

### The Lord as a Refuge; The Pure Words of the Lord

#### Psalms 11 & 12

Psalm 11 - *"In the LORD I put my trust. How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain"? 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. If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*

*The LORD is in His holy temple. The LORD's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The LORD tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup. For the LORD is righteous. He loves righteousness. His countenance beholds the upright."*

#### Background Notes for Psalm 11

We don't know the exact occasion for this "Psalm of David." Possibly it was written at a time when David's friends urged him to flee for his life, because King Saul was trying to kill him. 1 Samuel 18:11: *"And Saul cast the spear, for he said, 'I will pin David to the wall!' But David escaped his presence twice."* And 1 Samuel 19:10: *"Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night."*

Perhaps David wrote Psalm 11 on one of the occasions when he was urged to flee from King Saul's lethal anger. But he maintained his trust in the Lord: *"How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain"? David turned to the Lord as his refuge!*

#### Doctrinal Point for Psalm 11

**When the temptation to run arises, faithful believers turn to the sovereign Lord.**

Verse 3: *"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"* This verse is sometimes taken out of its context and used as a "proof text" to say that when the moral fabric of society is gone, the righteous might as well "throw in the towel" and just give up, because there's nothing anyone can do to remedy the situation.

However, when verse 3 is used properly in its context, David was not saying that the situation was hopeless. No! Verse 3 is part of the incorrect counsel that David's friends were giving him. They were urging him to flee for his life because

unrighteous people were out to get him. King Saul was no longer maintaining law and order, so they felt that righteous people had nowhere to turn for justice.

But David's conclusion was markedly different from the advice of these prophets of doom. There **is** somewhere to turn when the foundations of society are crumbling. We can **turn to the Lord!** *"In the Lord I put my trust" (v1).*

The Lord is still on the throne. He sees all, and He knows all. In fact, everything is under His close scrutiny: *"The Lord is in His holy temple. The LORD's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men."* God is sovereign, and He is able to use all events, including those involving the wickedness of mankind, to test both the righteous and the unrighteous (v4-5).

So things are not up for grabs or out of control! The Lord is still on His throne, and He is still in control. When the temptation to run arises, faithful believers turn to the Sovereign Lord!

## **Practical Application for Psalm 11**

### **Remember, the Lord reigns - and He rains!**

*"Upon the wicked He will rain coals, fire and brimstone, and a burning wind" (v6).* When he wrote this part of the psalm, David may have been thinking of how God rained down fire and brimstone on sinful Sodom and Gomorrah. In any case, because the Lord's throne is in heaven, He reigns supreme - and He is in sovereign control of **all things** (v4). He can and will rain judgment on the wicked (v6). He hates unrighteousness (v5), but He loves righteousness (v7). Remember, the Lord reigns - and He rains!

**Psalm 12** - *"Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things, who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail. Our lips are our own. Who is lord over us?"*

*"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 words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD. You shall preserve them from this generation forever.*

*The wicked prowl on every side, when vileness is exalted among the sons of men."*

## Background Notes for Psalm 12

Psalm 12 is another “Psalm of David.” It was set to music for an eight-stringed harp, or lyre, and it was used for worship. In this psalm, the failing words of the world (v1-5) are contrasted with the enduring words of the Lord (v6-8).

When the psalm begins, David was lamenting because it seemed that godly and faithful people were dying off or disappearing, and that no believers were left. *“Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men” (v1).*

Have you ever felt like that? Has it ever seemed to you that all the godly people were disappearing, and no one was left? Many years after this psalm was written, Elijah came to the same conclusion. He complained to the Lord that he had been very committed, but no one had listened to his message. It felt like there was only one faithful person left in Israel - Elijah! *“And the word of the Lord said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ So he said, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.’” (1 Kings 19:8-10).*

Well, Elijah was wrong, and the Lord had to rebuke him. The Lord told him that there were actually 7000 other believers who had not bowed their knees to the false god Baal.

Before David finished Psalm 12, he too would realize that he was not the only believer in existence. Many righteous people were left - people who look to the Lord when they are weak and needy. *“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.”*

## Doctrinal Point from Psalm 12

**When the words of this world fail, the faithful turn to the enduring Word.**

Verses 2-4 tell us that the words of this world have three characteristics: falsehood, flattery, and freedom from any restriction and restraint.

a. **Falsehood.** *“They speak idly [or falsely] everyone with his neighbor (v2).*

The words of this world are filled with lies. But what can we expect? Satan is the god of this world, and *“he is a liar, and the father of lies” (John 8:44).*

b. **Flattery.** *“With flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things” (v2-3).*

The words of this world are often insincere compliments that are used for the purpose of manipulation, or looking for favors, or wanting some kind of personal reward.

c. **Freedom from any restriction or restraint.** *“Who have said, ‘With our tongue we will prevail. Our lips are our own. Who is lord over us?’” (v4).*

The wicked people of this world don't want censorship of any kind. They do not like restriction or restraint on what they say or do. They hate authority, because it puts limits on their sinful talk and sinful ways. Think of how the media and entertainment industries react to censorship. They do not want **any** restraint or restriction, and they're arrogant in their willful freedom. *“The wicked prowl on every side, when vileness is exalted among the sons of men.*

Here we're discussing characteristics of the speech of the wicked people of this world, but are the words of unbelievers always false, insincere, and unrestrained? No! There are many unbelievers whose speech is above reproach. But the world is a satanic system of values and attitudes that are opposed to God, and its words are unbiblical and false.

What a contrast we see in the words of the Lord that we find in Scripture! They are pure, like highly refined silver. The Lord's words are *“like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (v6).*

And it is in the words of the Lord that the believer finds protection and preservation from the lies, and the insincere flattery, and the ungoverned words of this ungodly and worldly generation (v7). When the words of this world fail, faithful believers turn to the enduring Word - the Word of the Lord.

## **Practical Application for Psalm 12**

### **Think of the Bible as pure silver!**

*“The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (v6).*

In the refining process of a precious metal, the impurities are burned off. The psalmist emphasizes his point by describing the words of the Lord like silver that is *“purified seven times”!* When a precious metal is refined seven times, **no impurities** will remain. It doesn't just **look** pure - it **is** pure!

That's what the Bible is. The Bible is free from any impurity. There are no lies. There are no insincerities. There is no deceit. There are no errors!

The Bible is unlike any human production. It is the inspired Word of God, free from any error. It's a miracle book! It's pure, like a precious metal that has been refined seven times. Think of the Bible as pure silver!