

"HANDLING DISCOURAGEMENT"

Psalm 11

We consider a Psalm today that has application to the hazards and the stresses that life brings to every man. The book of Job so constantly reminds us that ~~through~~ his friends, who meant well, ~~but they~~ misunderstood both the conditions and the way to deal with discouragement. Here was a man who was hard pressed by difficulties of life. And to whom some well meaning people had said ~~to him~~ - "why not get away from it all."

Have you ever heard these sympathetic words by people? "Why not get away from it all?" Without realizing that their counsel could ~~not~~ encourage a coward. Or have you not heard friends say, "You cannot possibly win."

Now the man in our Psalm gives to us a simple ~~piece~~ of rugged everyday dealing with discouragement. There were those who tried to undermine him by weariness and temptation to give up the struggle. But if he gets out of it, he will be unable to live with himself. And that is what happens so many times when we get discouraged and we run away from something.

Discouragements hit us every day. James Buckingham tells about the day the stove blew up. He said, I thought only such things happened to Mark Twain. But ~~he~~ ~~said~~ it happened in my house. ~~He said~~ It was my birthday, and my wife was going to make a cake. She had mixed the dough ^{from} ~~and~~ the eggs, ~~and a lot of~~ milk, and sugar, etc. and put it in the oven. She went back to the ~~den~~ ^{den} to tend ~~to~~ the children, and to await the final outcome of her experiment.

Sometime
~~About 10 minutes~~ later, she heard any awful, terrible explosion in the kitchen.

She rushed in and the door was hanging loosely from the hinges, and splats of cake batter all over the kitchen. If that wasn't bad enough - the room was filled with an odor that she couldn't identify. She went to the phone to call her husband. He was not in. She called the gas people - they were in. And they promised to come out, but told her not to light any matches in the kitchen.

After the gas man arrived, the wife discovered what had happened. Young Timmy, seeing his Mama cooking a cake, for Daddy - decided he would do something nice for one of his favorite friends, Randy, his brown colley dog. Unknown to his mother, Timmy had taken a can of dog food from the cupboard, put it in the broiler underneath the oven, to get Randy's dog food nice and warm. Well, it warmed up alright - it got hotter and hotter until it exploded. Right underneath the Birthday cake. And the whole thing of cake and dog food went all over the kitchen. ^{Buckingham} He said he got home about the time his wife was dumping the cake pan in the garbage. And trying to scrape the dog food off the inside of the blasted off oven. He went to work on the walls and the cabinets. Of course, he said the thing that resulted was a new range, which his wife had secretly wanted for a long time.

We need somehow the ability to take care of these explosions in life. The things that aren't supposed to happen, and yet they do. And how do we get in tune to cope with these discouragements that come to us?

We are exposed daily to the common ordinary things that hit us. Do you know what discouragement is?

The Psalmist helps us.

In Psalm 11 we find:

First of all, speculation - V. 1-3.

Second, submission - V. 4-7.

I. SPECULATION - V. 1-3.

In the first three verses the Psalmist has people come and give him some speculation as to what he ought to do, how he ought to take chances, and how he ought to venture out, and handle his discouragements.

(read verse) 1. Flee desperate circumstances

V. 1 Flee as a bird to your mountain. The first bit of advice he gets in a desperate situation is to take flight. He is counseled to ^a change of place. This meant, don't stand here, even though you are defending truth. Yield to your enemy and go up into the mountain.

David did have to go from Saul and Absalom, but he did not flee from his spiritual position of believing confidence, as a bird to the mountains. Lam. 3:52.

Is that the way to avoid difficulty - to ^{flee desperate situations} substitute ~~it~~ and run off to the mountains?

Did you ever drive behind a car and study these bumper-stickers. Some of them are so contradictory.

I was going to Kansas City some months ago, and ~~I was~~ driving along on the Interstate highways, and ~~I know~~ ^{I know} a car passed me doing about 85. And he had a sticker on the back of his car saying - "I found it." I said, sure enough he has found it. And he is still going fast looking for something. ^{I Read of someone on a Trip &} ~~However~~ the rain was pouring down, and a car came past, and almost forced him off of the road because there was not too much room to pass. And then he ~~said~~ through his rain covered windshield, he

was able to discern the sticker, on the back of the car. " See you in church on Sunday

And ~~then you look~~ there is another exhortation that you get on the back of a bumper. "Honk if you love Jesus." That is a real interesting motto, isn't it? A man ^{stopped at a light} pulled up ^{at a light} behind a car ^{with a light} that had a bumper-sticker ~~on~~, ~~at a traffic light~~, and it read ^{that} "Honk if you love Jesus." So the man honked. You know what the driver ~~did~~ ^{that} in the car, ^{did?} He turned around and shook his fist at ~~him~~ the man behind him.

There was a national magazine that had a little cartoon in it. Showing a little man in a car whose sticker read - "Honk if you believe in anything." Now he represents a lot of people in this world, who are so tied up with despondency and discouragement that they just about turn to anything.

It is no doubt about it - there is much in this world that causes people to be discouraged. But there is no reason why anyone should stay discouraged.

There are many good answers to discouragement. And these answers are not found in speculation - but I think that David has the answer to it. If we will practice it with him.

Now, the advice was - flee like a bird to your mountain. David was in a tight corner. And what was the wisest course? These people came and said your situation is hopeless. That you are to pack up your bags and run for your life.

Flee to the mountain. Now that is what is happening in so many instances today. There are a lot of adults that do this and also a lot of teen-agers that try to do th

One teen-ager stopped in a church up North and asked the Pastor, "Would you announce in the church and see if there is anybody going to Texas. I'd like to get a ride." The preacher said, "What if they leave you off in Wisconsin somewhere?" That was not in ^{the young man's} his mind. His parents had divorced, his mother had re-married. The step-father was hateful. And the conflict was at home. And his school work was suffering. He had missed assignments. And he had dropped out of school. He had a job - but he had lost his job. He is going to run to the mountain.

People have a natural tendency to flee when things get tough. And it isn't only young people who feel this way. Sometimes alcoholics. But the thing about it is, reality becomes too much for some people. And we want to flee reality. And the only other alternative that we see is to flee to the mountain. And David's timid counselors bring forth the idea that he should do this.

Why should he stay on and be exposed? To flee from the spot where we are placed. To quit the duty that we have at hand because of peril. To resort to some safe nook. Such is the temptation. And it is hard to resist, my friends.

Peter felt that his effort to persuade Jesus to not go to the cross was perfectly in order in Matt. 16:22-23.

I'm sure that some of you who listen to me today have discouragements. And there are ideas that come to mind - ~~and~~ why fight any longer? Our best efforts seem to be fruitless. We are spending our strength and our labor in vain. We had just better bow out of it.

Remember the great prophet Elijah. He cried out in despair and discouragement.

I Kings 19:10 - I ~~am~~ ^{am} only left and they seek my life. And of course, he was false and mistaken, just as Peter was to suggest to our Lord - "This shall not be unto thee."

You remember the disciples of Paul said, "Go not up to Jerusalem." Acts 21:11. The same advice was given in Neh. 6:10-11. They tried to get Nehemiah to leave his work. But he had an enterprise going. And to take the fears of men, he knew would become a snare to his life. *Did these men take the advice to "flee"?*

(read the verse) David's enemies advise him that the circumstances will win, v. 24. They say you are exposed to the peril of the enemies. Here they mean to say to him, that the discouragement is getting harder. Now your foes have already planned, and they have their arrows and their bow, and they are going to try to shoot you down. Now this seems to be a cause for really hopelessness. He was not safe where he was.

So why not be tempted to desert his post like a sparrow. Prov. 27:1.

The wicked bend their bow - so David is encouraged to look here - "Some people are out to get you, David!" And they say, "You will not be able to escape." And David is to get the impression that these arrows are intended not for just target practice, but for him. Now how would he react? Would he run for cover?

Sometimes circumstances pile up on people. To the extent that there is no end to what can happen. Sometimes we look in our own lives and things seem to get tough, and then they get tougher, and then things go from bad to worse. And it is hard to resist discouragement.

So why not be like Lot and escape for thy life. The argument here is the wicked have really plotted against you. Just as the Pharisees plotted against Jesus.

What the Psalmist ~~here~~ is encountering here is that these arrows are going to come at him in the dark. And when he is not looking. He will be shot right in the heart.

Now here is a man who is upright, he is standing by spiritual standards, and malice has set in. And it is against this man, and it is going to undermine him. What is he going to do?

3. Foundations are crumbling.
(Read the Verse)

V 3 - The counselors say^s to David in their speculation - ^{//} the foundations are being destroyed. And what can you do? ^{?)} ~~Now if they destroyed the foundations.~~ ~~Now~~ you know what a foundation is. If the foundation goes, you sink. Here is the honorable foundation of integrity and honesty. The principle of a fair days pay for a fair days work. Respect for the permanency of marriage. Many people today think and believe our society is sinking. Why? Because the foundations are crumbling. ~~Now I really wouldn't disapprove of it.~~ But what do these people do? They cop out - they quit. They think about protecting themselves. What can the righteous do?

You remember Andrew when the disciples were among that multitude of people who were hungry. He said, "What are these among so many. We just have five loaves and two fishes." Now should the righteous quit? Here are the arrows of discouragement coming to this man. And, of course, we as Christians think often about the course these people talked to David about. Why not flee to the mountains. If the men who are the strength and glory of our state are removed, and the righteous foundations crumble, then what do we have to hold to^x?

It is time to discuss some of these foundations. Are ~~a~~ we going to preserve

truth? How are we going to preserve divine worship when the laws of God are discarded and the unrighteous say there is no God? How are we going to do this? It seems no one is able to reprove evil and error today.

II. SUBMISSION - V. 4-7

Now we have talked about the speculation of discouragement. And you know about this just as well as I. Let's come to the ~~new~~ way that the Psalmist gives us a real source of security— Submission to the Lord.

(read verse 1a)

V. 1 He says, "In the Lord, put I my trust. Now, I'll come back to that in just a moment. But let us go on and follow up his submission.

(read verse)

1. V. 4 Remember God is in his holy temple. Never forget that point. That is a great thing against discouragement. The Lord is ~~there~~ pictured in his Holy Temple, as a priest quietly going about his business in the offering of sacrifices and prayers on behalf of his people. The Lord Jesus is shown in many types of symbols in the Scripture. But his ministry as the great high priest is one that is most helpful. It says that "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." Heb. 7:25. That means that ~~the~~ part of the ministry of our Lord is to pray in our behalf. Now this ~~is~~ has a direct bearing on what a person should do when he becomes despondent. Should he flee to a mountain? Or should he turn in prayer to God who is on his throne.

There is an old story of God's care - when a slave owner who was godless ridiculed his slave. He asked the slave, "aren't you afraid that the Devil will get you." The answer was simple, "No sir." "Doesn't the Devil ever get after you?" the owner asked. Smilingly the slave replied, "often." "Well then, what do you do?"

We was asked.

In simple faith, the old believing slave said - when the Devil gets after me, I just look up to Heaven and say, Lord, one of your children is in trouble. Come take care of me.

Such a prayer will always be answered in the time of discouragement. And that is the way to handle it. The Lord is on his throne, he says here.

That is, the Lord is reigning.

Do you remember the story of Nebuchadnezzar - how ~~that~~ he had a dream and he called in interpreters and he told them that they would go into early retirement if they did not give him the account that he was looking for.

That was a very discouraging situation for Daniel to be in. Daniel 2:28. How did he handle that situation? First off, he says, "There is a God in Heaven." And then he went to work on his problem. God does reign in the affairs of men. And there is a throne in Heaven and there is a God on that throne. And one who is discouraged and despondent can look up to that throne.

The very eye lids watch us. V.4

His eyes are watching us. Now the Lord evaluates us. It says here that the eye lids of God try the children of men. That he is checking up on us. And he is looking critically at us. ~~Did you ever look out of your eyes~~ - it means here that he looks through the slits of his eye. The tiny opening there as you concentrate on

something - you narrow your eye lids in order to focus right on the object. It means that here is ~~one~~ God ^{Who} ~~that~~ stands, studying every move. Watching you.

I read about a man who was putting ^{his} a little boy to bed one night, and he went through the usual routine. "I want a drink of water." And then, ~~he came around,~~ "tell me a story." And then, as his Daddy was leaving the room - the boy said - "put the light on." Well, thinking that this was a new method of stalling, his father said - "well, go to sleep." The boy began to cry. So the light went on and the tears dried up. "I just wanted to see your face Dad, cause then I can tell you love me."

Now of course, that was not exactly a delaying technique, that the small boy had - but it was something deep and profound, ^{as} ~~and~~ the way God looks at us. And the way a person looks ^{at you} tells you something about his attitude. His eyes behold. ~~Every~~ man's true character - God knows and he sees him through. He not only knows but he understands.

And this is of value to us. Remember God in his temple knows.

Submission of our discouragement, in the next place, helps us to know that righteousness may be tried, but God has a purpose.

2. ~~(Read Verse)~~ ^{Remember} V. 5 ~~God hates violence.~~ ^{discouragers} Now good people sometimes are afflicted and discouraged. And these oppressors possibly for awhile, will prosper. But here is a Holy God. God tries the righteous. God does not like violence. And God hates him that regards himself wed to violence. Anyone who enjoys war is out of his mind. God, here, judges violence. ~~A father even has reason to give as he spans his son.~~

He ~~hates to do it but he can't avoid it~~. And God hates ^{violence} ~~it~~ and he becomes angry. ~~If violence really doesn't seek God, how much more difficult and painful it ought to be for us. Who get into it so much more quickly and eagerly.~~ Remember God who hates it says one day in Rev. 14:20, that horses will wade through blood up to their bridles. And that a cow and a bear will graze together. Isa. 11:7. And he will make an end to violence. Rev. 22:15.

(read verse)
 3. Remember God punishes oppressors.
 V. 6 ~~↓~~ says that God is going to punish and

^{rain} ~~reign~~ snares upon the wicked — those who have been advising David to flee, from his discouragement — (instead of submission.) The Psalmist said, the righteous judge is going to punish. It is going to be inevitable. Unavoidable. This punishment is going to come. It is going to come like a sudden shower.

It is going to be very terrible. It is going to be fire and brimstone — and horrible. He plainly here picks up the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah, as a figure of vengeance of eternal fire. Jude 7. It is the fire of God's wrath. And it will burn, and what a lake of fire and brimstone ~~g~~ will bring forth in the way of suffering, as ~~a~~ death forever. It is very dreadful.

Now the Psalmist finally says — his final submission is found.

Conclusion (read verse)

V. 7 — The righteous Lord loveth righteous^{ness} and his countenance doth behold upright. Now this goes back to his way of handling discouragement. How are you going to handle your discouragement. He says the Lord loves them that work and enjoy his grace. He is a righteous God. And we ~~will~~ need to keep ourselves in his love.

The key to this Psalm of handling discouragement — V. 1a He begins, I put my

trust in the Lord.³

There are two or three things ³ let me briefly point out, about this word.

First, as this word is translated from the Hebrew - it takes on two or three very wonderful meanings.

First, to take refuge in. That is one word that is translated as a refuge. As soon as a believer starts taking his refuge in the Lord, then he is on his way to handling discouragement. Now people may say - you are just manufacturing something to help you. But a man is inadequate at a point in his experience - and everybody who listens to me today is going to be inadequate someday sooner or later. You are going to crumble somewhere.

There is going to come a tragedy, or some sickness that will put you down. There is going to come old age. There is going to come some circumstance when you are going to realize that you have gone as far as you can. And the realistic thing is to admit this and to start planning for it. And you are going to find many areas in which you are inadequate, that you are not aware of.

Now we all have this basic need for some refuge. Some people more than others. Some people need a refuge and security in different ways. People need the security of a home. Some people need the situation where they have a retreat. Where they can go and do their own things. Other people need the refuge of being told how much they are appreciated. And how valuable that is when people tend to fall apart.

You don't believe this - you just look at a little child. He drags around a dirty blanket. Or he has some little stuffed toy that he will ~~carry~~ ^{cuddle} and haul around

What is that? It is a little bit of security for him.

If may be
~~So if you are going~~ in the area of your life - ~~your~~ refuge is ~~to be~~ to be
found
in some expensive luxuries ~~or something else~~. There has to be a Lord in whom refuge
can be found. If we are going to cope with the pressures today and the problems we
have, we have, ~~to~~ without being ashamed, ~~to~~ go to him. He is ready access.

I think no preacher could exist under the pressures of his work without this
sort of a refuge. It is a refuge where you take and get by yourself with God, in
a corner, and handle your discouragements.

The second meaning is the word to "lean upon." Trust - means here that I put my
trust in thee. Is to lean upon him.

A class was being held in which a young lady ~~in which she~~ said, "all this talk
about God is nonsense. God is just the result of some weak people who would like
to have a crutch."

Is that ~~what~~ ^{how} you look upon God ~~as~~? The man leading that class said, "you are
one of the most interesting people that I have ever met. ~~He said~~, If you were
skiing and your broke your leg, You would be taken to a hospital, and ~~at~~ that leg
set in plaster, and a man in a white coat would give you a stick of wood, and a rubber
cup at one end of it, and an arm pad ^{on the other,} and a handle in the middle. Now, you would
object violently to be given a crutch?"

Crutches are not to be despised but to be appreciated. And we admit that we

do not have the answers to our needs. And we need to lean upon God for support.

The problem with many people is that they will not lean upon God. They try to cover up their feelings in many ways. They have never learned to admit their faults or needs to the Lord.

Hence they try to hide their real problems. And they endeavor to run away from a crushing load. And they say, I will get out of this. ~~But you know,~~
~~so here is a problem I have.~~

I am discouraged and upset about something in my Sunday School Class or something - so I'll just run off or I'll transfer. I'll get away from the whole works. Now this man feels that he has a solution within himself.

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Third, the meaning - roll upon. Now this is another meaning of the word “trust.” It merely means to roll upon him. In the 22nd Psalm, we have a statement about the crucifixion of our Lord, while on the cross. He quoted that. He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him. Even his enemies said that in V. 8. That here on a cross, even his enemies knew that Jesus rolled himself upon Jehovah. Now they didn't like that and so they ridiculed him even on a cross.

But never forget this, that Jesus trusted God. And the question comes to mind - if Jesus needed to live and operate that way - what makes me think that I can get along without rolling my burdens upon the Lord.

There is an old story about a woman on her way to market with a large basket. A local farmer riding along to market with his pony and cart had stopped and offered her a ride. She gladly accepted. A few minutes had passed and the farmer noticed that the woman was sitting there hugging the large heavy basket. When he suggested that she put the basket on the floor, she replied, "Oh no, thank you. I prefer to hold it upon my knee. And keep the weight off of the horse."

Now we laugh about that and we laugh loud. Because if you are like I am - you probably do the same thing with the Lord. You don't really roll the burden on the Lord. You must do that if you are going to handle your discouragements. David had an alternative approach for discouragement. And it was this - you can flee to the mountains. But his answer is, "in the Lord do I put my trust." What are you trusting in?

Now, we as believers give the impression that we are trusting him. But when the way gets tough, we trust something. "Some trust horses, and some trust chariots, and you are going to be trusting in something."

Are you trusting in your luck? Are you taking refuge in things you shouldn't. What are you trusting in? Are you trusting things in the world today? A man was illustrating the idea of trust. He was a big fat man teaching a Sunday School class. There was a chair on the platform in full view of all the boys and girls. He ~~said~~ ^{said} "I am going to demonstrate what trust is." With that he ~~threw~~ ^{threw} his great weight on this ~~unstable~~ ^{unoffending} chair. It promptly collapsed. To the unspeakable delight of the kids, he landed flat upon his back amidst the ruins - with his feet in the air. One little kid with ~~his~~ tears running down his face said, "This is better than the movies." The large demonstrator regained his feet, held his hands up ^{for} ~~in~~ silence, and said - "I

tried to demonstrate one thing but I managed to demonstrate two. I showed you what trust is. And I showed you that you must be careful what you put your trust in. Now that is exactly what David is doing. Trust in the Lord.

(read verse)

V. 7/ His countenance doth behold the righteous. The righteous will behold his countenance. Both of these are true, of course. Hope is the ingredient that is missing in our discouraged lives. ~~But~~ ^{But} it is not missing in the trusting person who believes in Christ. One day we will behold his countenance.

If you feel like quitting a job, leaving your family, taking to the road, dropping out of school, transferring your membership, migrating to another country, or hiding in a bomb shelter. Whatever your discouragement may be - hold on, and ask "Have I allowed all of these things to get on top of me? Have I forgotten to trust the Lord?" When you try to answer that question. Decide then, whether you are going to flee, or whether you are going to put your trust in the Lord. Verse 1 - "In the Lord put I my trust",