

STATEMENTS OF FAITH: "Fight or Flight"

INTRODUCTION

- The first inclination that grips the human heart when encountering trouble is the **desire to run** ("How can I escape this?")
- This Psalm describes a **trying time, a period of persecution**. David stands his ground and refuses to flee.

THE COUNSEL (PSALM 11:1-3)

- "**Panic launched this Psalm**": David is facing *political intrigue* (v.2) and *political implosion* (v.3). David speaks of the "foundations [being] destroyed" (v.3). This is a time of **great instability**.
- David's counselors (either friends or political advisors) are telling him that there is nothing that the righteous can do but flee (v.3).
- Note that there are times when **ducking danger is not a lack of faith**. It can be prudent to flee danger and persecution (1 Samuel 19:18, Matthew 10:23, Luke 13:31-35).

THE CONVERSATION (PSALM 11:1-3)

- While David's counselors are well-intentioned and well-meaning, David decides to disregard this counsel and stay.
- David strikes up a conversation with his counselors and **challenges the voices of fear**.

"Be specific about your fears. . . talk to God about it. Putting your worries into words disrobes them. They look silly standing there naked." (Max Lucado, Fearless)

THE CONFIDENCE (PSALM 11:4-7)

- The term "LORD" is **emphatic** in this Psalm (v.1) – repeated **5x** in verses 1-7. David's heart is gripped by a **focus on the LORD**, not a focus on his circumstances.
- A. **God RULES (v.4)**
- David saw above His circumstances a **transcendent throne** and one who sat on it (v.4).
 - David reminds himself that things were never under his control.
- B. **God REVIEWS (v.4)**
- "The LORD's throne is in heaven." – God's rule is warm and real, not aloof and indifferent.
 - God is not inattentive – "his eyes test the children of man." **All disasters are tests** (1 Pet 1:6-9).
- C. **God REPAYS (v.5-6)**
- "The future of the child of God is the refining fire; the future of the man or woman without Jesus Christ is the judgment fire."
 - "God **hates** the wicked" (v.5) – a husband's love for his wife is expressed in his hatred towards any who would harm her.
- D. **God REWARDS (v.7)**
- "The upright shall behold his face." (v.7) – someday the righteous believer will turn his face away from the sorrow of this world and turn his face toward God in glory.

Sermon Application Questions

March 29, 2020

PERSONAL RESPONSES

Pastor Philip said in his sermon:

1

“Troubles and trials expose sin in our lives. They show us things that we hold to be far too important that are not related to the kingdom of God. They show us commands that we have yet to obey, show us a level of worship that we have yet to worship, an experience of grace we have yet to encounter, a love for others we have yet to fulfill.”

What do you think about this statement?

What are the current troubles and trials revealing about your life?

Bonhoeffer was a pastor who joined the German resistance that attempted to kill Hitler. He was arrested in 1945 and hung in a concentration camp.

The camp doctor who witnessed Bonhoeffer’s execution gave the following testimony of Bonhoeffer’s faith:

2

“I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer, before taking off his prison garb, kneeling on the floor praying fervently to his God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued in a few seconds. In the almost 50 years that I have worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God.”

What was your response to Bonhoeffer’s testimony?

What can this portrait of courage in church history teach us about how to handle our trials?

DIGGING DEEPER

1

Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week’s sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

Psalm 17:15

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

Psalm 93:1

The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.

Psalm 99:1-2

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.

Psalm 115:3

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Read **Psalm 11:1-3**. David here is having a conversation before the LORD. To paraphrase Martyn Lloyd Jones, David is “talking to himself, not listening to himself.”

2 What are the specific fears and worries that you are facing in this moment?

How can you “challenge the voices of fear” in your life?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Andrew Murray has written:

“In time of trouble say:

First — God brought me here. It is by His will I am in this strait place. In that I will rest.

Next — He will keep me in His love and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child.

1 *Then* — He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.

Last — In His good time He can bring me out again - how and when He knows.

I am here — by God’s appointment, in His keeping, under His training, for His time.”

Meditate on this instruction with a view towards personal application. How does this instruction help you face the trials in your life?

Psalm 11:7 teaches us that the “the upright shall behold his face.”

Pastor Philip told the story of when he visited his mother in Northern Ireland. She took his face in her hands and said, “It’s good to see your face son.”

2 One day, the righteous man will be able to turn his face away from the sorrows of this life and see God in all his glory. Perhaps with those nail scarred hands where He died for us on the cross, He will cup our cheeks and say: “It’s good to see your face, son.”

Take a moment and give God praise for the hope that we have of being with Him in heaven.

Ask the Lord to help you see beyond the sorrow of this moment to anticipate the moment when we shall see His face.