

Indeed in the story of Job this was why God even allowed Satan to test him – God examines the heart of the righteous. I know for a fact that I praise God because he blesses me – there is nothing particularly righteous about that – the question is where I can still praise him even when there is seemingly no clear evidence of his blessing – can I praise him in spite of my obvious hardship?

The answer for most is “no”. When the hardships come, their praise dries up and their mouths are filled with questions, “Why

me, why now?”, and then finally they dry up all together, either in rebellion to God, or because they can see no further reason to praise him.

If your hearts desire is to be righteous – God will examine your heart – and the best way to do so is to remove obvious reasons for praise . . . will you be found wanting, or will you still overflow with songs of gladness as you have sang today?

And so, even when the foundations are shaken, stand firm for God may well be testing your heart.

3. A third reason is because ***the LORD is righteous***, *he loves justice; upright men will see his face.*

Ultimately justice will triumph. This is the testimony of Ps 73.

In the beginning the wicked may seem to triumph, but at the end of the day God has the last say, and the façade that is the seeming comfort, untouchability of evil, proves to be a paper house that is easily blown away by the blast of God’s justice.

What then do the righteous do when the foundations are shaken? Not flee to the mountain of Connection, Inconspicuously or of conformity, but flee to the Lord.