

13. The Book of Psalms 11:1-7

If The Foundations Are Destroyed-Part 1

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(8-3-25)

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As we come to Psalm 11 it's obvious that David was facing an enemy of some kind.

It isn't hard to figure out that the background of this psalm was either when he was fleeing from Saul or from Absalom—on that most commentators agree.

One of them made this statement—

"Psalm 11 is an antidote for gloomy headlines. When the news is all bad—wars, violence, crime, corruption and political unrest—David reminds us that we can rise above the circumstances of life by keeping our eyes on the Lord."

I've divided this psalm into two main points—

I. The Advice of Fear—verses 1-3

II. The Advance of Faith—verses 4-7

Fear wants us to retreat whereas faith moves us to advance—*"Perhaps among all the psalms none reveals more perfectly the strong hold of faith."*

I. The Advice of Fear—verses 1-3

Psalm 11:1-3 (NKJV)

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?

In other words, David is getting advance from one or more people who are giving him 'fear-based' counsel—something to the effect,

"David you can't fight this battle and win! The enemy is too strong; the foundations of the kingdom have fallen—all hope is lost! Therefore, all you can do is flee to the mountains (run for your life and hide)!"

But David's response, **"In the Lord I put my trust."** (verse 1a)

As we talked about when we studied Psalm 9—this is not only a statement of faith, but also a perspective of life. Looking at life through the eyes of faith will give you a whole different perspective of life—including and especially when it comes to the trials you face in life—as David demonstrates here.

My perspective of life will be determined by where I am living—close to earth or seated with Jesus in heavenly places.

This will determine whether I look at life through the eyes of flesh or through the eyes of faith.

➔ Listen for the story of Elisha and Gehazi in Dothan—2 Kings 6:8-17

One pastor commented on this by saying,

“How I pray that, in every situation we face, we would not only see the problem but that we would see the solution—that the Lord is with us; that His angels are surrounding us; that His promises are applicable to us. He says He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He says He will complete the good work He began in us (Philippians 1:6). He says all things work together for good to them that love God (Romans 8:28). He says nothing separates us from His love (Romans 8:35–38). He says all of our needs will be met according to His riches (Philippians 4:19). He says He is the God who heals us (Exodus 15:26). We need to see the reality of the spiritual forces surrounding the enemies that surround us.”

If you keep your eyes on the Lord and realize that whatever problem you are facing the Lord is with you and has you surrounded—it will greatly help you to have peace and faith that He is going to work it out.

➔ Hold on to verse 3—I want to come back to it.

II. The Advance of Faith—verses 4-7 (‘keep moving forward and fight’)

Psalm 11:4 (NKJV)

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.

One of the main problems that the Bible reveals about the wicked is that—they don’t believe that God can see the evil that they’re doing, and therefore they don’t fear a day of judgment is coming:

Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NLT)

¹⁴ God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

Hebrews 4:13 (NIV)

¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

“The Lord’s throne *is* in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.” (verse 4)

One commentator said,

“The reference to God’s “eyelids” is interesting. When we want to look at something very closely, we narrow our eyelids, half closing our eyes. Far from being indifferent to what was happening to David, the Lord narrowed His eyes, taking a sharp look at it.”

The word **“test”** in verse 4 carries the idea of *“testing metals” (for strength and purity)*—

Jeremiah 11:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But, O Lord of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause.

Jeremiah 17:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ I, the Lord, search the heart, / test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

One pastor put it this way—

“The Lord tests the righteous to bring out the best in them, but Satan tempts them to bring out the worst. When we trust the Lord in the difficulties of life, our trials work for us and not against us (2 Cor. 4:7–18).”

Psalm 11:5–6 (NKJV)

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.

The ‘cup’ that David is referring to is the ‘cup of God’s indignation’ (His judgment):

Revelation 14:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

What’s in view is ‘full strength’ eternal judgment.

Believers will never drink of this cup because—Jesus already drank it for us:

Matthew 26:36, 39 (NKJV)

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." ... ³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

John 18:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

Those who reject Christ will be made to drink that cup of judgment themselves—full strength for eternity. The Psalm ends with a statement of faith—

Psalm 11:7 (NKJV)

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

One writer commented on this—

“The Lord loves righteousness. In time of trouble when the foundations are removed, we are to look from earth to heaven—the upright will behold His face. What a wonderful picture this is!”

For the rest of our time, I want to focus our attention on verse 3:

Psalms 11:3 (NKJV)

³ If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?

Those who work in construction will tell you that a building (especially a tall building) is only as strong as the foundation it's built upon—if the foundation is faulty the structure built upon it is doomed to fail.

Let's apply the concept of a foundation *allegorically*. Civilizations have to be built on a strong foundation if they are going to survive, thrive, and be blessed.

God has created three institutions that a civilized, God-ordained society must be built upon:

1. *Government*
2. *The Church*
3. *The Family*

All three are built on the principle of authority and submission.

1. Government

There is only one Foundation that human government must be built upon if it is going to succeed and be blessed—and that foundation is God and His Word.

Proverbs 14:34 (NIV)

³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people.

God has delegated His authority when it comes to human government to leaders that are to rule in the fear of God—in other words, honor Him by keeping His word and imposing penalties upon those who violate His laws.

Romans 13:1 (NLT)

¹ Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there [appointed] by God.

In Romans 13 Paul is dealing with *civil* government. In every ordered society there must be authority and submission to that authority—otherwise you have a state of anarchy, and no society can survive indefinitely under anarchy.

So, God instituted human government to maintain law and order and to keep societies from descending into anarchy and chaos. This does not mean that He approves of everything the leaders of any particular government do—He certainly doesn't approve of corruption, brutality, and tyranny!

But the fact remains that all governmental authorities are appointed by God.

Both Paul and Peter commanded us to be good citizens and submit ourselves to governmental authorities. We are commanded as Christians to pray for our leaders whether we agree with them or not, whether we voted for them or not—godliness respects the office God has ordained.

Michael the archangel respected Lucifer; David respected Saul; and Daniel respected Nebuchadnezzar.

Many in our country believe that Donald Trump is an illegitimate president and say things like— “*He’s evil, he can’t be from God and therefore Trump isn’t my president!*” (Comment)

You don’t read things like that coming from Daniel, David, Paul or the other N.T. writers.

Romans 13:1–2 (NLT)

¹ Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. ² **So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.**

Paul is telling us that anyone who disobeys or rebels against the government is disobeying and rebelling against the God who has ordained that government. And that whoever resists the authority of government earns and deserves punishment.

As a general rule that is true—however, there are exceptions. There are times when God accepts rebellion against authority—and even commands it!

As we have already pointed out, the Bible has some pretty clear admonitions about respecting and obeying governing authority and being good citizens as Christians—

1 Peter 2:13–15 (NLT)

¹³ For the Lord’s sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, ¹⁴ or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. ¹⁵ [For this]...is God’s will...

In America, governmental laws (civil laws) and God’s laws have often been in agreement—but more and more in recent years, in our country, they stand in opposition to each other.

The only time God allows us to disobey civil government is when the government passes laws that are in direct violation of God’s laws—then, as Peter said, “*We must obey God rather than men.*” (Acts 5:29)

You all remember that during the COVID outbreak 5 years ago, Christians tried to be good citizens and obey our local and state authorities (mayors and governors) that asked us to self-quarantine to “*flatten the curve*” of the virus to keep infection rates low so as not to overwhelm our hospitals and medical personnel.

But what started out as ‘*encouraging*’ Americans to practice common sense and stay at home as much as possible during that critical period—quickly devolved into tyrannical overreach. The problem was that many liberal governors classified abortion clinics, liquor stores, casinos and pot shops as *essential* allowing them to remain open—while classifying churches as *non-essential* and ordering them to be closed.

Governors in these states threatened to arrest and fine pastors and their congregations for violating their Executive Orders if they chose to meet for church services—even claiming that they had the authority to ‘suspend’ their constitutional rights during this emergency.

Some churches such as the Maryville Baptist Church in Kentucky said they were going to obey God rather than men and announced they would have Easter Sunday Services regardless of what the Governor ordered.

Democratic Kentucky Governor, Andy Beshear, announced that the state would enforce a stay-at-home measure by recording the license plates of any person attending Easter services.

The pastor of the Maryville church, pastor Jack Roberts, said that he arrived at the church Sunday to find that someone had dumped nails at the entrances of the church parking lot—

“Of all the places to keep you from, they should’ve put them (the nails) down at the liquor store to keep people from getting drunk, going home, and killing somebody on the way,” Roberts said, Fox News reports. “They could’ve put them down at the abortion center. They could’ve saved some lives down there, maybe.”

There are many more examples that I could give you where the government has tried (and possibly will try again in the future) to shut down churches in the name of the ‘greater good’ leaving Christian pastors and congregations to practice what I’ll call—“righteous rebellion”.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his famous “letter from the Birmingham jail” rightly declared,
“One has not only a legal, but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God.” He went on to explain, *“An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law [the law of God].”*

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

The second institution God has ordained for a society to be blessed and fruitful is the Church.

2. The Church

The Church is also known as the ‘*Body of Christ*’ with Jesus as its *Head*. Unfortunately, many people think of the Church as an *organization*—but that is fundamentally incorrect.

The Scriptures teach that the Church isn’t an organization—it’s an *organism*! The big difference between an organism and an organization is that—one has life and the other does not.

As one author put it—

“A corpse is organized—it has all of the limbs in the right place, the bone structure is intact, all the organs are in the right spot and connected to the right things—everything is there but it’s not alive. At this point it’s an organization but it has ceased being an organism.”

The dictionary defines an organization as a ‘structured system’—but it defines an organism as a ‘living system.’”

So again, the Scriptures teach that the Church isn’t a dead organization—it’s a living organism!

It’s living because Jesus, Who is alive, is its Head and because the very ‘life breath’ of God, the Holy Spirit (pnuema-breath) fills its members.

Ephesians 2:20–22 (NKJV)

²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

This temple (the Church) is built on the *'foundation'* of the apostles and prophets. It does not mean that the apostles and prophets were the actual spiritual foundation of the Church—Christ is the foundation of the Church:

1 Corinthians 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

So, then what did Paul mean when he said that the Church was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets?

It means that the apostles and New Testament prophets were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit and given God's revelation of New Testament doctrine that the Church is built upon.

Acts 2:42 (NKJV)

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine...

This doctrine was eventually written down and became the New Testament Scriptures.

The foundation of a building needs to be laid only once.

The apostles and prophets did this work once for all—that is why the office of apostles and prophets has passed off the scene.

1 Timothy 3:14–15 (NLT)

¹⁴ I am writing these things to you now, even though I hope to be with you soon, ¹⁵ so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the **pillar and foundation** [NKJV-*'ground'*] **of the truth**.

A pillar, of course, was used to support or hold up a structure. But, in those days, a pillar was often set up 'free standing' in a public marketplace and notices were posted on it—in that context it became a 'proclaimer'. So, the first thing that we Christians are to do as 'pillars' is hold up and proclaim God's truth to the people of this world (the Great Commission).

But also, Paul says that we, as the church of the living God, are not just the pillars but also the 'ground of the truth'. The word *ground* suggests a *bulwark*. The dictionary defines 'bulwark' as: *"a solid wall-like structure raised for defense"*.

As Christians we are not only to proclaim the Word of God but we are also to defend it against the attacks of the enemy—*"earnestly defending the faith"* (Jude 3—this is not the faith of trusting—it is the faith of truth).

Warren Wiersbe—

"As a bulwark, the church protects the truth and makes sure it does not fall...When local churches turn away from the truth and compromise in their ministry, then the enemy makes progress. Sometimes church leaders must take a militant stand against sin and apostasy. This does not make them popular, but it does please the Lord."

1 Timothy 4:1 (NLT)

¹ Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.

2 Timothy 4:1–4 (NLT)

¹ I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: ² Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. ³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Next week I'd like to look at the third great, essential institution that a society must be built upon if it's going to be healthy and blessed—the foundation of marriage and family.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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