

Confidence in Dangerous Times

Psalm 11

Welcome; Last week, 1490 locations worshiped live from 36 states, Can, Mex, UK, S. Afr., Istanbul.

"Pastor Craig, the highlight of our week is watching and listening on Sunday morning to your New Hope service. Technology is absolutely amazing and so necessary when we can't gather in a building. Proof positive that "the church is NOT a building!"

*A big thank you to our **media and tech crew** who has helped New Hope transition seamlessly for the last **6 weeks to minister hope and confidence during these times.**

*Do me a favor: **Write a note this week** to our tech crew, telling them how thankful you are!

This is the **5th sermon in Psalms of Confidence for times that are Troubled, Fearful, Anxious, Deadly...**

*And today, Psalm 11 adds to that list by remaining **"Confident in Dangerous Times."**

1. Run to God in dangerous times, (v.1-3)

"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?"

***When things get dangerous (politically/personally) some people want to run and hide.**

*Maybe you feel that way right now: You just everything to go back to safe & normal.

*David faced about every possible scenario of danger a person could face.

***Culturally**, he led an economy through prosperity and recession.

***Politically**, he had adversaries who wanted him removed from office.

***Personally**, he and his family faced threats of physical harm or death.

*David had a **cabinet of advisors** who gave counsel: *"Run. Go to the mountains. Fly like a bird."*

*Their advice was logical. **Like Dr. Fauci with Trump**, they were concerned for the **physical safety** of David **and based on the data they saw**, recommended action.

*But instead of **"Stay at Home,"** they recommended **"Flee to the Mountains"**

*In the words of **Gandalf**: *"Fly you fool!"*

*In the words of **John Denver**: *"Leaving on a jet plane. Don't know when I'll be back..."*

*The **economic fallout & risk of personal danger** convinced them that hope was gone:

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

IOW: Things in **culture** are **crumbling...**and there's nothing you can do...but Run!

***Let's relate this to our times. I have three questions: "Faith or Fear"**

- **What “Red Line” (if crossed) would make you want to run?**

- *In 2012, Netanyahu told the UN, Iran had crossed a “Red Line” in nuclear program.

- *When you look at our culture, what **Red Line** would make you want to flee for safety?

- ***Politically**, some Americans say they will flee the country if they don’t like a President.

- *Before last election, a number of stars said they would flee the country if Trump was elected; Miley Cyrus, Whoopi Goldberg, Snoop Dogg, Samuel L Jackson, Cher (**Jupiter**)

- ***Gallup**: Americans who want to leave the US permanently during...**Bush; 11%. Obama; 10%. Trump; 16%. (The top destination to run to: Canada)**

- ***Economically**, some Americans decide to move to other states due to taxation.

- ***Bloomberg** = Every year, 5 million Americans move states (**New York being the biggest loser...Florida being the biggest winner**).

- *What about you fellow Michiganders...what would cause you to run for safety?

- ***Personally**, some run away to **avoid problems**.

- *In neighborhoods, some move because of issues with neighbors.

- *In workplaces, some switch jobs because of conflict with coworkers.

- *In families, some run from homes because of turmoil with family.

- **Where would you run for safety?**

- ***David’s advisors said: “Go to the Mountains.”** If I had a choice, I’d go to **Bozeman, Montana**.

- *And there are times to run. **Jesus talks about fleeing to the mountains during tribulation.**

- “let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” (Matt 24:16)*

- *Do you know where **Ralph, MI** is? Likely, not...unless you’re a Yooper.

- *It’s a tiny place past Escanaba, with a small cabin, **off the grid in the woods**.

- *From my childhood, that is the place my dad always joked about running in hard times.

- *Well, even though **running is an option**, David chooses a place safer than **Ralph or Bozeman**.

- **Do you have courage to stand firm?**

- *The Bible says: *“If you do not stand firm in faith, you will not stand at all.”*

- ***Advisors Perspective: “Flee!”** Hope was lost; the only option David had was to run for safety.

- *They probably even had **logic, data, and an ounce of wisdom!**

- ***David’s Perspective: “How can you say...”**

- *Hope was not lost. He saw running from the trouble a lack of trust in God’s promises

*Yes, there may be times for the righteous to run...but there are times to **stand firm**.

*The way David saw it:

*His advisors may have had counsel, but they lacked courage.

*His advisors may have had a plan, but they lacked perspective.

*His advisors may have had good data, but they lacked godly direction.

*David has the **courage to stand firm in faith** even when everything in culture is crumbling:

"How can you say...Flee...hope is lost...or what can the righteous do...?"

***Northern MI, in these dangerous times there is a great need to stand firm in faith.**

*Our world has a lot of **advisors** who have no faith in Living God.

*David looks the advisors in the eye and says w/ confidence: *"In the Lord, I take refuge."*

*No matter what **Fox News** or **CNN** or **Social Media** says, **the Lord is our refuge.**

*No matter what happens with **China**, **the Lord is our refuge.**

*No matter who is elected as **President** or **Governor**, **the Lord is our refuge.**

*No matter if the foundations of **American economy** crumble, **the Lord is our refuge.**

2. (Run to God) ...because He is in charge, (v.4-6)

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.

*The advisors see no other option: *"What can the righteous do, David, other than run?"*

*David says: *"Here's what we can do: Remember who God is and what He will do!"*

*In the face of danger, David **clings to 2 fundamental truths about God:**

- **He knows what's wrong.** (v.4)
- **He will fix it.** (v.5-6)

*He genuinely believes that **Heaven** is God's throne, and **Earth** is His footstool.

*He believes **Heaven oversees Hell**. That God is in charge...and we can trust Him.

*I imagine people asking David: *"Why is God allowing this? Why is the economy crumbling?"*

*To which David responds: *"God is testing his people."*

***Two times, he says that God: "test the children of man." "tests the righteous."**

***IOW:** David interprets the hardship as a **DIVINE TEST** of the human heart.

*Perhaps God uses **economic turmoil** as way to **revive a dead nation**.

*Perhaps God uses **danger** to see if people **turn to Him, or away from Him.**

*Perhaps God is testing to see if his people walk by **faith or fear?**

***This is how one 90 year old woman from NH sees it. (watches every Sunday from Indiana)**

*“Craig, I just had to write you and let you know what a joy it is to be able to watch you online during **this time of testing for our nation and the church.** We know that **God has a purpose in this** and my prayer, like yours, is that people will seek God and for revival for our country, the church and the world.*

*Let me ask you: **If our present crisis is a DIVINE TEST of your heart, are you passing?**

*Are you **walking by Faith** or are you **paralyzed by Fear?**

*My friend, here is what the righteous can do when the **foundations of culture crumble:**

We walk with faith in the Risen Savior...fully confident of Who He is and What He will do.

3. ...and our future is secure. (v.7)

7 For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.

***This is David’s closing argument for why he will not run or flee to the mountains of Bozeman.**

*First, he knows **God is righteous...**which means that God is completely and utterly good!

*Second, he knows **God loves righteous deeds...**which means God will defend him against evil.

*Third, he knows **the upright will behold God...**which means he has the future guarantee of God’s presence.

*What could be better news in **dangerous times?**

*God is good. He is with us. And His promise is never to leave us or forsake us.

*We don’t have to fear. We don’t have to run. We don’t have to panic.

Action Step: “Run to God!”

*David says: *“In the Lord I find refuge.”* He believes that the safest place to run in times of danger is not **Ralph, or Bozeman, or Canada,** but to the Lord.

***How do we do this?**

- **Be Patient.** Wait on the Lord’s timing. God has many chances to be early, but is never late.
- **Pray.** When fear rises up, cast your worries of the future to the Lord who daily bears us up.
- **Listen to counsel, but don’t always follow it.** Many people give advice without faith in God.
- **Keep Perspective.** Take the long view. God has always been faithful and will always be faithful.
- **Persevere.** We have need of endurance. Endure hardship as a “good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
- **Cling to Promises.** God sees what is wrong...and will one day fix it. His purposes & plans prevail.