

Sermon Series: Singing in the Reign  
**Sermon title:** "The LORD is my refuge"

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 11

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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**Introduction:**

In about 1994, my friend Matt and I decided to do a 3 day backpacking trip doing the entire south end of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park.

It's 40 miles up and over steep 6000ft mountains.

On the last day, as Matt and I were finishing up, we were very tired and hiking over the last mountain before we went straight down to a dam, where our friend was supposed to pick us up.

As we came near Shuckstack Mountain, we were hiking on a flat ridge when we saw a big thunderstorm coming our way.

We could hear the booming thunder and see the lightning and wind and rain. It was headed straight for us.

Now you don't want to be on the top of a ridge in a thunderstorm. It's a good way to get struck by lightning.

Problem: There was no where to hide. There was no where to go.

We were stuck. There was no shelter. No cave. No rock outcrop.

Only trees. Lightning loves trees.

We did the only thing that we could do at that point. We prayed to the LORD God who controls the lightning and thunder and sought refuge in him. And we saw the glory of God.

That storm went right over us. Thunder, lightning and hail. My backpack was covered in hail, like it had snowed. The thunder was deafening. The lightning flashing made us tremble. But we kept walking on the trail in the midst of the storm. We survived and we were safe. You know why? Though we had no place to hide. We had a refuge. The LORD. And we worshipped him on that mountain.

As we will see in **Psalm 11** today, King David knew where to run to when difficulties came his way. Like David...we all face difficulties in our lives. And in those difficulties we have a choice to make. The choice is where will we run. Will we run to the LORD or away from the LORD.

**Let's pray.**

Let's read our passage again from **Psalm 11**.

To the choirmaster. Of David.

**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.

What's going on here in this Psalm?

## **I. David's temptation**

First, we see that David is being tempted to run away. This is clear.

[David says...] 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?"

Some people are saying this to David.

The Hebrew word 'you' is plural.

So, he's not talking to himself or an individual.

Someone is telling him he should run away. "*Flee like a bird to your mountain*".

Now David did hide away from Saul several times and he ran away from Absalom, so they could be saying, "*Go up to the hideout in the mountains. That's where you'll be safe*".

What's their reason for saying this?

Seems that someone wicked people are after him.

Notice a few things:

- The wicked want to shoot arrows in the dark. They are ready. The bow is bent. The arrow is on the string. This could be literal...meaning someone wants to ambush David and literally kill him or it could be figurative for scheming behind his back to do harm to him. But the situation, whatever it is, is such that David is writing about being in trouble.

- "If the foundations are destroyed" is a weird phrase. It usually means the moral foundations. Things may be falling apart morally in the kingdom.

We don't know what occasion in David's life inspired him to write this song. Some say Absalom's coup or perhaps his failure with Bathsheba. It could be when Saul is after him and at that time Saul kills 80 priests in cold blood.

Can you imagine what that would do to the nation? Either way, we don't know.

What we do know is that in this case David receives counsel and is tempted to run away from the danger to a supposed safe place up in the mountains. But David has a mountain. He already has a place to run to that is secure. A stronghold.

## **II. David's foundation**

We already saw in **Psalm 9:9-10**

The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And all those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.

**Psalm 11:1** says, "In the LORD I take refuge"; and this is mentioned right off to make a clear point.

In the LORD David takes refuge.

Then in **verses 2-3** as we mentioned...comes this temptation.

Then in **verses 4-7** we have the reasons why God is David's refuge.

Why God can be trusted.

**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.

Notice again, as we've seen in the other Psalms in this section, that God reigns.

He is holy.

He rules from heaven.

God is a refuge for us because he is powerful. He is able to handle whatever difficulties we face. He is able to protect and provide for us.

He also sees. His eyes see what is going on.

He is omniscient. He is omnipresent. Nothing escapes him.

He doesn't JUST see though. He tests the children of man....everyone...and the righteous (v.5).  
All will be judged by him.

So David doesn't need to run away and find safety and security somewhere else. He has a refuge. He has God. And God is the all-knowing, all-seeing, powerful king and judge of all the world.

There's no need to fear. Just have faith in God.

**When we are tempted to run away from our problems in fear, we should run to God in faith.**

We see in **verse 5** that God hates the wicked.  
That's very hard to swallow in our world today.

We live in a world today that says God would never hate anyone. He approves of whatever YOU like. He would never condemn anything you do or disapprove of your behavior.

He's like a nice kind grandpa who gives you whatever you want.

God hates the wicked and wickedness.  
He doesn't think wickedness is funny.

He is righteous and loves righteous deeds.

Problem is we are all wicked. God therefore hates us and our wicked ways.

Now if we only had this verse in the Bible, this would be very bad news indeed.

But the Bible is clear that God hates the wicked but he also LOVES the wicked!

This is what we call 'the gospel'. It's good news.

God desires all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. **1 Timothy 2:3**

**2 Peter 3:9** [God] is not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance.

**Romans 5:8** says this, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

**John 3:16** God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The wicked's portion is in fire and sulfur (11:6), which is a place called hell but the righteous....those who



trust Christ and accept his death for their sin [will behold his face forevermore](#). (11:7)

Like David...we all face difficulties in our lives. And in those difficulties we have a choice to make. The choice is where will we run. Will we run to the LORD and say ["In the LORD I take refuge"](#) or will we run away from the LORD.

### **Application**

- Is there anything going on in your life at the moment where you need to run to the LORD for help?

Maybe you are trying to solve the problem yourself. Maybe you are wanting to run away from the problem and you know that you only need to be still and trust the LORD.

Can I just encourage you with this... take refuge in the LORD.

- One application that you might be able to draw from this Psalm is that you might have some near and dear to you that give you bad advice. These people probably meant well who said to David, ["Flee"](#). Seems like the logical thing to do. Well, faith isn't always logical.

Be careful that you don't hear what I am saying and ignore everyone's advice and take this as a sign to not listen to

anyone. No, but realize that in life there come times when you have to trust God and run to him and hear from him and it may not match what others say to us.

See, often we don't run to the LORD at all. We don't seek him at all. We say we are trusting God but in reality we just think and ask people what they think and don't REALLY run to the LORD.

- Last application, notice that the LORD loves righteous deeds. He LOVES righteous deeds. That should encourage you and me to do righteousness. When we do what is right, God loves that. He is righteous and loves it when we do righteous things.

Therefore, we should strive for righteousness. Maybe nobody care if we do what is right, but God LOVES it.