

PSYCHOLOGY IN THE PSALMS

PSALM 11

A STABILIZING SONG



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

DAVID MURRAY
JULY 9, 2022 (PM)

INTRODUCTION

We're living through a long earthquake that is shaking our society from top to bottom. It's not just the tumult in our political system, and it's not just the virus that's rocking our world. It's the moral and spiritual earthquake that's our greatest threat. Good is now called evil and evil is now called good. Truth is lies and lies are truth. The most basic distinctions in society are cracked and crumbling: What is marriage? What is a man? What is a woman? What is a family? What is right? What is wrong? The earthquake has spread from the media to schools to businesses to courts to churches and even to our own homes. Nothing is steady and sure. Everything is shaking and quaking—including ourselves. **What can stabilize us when everything is shaking?** We need earthquake faith to support and strengthen us, and that's what we find in Psalm 11.

BACKGROUND

The Psalms are God's infallible study of the connections between feeling, thinking, and doing. They stimulate healthy thoughts, feelings, and actions. But they also help us process dangerous and damaging emotions. So far we've felt the following Psalms:

- Psalm 1: A Happy Song
- Psalm 2: A Fight Song
- Psalm 3: A Peace Song
- Psalm 4: A Love Song
- Psalm 5: A Hate Song
- Psalm 6: A Complaining Song
- Psalm 7: A Justice Song
- Psalm 8: An Awe Song
- Psalm 9: A Safe Song
- Psalm 10: A Patient Song
- Psalm 11: A Stabilizing Song



1. THE LORD IS TRUSTWORTHY (1-3)

"I in the Lord take refuge" (1) David exclaims at the beginning of this Psalm. Why? Why this direct and determined confession of faith right up front?

David's enemies were taunting him: **"How can you say to my soul, 'Flee like a bird to your mountain'"** (1). The wicked were in power and the righteous were powerless in the face of their aggression and violence. The godly were being chased out of their homes, churches, and businesses. "Flee like a bird to your mountain," the wicked mocked (1).

"Your mountain" may have been a reference to Mt. Zion, the location of the Temple. The wicked may have been mocking David's confidence in the Lord's presence and power in the temple. "Go run to your protector if you are so confidence in him."

Or, the wicked may have been telling David to flee for safety in a nearby mountain. This is the more likely interpretation as David's response indicates that he knew their "invitation" to run to the hills was an ambush. **"Behold, the wicked bend the bow; they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart"** (2). If the righteous ran to the mountains, they would run into an ambush. Running to the mountains was running into a murder.

David and his fellow-believers were in dire straits. No wonder he asks, **"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"** (3). It looks hopeless. There aren't just hairline cracks in the fabric of society. The whole foundation is crumbling. The wicked are in power and the godly are not only being mocked but murdered. The basic essentials of a civil society have been smashed. What can the righteous do?

Back to verse 1. **"I in the Lord take refuge"** (1). I don't run to the temple, and I don't run to the hills, Instead, I run to the Lord. "I trust the Lord despite all your threats and violence."

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Feel the earthquake. Be aware of what's happening all around us. Get a real sense of the enormous earthquake that's crumbling the very foundations of our civilization. Don't ignore it. Don't get numb to it. Let it rock you and scare you.

Feel God's refuge. Don't run away but run to God. Run to him in prayer. Run to him in trust. Run to him for rescue. Run to him for safety and stability. When the biggest rocks are hurtling towards you, get into his refuge. and plant your feet firmly upon his rock-solid character.

**RUNNING TO THE LORD IS SAFER
THAN RUNNING FROM THE WICKED.**



And what do we see, when we run to the Lord?



2. THE LORD IS ON THE THRONE (4-7)

“The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man” (4). God is reigning over everything, sees everything, and is using these events to test people. He's testing believers to reveal their faith and faithfulness in the face of the wicked's threats. But he's also testing unbelievers to reveal where their hearts really lie.

And just in case anyone thinks that the wicked's success means that God loves the wicked and hates the righteous, the Psalmist confidently asserts: **“[God's] soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence”** (5) but **“loves righteous deeds”** (7).

And just in case there's any doubt as to the final outcome, David predicted that God would **“rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup”** (6), but **“the upright shall behold God's face”** (7). What a contrast in ends: God's face or God's fire. What a change of view for the righteous: from the wicked's face to God's face.

The scary threats of the wicked drove David to the stable throne of God. His earthquake faith was stronger than his earthquake fears.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

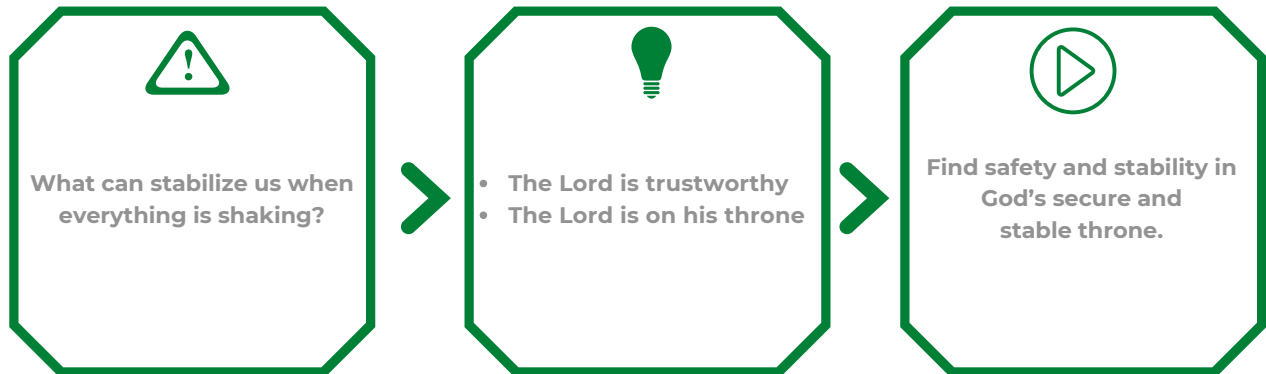
Find stability in this Psalm. When our lives, the church, and our world are being shaken, find safety and stability in God's stable, sure, and sovereign throne.

Find the Savior in this Psalm. When we sing this Psalm, we can, firstly, sing it to Christ as Sovereign over all. Secondly, we can sing it of Christ, as it describes his life and experiences on earth. He died in the midst of the greatest earthquake (an external and internal earthquake). Third, we can even sing it with Christ in the sense that he would have sung this Psalm in his scariest moments to stabilize his faith. Worship him by singing it with him to enter into his experience on earth.

MORAL EARTHQUAKES IN SOCIETY NEED NOT BE
SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKES IN OUR SOULS.



SUMMARY



THE NEXT CHAPTER

Gospel: If you're an unbeliever, take the warning of this Psalm, and repent to flee the fire.

Identity: Shape your identity with this Psalm not the media. You are not a scared little bird but a safe, secure, and stable believer.

Sing: Sing this song to stabilize you and to shake the wicked.

Prayer: My Refuge and my King stabilize me until I see your face

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What scares you about today's world and our society?
2. What aspect of God's character stabilizes you?
3. Who do you know that needs to hear this Psalm and how will you get it to them?
4. How does this Psalm help you evangelize?
5. How does this Psalm shape your view of heaven?
6. How will this Psalm change the way you read/hear/watch the news?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315
Phone: (616) 878-9768
www.firstbyroncrc.org

Pastor David Murray
www.thestorychanger.life