

The Weekly Word

Jan 31 – Feb 6, 2022

Hello Bible readers. This week we continue Luke's account of the early church reading Ps 11-13. I hope you are blessed as you join me. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, January 31: Psalm 11:1-3 NIV2011

¹ *In the LORD I take refuge.*

How then can you say to me:

"Flee like a bird to your mountain.

² *For look, the wicked bend their bows;*

they set their arrows against the strings

to shoot from the shadows

at the upright in heart.

³ *When the foundations are being destroyed,*

what can the righteous do?"

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Right out of the gate David declares his trust in the Lord. When the onslaught of life comes David turns to the Lord for his refuge.

When he opens his mouth to pray the first word that issues forth is that he will take refuge in his Lord. People may try to goad him to flee to the mountains as the wicked bend their bows and set their arrows to assault the upright in heart. But David has already declared that God, not the mountains, is his refuge.

David concludes this stanza with the probing *"When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"* (It seems to me that David has already answered that question in verse one, turn to the Lord as one's refuge.)

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

Listening in on David's prayer we hear how he puts his trust in the Lord especially when he senses the pressure mounting against him. God is his refuge and strength. Human hideouts can't possibly compare to the refuge that God alone can give. This song is a prayer any believer could and should pray when they feel as if they are being hunted or betrayed or trapped.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

Having received some personally disheartening news today, this Psalm is an appropriate reminder that my safe space, my hiding place, my refuge, is in the Lord God Almighty. God is always there when I need Him. He is my safe space.

Tuesday, February 1: Psalm 11:4-7 NIV2011

- ⁴ *The LORD is in his holy temple;
the LORD is on his heavenly throne.
He observes everyone on earth;
his eyes examine them.*
- ⁵ *The LORD examines the righteous,
but the wicked, those who love violence,
he hates with a passion.*
- ⁶ *On the wicked he will rain
fiery coals and burning sulfur;
a scorching wind will be their lot.*
- ⁷ *For the LORD is righteous,
he loves justice;
the upright will see his face.*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Where is God in our times of trouble? Where God always is. The Lord God is in His temple and on His throne (He is never hiding from us. God is in the place He always is, and we can turn to Him whenever we need.)

From His temple God observes all that is going on around the earth, nothing escapes His view. He sees the righteous and the wicked as well, and *he hates with a passion* the violence of the wicked. And upon the wicked the Lord will rain down his wrath... *fiery coals and burning sulfur; A scorching wind...*

The Lord God *is righteous; he loves justice* and people who are righteous will see His face... they will be invited into His presence.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

God does not hide from His people. The Lord God is in His temple, His throne room. He can always be found there and as the one who sits on the throne, God is observing His world and will treat the righteous with grace and invitation to come to Him. But the wicked, those who love violence, God will sow His wrath and judgment upon them.

The Lord loves justice and He will invite the righteous who love Him into His presence.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

I am never abandoned. I am never alone. As a beloved of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, God invites me to come to His temple and into his throne room. He invites me to see His face and to be known by Him. Praise be to the Lord God Almighty who is my refuge in times of trouble and my Savior at all times. Amen.

Wednesday, February 2: Psalm 12: 1-4 NIV2011

¹ *Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.*

² *Everyone lies to their neighbor;
they flatter with their lips
but harbor deception in their hearts.*

³ *May the LORD silence all flattering lips
and every boastful tongue—*

⁴ *those who say,
“By our tongues we will prevail;
our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Apparently, David is in a dark place. His life observations are all black, “no one” and “everyone” characterize his comments.

It appears David cannot trust anyone. What he hears is flattery not truth from others. He calls out for justice, that God would silence all *flattering lips* and every *boastful tongue*, people who trust in themselves and who believe they will prevail because they have the skills to defend themselves (people enamored by their abilities).

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

When we are in bad places we can call out to God. Even if our perspective is jaded, we can talk with God from our heart... God can handle our darkness. And when we seek vengeance God knows how to best handle things. Be honest in your asking...and trust God.

Honesty with God... in both your description of the problem and your desire in the solution is key. My words don't necessarily need to be 'right' as much as they need to be honest expressions of who I am and what I am thinking/feeling at the moment. God can sort through my miss-shaded comments and get to my needs.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

I need to cultivate a relationship of honesty with the Lord... always moving to deeper honesty, deeper honest sharing of myself, my thoughts, my feelings with the Lord. God can handle the real and honest me. And when I am honest God can help the real and honest me to grow and heal and mature.

Thursday, February 3: Psalm 12: 5-8 NIV2011

⁵ *“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,
I will now arise,” says the LORD.*

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

⁶ *And the words of the LORD are flawless,
like silver purified in a crucible,
like gold refined seven times.*

⁷ *You, LORD, will keep the needy safe
and will protect us forever from the wicked,*
⁸ *who freely strut about
when what is vile is honored by the human race.*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Psalm 12 continues when the Lord's answer comes to David...

The Lord will act because the needy have been plundered. God will protect them from the people who malign them. (David understands that God is the backstop for the needy.)

David trusts this word from the Lord because God's Words are perfect and flawless like refined silver and ultra-pure gold.

David praises God: *"You, Lord, will keep the needy safe and will protect us from the wicked.."*. You, Lord, are our protection when humanity honors that which is vile.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

David understands that the Lord God is the protector of those who cannot protect themselves. David understands that the heart of God arises when downtrodden people crushed under the boot of vile men and women. David sees this going on and he calls out to God to do something. And then David hears the word of the Lord saying I will protect those people in need who are maligned by others. God has spoken.

The structure of the Psalm reminds me that prayer is bidirectional... David cries out to the Lord and the Lord answers him. Prayer is listening as well as speaking.

Prayer is built on faith as well; David believes that words from the Lord are pure and as faultless as the most precious gold is pure. We, God's people, are to believe the same... that what God has said is faultless and pure.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

I am humbled by this word because far too often my prayer life revolves around me, and my family and I don't lift my eyes and cry out about injustice and pain in this world. Hard questions filter through my mind this morning:

- Am I comfortable with the status quo of the world where injustice is the norm for many because I myself do not feel that injustice?
- Do I allow my comfort to act as a veil or a curtain protecting me from people who don't enjoy the comforts I have?

Even though David was king and sat at the top of the heap, he was willing to look out and pray about the injustices he saw around him. Help me, Lord God, to grow even a sliver of David's heart for people in need... In the name of Jesus, my Savior, I pray. Amen.

Friday, February 4: Psalm 13: 1-2 NIV2011

- ¹ *How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?*
² *How long must I wrestle with my thoughts*

*and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

David cries *how long*... Four times he begs God how long will you forget me, how long will you hide your face from me, how long must I wrestle with my thoughts, how long for my enemy is triumph over me...

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

This passage is a cry of desperation. Four times David cries out, *how long*... In our world of immediate answers, we see that David has been dealing with, wrestling with and concerned about the present issue for a long time. God did not answer David in David's timing. Sometimes God requires us to wait for His response...

These verses are a cry of pain, cry of anguish, a cry of wondering, and a cry of despair. And yet, despite David's pain, anguish, wondering, and despair he still reaches out to the Lord. David does not and will not forsake his faith and trust in the Lord. David is all in with God, even when he can't understand why God isn't answering him.

Patience and trust are two words that fill my thoughts. Patience... David didn't want to wait yet he waited, he would not abandon the Lord. Trust... he maintained his trust even when God wasn't answering.

Important words for all God-followers for every time and age.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

Longsuffering... I hear God reminding me, "Will you contend in prayer for the things that matter to you?" Some personal prayers come to mind that I choose not to put on paper here...

Saturday, February 5, 2022: Psalm 13:3-6 NIV2011

³ *Look on me and answer, LORD my God.*

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴ *and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"*

and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵ *But I trust in your unfailing love;*

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶ *I will sing the LORD's praise,*

for he has been good to me.

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

After all his crying out to the Lord and waiting seemingly in vain for the Lord to answer him, the Psalm turns in verse 3. David cries out one more time *look on me and answer Lord my God*.

Despite crying out and calling for the Lord and hearing nothing, David still turns to the Lord believing God will answer him.

Expressing how he is at the end of his rope, David begs God to give light to his eyes or they will close in death: then his enemies will gloat that they have won, that they overcame him.

Despite being on the edge of the spare David professes his trust in God... In God's unfailing love. Joy wells up in his heart at the thought of God's salvation (in the context of the song God's salvation is God coming and answering his prayers). David declares, *I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me*. Even before God answers his prayer, David is praising Him because God is good to him.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

The bedrock of our faith is trust in God. And we can always turn to the God we trust and plead for His assistance and help. Even as we do, David reminds us that while we are waiting, even desperately waiting for God to show up, it is possible to continue to trust. It is possible to continue to believe in God's unfailing love. It is possible to rejoice in the fact that God will bring salvation. It is possible to sing and praise God even as the storm batters your life and when the days feel dark and deep groanings about whether God has forgotten you...

True trust runs deeper than circumstances.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

COVID continues to rage; there are times I think our country is hemorrhaging and the faith of God's church in our country (maybe even the world) seems weak and feeble. Still, I will trust. I must trust all the more in the Lord God Almighty. God's Spirit will not allow faith to despair. Faith in Jesus will win the day. Thanks be to God! Hallelujah! Amen.

Sunday, February 6, 2022 - Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the Living Hope website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@LivingHopeCT.org.

Click here for an audio link to my sermons, <https://livinghopect.org/resources/audio-sermons>. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days. We also livestream our full services which are up on our YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKURRsX92qqIFgDF1iRWA>