

Psalms 11-15

Good evening Church, thank you for coming out tonight.

We are continuing in our journey through the Old Testament tonight, we are currently in the Book of Psalms, we will be in Psalm 11 and we will make it to Psalm 15 tonight.

Our existence here in this life has a chief purpose above everything else.

We were made to worship God, to bring Him glory.

I don't know if you are signed up on our email list, but our office manager, Chelsea, sends out a daily devotion, one that the staff and I read in the morning.

This morning, it was from Warren Wiersbe, and he shared from part of **Col. 3:15-17 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**

Wiersbe pointed out in today's reading that, "Psalms were the songs taken from the Old Testament. For centuries, the churches in the English speaking world sang only metrical versions of the Psalms."

Then the church went to Hymns, both serve as wonderful worship unto the Lord.

I know today, there is a return to the Psalms in some of the worship, and there is just something really sweet about singing simply scripture.

Pastor Josh has done some new worship from the Psalms, and they are powerful.

Singing and praising our God is really only part of our worship.

Our lifestyles are to be a lifestyle worship, lived in obedience to our Lord.

David was a man after God's own heart, and it is pretty amazing that we get a glimpse into his heart through these songs, and we see that he was a man like you or I.

He deals with all the same emotions that you or I have. And his life, through all the ups and downs was an act of worship unto our God.

David's life before he became king had three divisions...

His earliest years were spent in the pasture with his father's sheep.

He worshipped God under those magnificent stars and in the moonlight.

He learned duty and even had courage in those years.

His faith was grown through smaller victories, defending those sheep from the paw of the lion and the bear.

The second division was from his fight with Goliath onward, in the courts of King Saul, whom he would replace one day.

During this time he gleaned much wisdom, learned how to restrain himself, and how to wait on the Lord. He learned submission and servanthood.

The third division came after Saul went mad, and chased David from him.

David spent these years in the wilderness, in a cave, and he ran for his life from Saul.

It was during this time David learned to lead, by heading up a hoard of misfits.

He learned war and how to use the shield and spear fearlessly.

This all took place before he was made king.

After becoming King David, he found many successful streaks in his rule, but there were some tumultuous times as well.

His own son, Absalom usurped him as king for a time, and once again David found himself fleeing into the wilderness.

Psalm 11 has been debated to be either from his wilderness experience during Saul's reign or from Absalom's coup.

Whatever the crisis is, we will see that this Psalm deals with choosing between fear and trust, or between walking by sight or walking by faith.

Either listening to human counsel and reasoning or trusting in God's Word and Wisdom.

And maybe tonight you are here and you are in the midst of your own wilderness experience.

It is my prayer that God will speak to you through the reading tonight.

Let's pray, and we will get into our text tonight.

Starting now in Psalm 11... it is entitled **Faith in the Lord's Righteousness** and written **To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.**

11:1 In the Lord I put my trust; How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain"? 2 For look! The wicked bend their bow, They make ready their arrow on the string, That they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart. 3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?

So whatever the crisis that David is facing here, we see that someone close to him is telling him to run for the hills.

David of course did not want to flee, but instead wanted to trust the Lord.

He was not willing to let fear overcome him because of his ominous circumstances.

Fear is a great motivator that is for sure.

When fear enters into our hearts about what may come, our tendency is to get out and we turn to flight.

We allow doubt to come into our thinking, and somehow we start making plans and moves based on the irrational assumption that our enemy is bigger than our God.

But understand something, fear is a terrible motivator in life, and it usually takes us further down the road of bad choices.

David was learning the value of turning to the Lord, and he tells his advisor that he puts his trust in the Lord.

Of course this is more fitting here to see this at the time when Absalom made his move, and not the time when David was running from the crazed King Saul.

David seemingly had learned through the former trial to trust the Lord in this newer trial.

Our struggles from our past teach us the better way for the next time.

Maybe you are thinking, “Oh pastor, you just don’t know what I am going through, it is not as easy as you think for me.”

People accuse me sometimes of being out of touch because I work at the church.

But something I have learned is this... through struggles in the past, and current struggles now, there is a better way than reacting in fear.

I have made some terrible decisions, and have even disobeyed God out of my reaction to fear.

But let God’s Word speak to you on your own worries and fears, **Heb. 13:5-6 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"**

The Lord is your helper, do not fear, what can man do to you?

Be content where you are is the instruction from God’s Word.

This is an invaluable word today...

1 Tim 6:6-8 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

Contentment and trust in the Lord are powerful forces against our enemy who loves to use fear and doubt in our lives.

David's naysayer friends tell him to focus on the terror that is coming upon them.

The wicked bend their bow, their arrows are ready to shoot to kill.

All of this comes against the foundations that David is trusting in.

But flying away like a bird is not the answer.

When your own foundation starts to shake and even break apart, how do you react?

When your marriage hits a rocky patch, when your boss tells you they have to make job cuts, when your child has chosen to rebel against all that you have raised them to know, or the doctor gives you terrible news?

There are these issues in life that just rock us, and often our first instinct is to flee like a bird.

And listen, the wrong voices in our lives can only add to the hardships, sometimes those voices create even greater heartbreak.

David turned to the Lord over the voices in his ear.

Look now at the rest of this Psalm starting in verse 4...

4 The Lord is in His holy temple, The Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of

men. 5 The Lord tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. 6 Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind Shall be the portion of their cup.

7 For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.

Instead of running from his troubles, David changes his focus from the trial to the realities of his God, our God.

David runs to the Lord and recognizes that God is on the throne and God is in control.

This truth really brings our trials into the proper perspective that is for sure.

When we can understand that God is the one who is allowing this trial, this test of our faith, it allows us to face it in strength.

David speaks of God's All-seeing Eyes.

God sees it all, nothing is hidden from His view.

I hope you know this tonight, that God sees you, He is aware of everything that you are going through and enduring through.

Remember last time, this same reality brought David a measure of comfort, when he wrote...

**Ps 8:4 What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?**

This brings the issues that we face into the right understanding.

David knew that God was aware of his situation.

And your situation tonight that you are facing, may simply be a time of testing for the righteous.

The wicked will get theirs in the end.

God is our Mighty Defender and our Strong Tower, our refuge in times of trouble.

Run to Him tonight, take this truth to heart tonight, God sees you...

David says the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness, and His countenance beholds the upright.

David focuses on the greatness of God, the care of God, and the vision of our God.

David found security in trusting God, he found safety in his knowledge of God.

Maybe his friends and counselors meant well in their advice, but David would no longer be moved by fear.

Consider now Psalm 12 with me, titled here... **Man's Treachery and God's Constancy**

To the Chief Musician. On an eight-stringed harp. A Psalm of David.

Psalm 12 seems to be written at a time when men were coming against David even backstabbing him.

Maybe at the time Ahithophel, one of his greatest confidants sided with his rebellious son Absalom.

The exact timing is really unknown, however David is being betrayed by someone close to him, and this Psalm is his response.

Verse 1 now...

12:1 Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. 2 They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; With flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

David feeling betrayed, it is one thing to get hit with friendly fire, a friend that means well but causes harm, but it is another to have a fatal wound in your back from someone who meant to cause harm.

David's heart is broken here.

It causes David to think that there are no righteous people left on this God-forsaken earth.

Only gossips and idle talkers are left.

David feels as though the whole world is against him.

Gossip has been known to bring down the greatest of men.

God's Word is clear that Gossip is always bad.

David describes here the classic backbiter, always to your face they butter people up, but goodness behind your back they speak words from the pit of hell.

Always be cautious of those who overtly flatter you, they are usually compensating for what is said when you are not around.

More destructive than tyrannical kings bringing their wrath upon the church is a gossiping tongue among God's people.

Be the one that stops it, I know we love to lean in and here the latest in someone's life, but be the one who makes the Gossip feel incredibly awkward, it is the greatest tactic against them.

Look here how David hopes the Lord will handle it all.

3 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, And the tongue that speaks proud things, 4 Who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; Who is lord over us?"

David hopes the Lord will take care of this, and cut off their flattering lips and their tongue.

Notice David is not taking it upon himself to deal with it, but wanting God to be his Defender.

Benjamin Franklin said "Since I cannot govern my own tongue, tho' within my own teeth, how can I hope to govern the tongues of others."

David is feeling the same way here, and he petitions the Lord to handle it.

Verse 5 now...

5 "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, Now I will arise," says the Lord; "I will set him in the safety for which he yearns."

The Lord intervenes and promises the safety David longs for.

And you see, in your times of turmoil and heartbreak, when you are attacked, count on God being your Defender.

God will arise on your behalf...

Let's finish this Psalm...

6 The words of the Lord are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times. 7 You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

8 The wicked prowl on every side, When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

You see when men speak forth lies against you, when they attack with falsehoods and deceit, we can counter it all with the sure and true promises of God.

David says here that God's Word is even tested, like silver tried in a furnace, purified seven times, or perfectly, completely.

David also claims God's Word is trustworthy, as His Words are preserved.

Also, he states that God's Word is timeless lasting forever.

David concludes that God's Word is True, Tested, Trustworthy and even Timeless.

Church put your trust in His Word, it has sustained generations of God's people throughout history.

It has stood the test of time.

Think about all who have gone before us, who have put the Word to the test, only to further strengthen our stance today upon it.

As sure and true as it was for David in his day, it is true for you and I today.

The Word is timeless, and it is relevant to every generation.

Let's move into Psalm 13 now... titled **Trust in the Salvation of the Lord**

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

This Psalm has been attributed to David's fleeing fugitive years.

When Saul exiled him and separated him from his people that he loved dearly.

Verse 1 now of Psalm 13...

13:1 How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me? 2 How long
shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my
heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over
me?

I don't know about you, but there are those times when it seems as though the Lord has forgotten me in my time of need.

Perhaps you have felt that way a time or two.

But our heartaches are so painful, and we are just longing to hear from the Lord, and it is crickets, and we simply cry out "How long, O Lord?"

David is experiencing this here, as he is running for his life from Saul.

It is interesting, because David had already been anointed King of Israel by Samuel the prophet many years before this.

And here, even upon the promises of God, he is living in a cave facing great peril.

He was supposed to be a king yet he is in such a humiliating predicament.

And this is where we find ourselves at times.

We know what God has promised us and assured us of, but circumstances seem so far from that reality.

We have an enemy that is unrelenting in his attacks, and sometimes it seems we can barely lift our head out of the water, and he is pulling us back under before we can catch our breath.

And at times God feels distant and far...

But understand, He is not, He is still at work in your life.

I was telling a woman the other day who is going through one of these seasons where she just cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel.

She had a very specific promise from the Lord, but it seems impossible currently.

I pointed her to Joseph in the Bible, who too had promises implanted into his heart, dreams that he would one day be a ruler.

But he was sold into slavery by his own jealous brothers, then put in prison after being falsely accused, and there was about 13 years of him in this incredible valley low.

And we go through these dark times of grief and sorrow, and we think we are abandoned, but remember the promises of God came to pass in Joseph's life.

It was actually all those trials that ultimately got him there, and remember his conclusion at the end of it all.

When his brothers thought he would enact vengeance upon them...

Gen 50:20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

God's plan ultimately came to pass, and no amount of hardships in this life could stop it.

Church keep the faith, no matter your circumstances tonight.

Rom 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

God is for you, be patient, even when the odds are stacked against you, if you are for God, He is for you.

David goes on now verse 3...

3 Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death; 4 Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him"; Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

David was at the end of himself, complete and utter exhaustion and despair.

He asks the Lord to "Enlighten *his* eyes."

He wanted to see God's presence in all of this, to know that he could lay his head down and sleep without fear of death.

David wanted to see the protection that the Lord provided for him so he could find rest.

David asked four times, "How Long?"

Three times he says, "Lest" or "What if."

These statements seemingly always work against faith.

Sometimes we "what if" things so much we never move an inch in life.

These “What ifs” create anxiety and really are means to torture us.

They have so much control over our decision making.

When the Lord led Jess and I to foster care and adoption, our hearts and minds were filled with all kinds of “what ifs,” friends and family discouraged us with all kinds of “what ifs.”

But ultimately we concluded if God has led us here, He will carry us through all that is ahead.

We simply needed to rest in our God, not the many, many voices from within and without that created anxiety and fear.

I am learning in this life, to listen to the voices that are pushing me toward faith.

Sure there will always be those voices in your life that are telling you, “It might not work, what if you fail, what if, what about, and you’ll never make it.”

Start listening to the voices that push you toward faith, “What if God is in this, imagine what it will be, think of the possibilities.”

Rest in God’s Promises and direct your life according to what He says, and surround yourself with people of faith, not doubt.

David reminds himself in verse 5 now...

5 But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

We see here David transitions his song from fear to faith.

“But God,” is a concept that should remain at the forefront of our hearts and minds.

When it seems your marriage is done, but God.

When your job is uncertain, but God.

When the doctor gives you the terrible diagnosis, but God.

When the kids have pushed you past your limits, but God.

The only thing that changed in David’s situation was his outlook.

Instead of focusing on his perilous predicament, he turned his attention toward his God.

He rejoiced in the salvation of God, who was in total control of his life.

Look up tonight, look past your circumstances, look to your God.

Prayer changes things church, it does not always change our circumstances, but it surely will change our outlook in our circumstances.

We will find the strength to endure and to keep moving forward, to take another step, to live another day.

As we seek the Lord, it brings us to the awareness that we are not god, but He is God, and He is Sovereign over the affairs of our lives.

David's heart was dramatically changed here through his prayer.

So let's move in Psalm 14 now... entitled **Folly of the Godless, and God's Final Triumph (Ps 53)**

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Verse one, an ode to national atheist day, April first, April fool's day.

14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God. "They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

The fool has said in his heart that there is no God, and there is a lot of truth in that statement.

Truly the evidence of our God is abundantly clear, just looking up into that brilliant night sky speaks volumes to this reality of a Creator.

Nature, even the complexity of the human body and mind all speak to a Maker.

The fool says in his heart there is no God, David points to his own reasons here, man is corrupt in himself, and does abominable things.

Verse 2 now...

2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

In the New Testament, Paul uses these verses to describe man in **Rom. 3:10-12 As it is written:**

"There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

In order for man to be comfortable in his sins and in his indulgences, he has to put God out of his mind altogether, he must suppress the truth, and reject the witness of God.

When God is absent from a man's conscience, they are not restrained by His Holy Spirit, and they live like an animal.

David said this is foolish, to give up this relationship with our Creator and to follow the temporary pleasures of this world, which is fleeting and always leaves you thirsty for more.

Jesus said **John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.**

True living, satisfied living, is found only in a relationship with our God.

Verse 4 now...

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call on the Lord? 5 There they are in great fear, For God is with the generation of the righteous. 6 You shame the counsel of the poor, But the Lord is his refuge.

David states here those without the knowledge of God have no remorse in taking advantage of the weak and the poor, and they do not call upon or consider the Lord.

David uses this metaphor here of “eating people like bread,” in likening their abuse toward the poor and the helpless people.

David however claims that the Lord is with the generation of the righteous, and identifies Himself with His own, He is a protector and a refuge to them.

He is that for you tonight, your protector and your refuge.

Paul continues on here in verse 7...

7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

Those who come after God's people and deny His existence, those who say, "There is no God," will have their day of judgement.

And there is coming a day of judgement, it is unavoidable, and it will be terrible.

Jesus Himself will rule and reign from Jerusalem, and all the arrogance of man and rebellion will be dealt with justly.

Now, I would caution you in rejoicing in those that will meet their final judgement before Christ.

Understand it will not be a celebratory time, where we gloat over those who persecuted us and preyed on God's people in this life.

There is nothing more terrible than understanding the reality of those who will be eternally separated from God.

The final judgement depicts frightening angelic beings carrying off those and placing them in Gehenna, a place described as having a flame that is not quenched, and where the worm does not die.

It is eternal torment, and I don't know about you, but I don't wish that upon my worst enemy.

Instead of gloating over this reality that the wicked will one day be punished eternally, we should be moved to action to tell as many people as possible of the salvation that is offered in Jesus.

Don't wish judgement upon anyone... it is coming, and that reality should cause us to passionately preach this life saving Gospel of Grace while there is still time.

Let's finish up tonight with Psalm 15...

This is a Psalm that Jess and I really enjoy, we actually read it every night for about a year before we went to bed early on in our walk.

It implanted the character in our hearts that God desired of us.

Psalm 15 is titled in the New King James Version, **The Character of Those Who May Dwell with the Lord**

And it is **A Psalm of David.**

15:1 Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

David puts forth the question, "Who is worthy to live in God's presence?"

In David's day the presence was at the Tabernacle, or Tent of Meeting, the Temple was not yet built.

David is inspired here to give the answer to the question.

2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; 3 He who does not

backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

Interesting here that David says the person who can dwell in God's presence must walk uprightly and work righteousness.

But David has already said that there are none that are good, yet to dwell in the presence of God was contingent upon works of righteousness.

But understand something, he is not saying that being in the presence of God was contingent upon my ability to be righteous.

We will never be able to fully live righteous, we will fail in this attempt every time.

He is talking about righteousness being the pursuit and passion of our lives.

Eph. 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Also in Col. 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

We are to pursue righteousness to enjoy abiding in the presence of God.

Also, we are to speak truth in our hearts, and we are not to backbite.

And again Gossip is such a destructive force, and it is toxic to any group of people.

Eph. 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

There is a better way, speak encouragement to people, build people up, speak words of life into them.

Listen when we edify one another, and impart Grace toward each other, there is joy and excitement in our service.

If you are to speak words of correction to anyone, season them with Grace and Compassion.

Gal 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

There is a big difference between gossips and being a concerned brother or sister in the Lord, one will be in overt love and compassion the other meant to destroy.

Guard your words and check your motives, backbiting is not welcome in the presence of God.

Righteousness is truly lived out in our actions toward one another.

The way we conduct ourselves is really a reflection of our walk with God.

1 John 1:6-7 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

David continues on here in his description of the person who dwells in the presence of God.

4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these things shall never be moved.

David also knows that those who are right in God's eyes will be despised by those who are of this world.

And in turn this world's wickedness will be despised by us.

He is saying to not honor the vile person or be influenced by them.

Too many times people are moved in their decision making by a Hollywood actor or celebrity of some kind.

Influencers have huge sway over what people buy and eat and drink, and even over what is morally acceptable and right.

Don't blindly follow those who are popular, but honor those who fear the Lord.

David also says a person's pocket book will also speak volumes to who they are, in how their money is used.

If you want to be unhindered in your worship toward God, be sure to have a Biblical concept of money and not a selfish or worldly view of money.

We are simply stewards over all that God has entrusted to us, and we are to be faithful with what He blesses our lives with.

Warren Wiersbe said in the devotion sent out today...

"Someone has said that a successful Christian life involves attention to three books: God's Book, the Bible; the pocketbook; and the hymnbook."

I heard it said that our pocket books are the last stronghold in many Christian's lives, and once God conquers a person's money, He has the whole man.

God expects us to live generously, openhanded as He is with us.

We are not to deal dishonestly for selfish gain.

David says that the man who can live this way shall not be moved.

That line, "shall not be moved," meant the world to Jess and I early on, that is why we loved this Psalm.

Our lives were so chaotic and uncertain before we surrendered our lives to Jesus, and we so longed for stability.

We found it in the presence of God, and we found security and stability in our lives when we lived for Him and His desires.

We did not and do not always get a right, but it is our prayer that these things are our pursuit.

I hope these things are your life's pursuit?

If they are you will not be moved.

That is the promise before us tonight.

Let's pray...