

# Flight or Faith?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Psalm 11. Again, if you would stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together.

! Psalm 11. To the choir master of David. In the Lord I take refuge. How can you say to my soul, flee like a bird to your mountain, for behold, the wicked bend the bow.

They have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark 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 see, His eyelids test the children of man. The Lord tests the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

Let Him rain coals on the wicked. Fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cups. For the Lord is righteous. He loves righteous deeds.

[ 1 : 11 ] The upright shall behold His face. May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? Amen. Polycarp was an elder of the early church.

He was a disciple of the Apostle John. He lived from 70 AD to 155. And when he was in his late 80s, Polycarp was in Rome.

One day in Rome, he received news that Christians in the city had been executed and that the Roman soldiers who executed them were coming for him next and the crowds were chanting for Polycarp's death.

At this time, the Romans called Christians atheists because of their refusal to worship the pantheon of Greek and Roman gods because they refused to acknowledge Caesar as Lord.

Instead of fleeing the city and the crowds that chanted for his death, Polycarp remained in Rome. And when the Roman soldiers arrived at his house, Polycarp welcomed them in and he gave them food with one request that they would let him have some time to pray, which they honored.

[ 2 : 32 ] After praying, the soldiers escorted Polycarp to appear before the Roman proconsul. Who gave Polycarp a chance, one last opportunity to save his life, all he had to do was say, Caesar is Lord and offer incense to one of Caesar's statues.

Polycarp had a choice. He could either burn incense to Caesar and live or be burned at the stake and die. This is how he responded to the proconsul and to the crowds who were wanting his death. Eighty-six years I have served Christ and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who saved me? Tradition says that when the soldiers either couldn't find nails or were about to nail Polycarp to the pyre where he would be burned, Polycarp told them, leave me like this.

In other words, you don't need the nails. He said, He who gives me to endure the fire will also give me to remain on the pyre without your security from the nails.

Polycarp didn't run. He didn't hide. He took refuge in the Lord. He prayed. He proclaimed his faith when faced with death.

[ 4 : 02 ] And though he died 1,870 years ago, I'm sharing his testimony with you today in a part of the world that Polycarp, I don't think at that time, even knew existed.

And though he died for Christ, he lives today because he's trusted in Jesus as his Lord and Savior. When the culture turned against him for his faith, when wicked men took aim at him, Polycarp did not flee.

He took refuge in the Lord. David is the human author inspired by the Holy Spirit to pen the words of Psalm 11. We don't know for certain what the circumstances were that put him in the crosshairs of wicked men.

Truth is, there were many times in David's life when people sought his death. King Saul made several attempts to hunt him down and kill him. Later, David's own son Absalom revolted against him and sought to kill David and replace him as king of Israel.

And in between those two events were the constant battles and wars that David fought against the nations that surrounded Israel that were bent on their destruction.

[ 5 : 19 ] Whatever the situation, at this point in redemptive history, David faced enemies who hated him, hated the God he worshipped, and those who were upright in heart.

In verse 2, these enemies are called wicked men. That label first appears in Psalm 1 and again in Psalm 2. And it's used in the Psalms to describe those who reject the rule of God over them.

In Psalm 9 and 10, wicked men are described as those who inflict suffering on the righteous.

Wicked men aren't people who merely get things wrong. They are people who set themselves.

Their whole direction of life in opposition to God. They are people who reject God, who oppose God, the things of God and the people of God.

In Psalm 11, they are those who seek to destroy the foundations established by God for society.

What they were to believe, how his people were supposed to live, and how they were to function as a society that they would be a light to the Gentiles.

[ 6 : 34 ] We hear two voices in Psalm 11. One is David. The other voice is the voice of his friends, his counselors. They're pleading with David.

They're trying to persuade him to flee the wicked. They're saying to him, these enemies are strong. These enemies love violence. They had apparently done things and were capable of doing things that filled them with fear, that filled them with terror.

And in despair, they say to David, David, the foundations are destroyed. What can the righteous do? I think many Christians are asking the same question as David, anxious friends, asked him.

Despite what revisionist historians say, our nation was founded upon morals and values informed and shaped by the Bible.

If you visit Washington, D.C., if you look closely at our nation's monuments, if you look at our founding documents, you will find references to God and the Bible that he inspired all over the place.

[ 7 : 44 ] A lot of Christians today in our country who know that history are asking themselves that same question that David's friends asked him.

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? As a pastor, I've heard a lot of people ask that question just in a different way.

What can the righteous do when murdering children in the womb is called health care? What can the righteous do when society redefines marriage and gender? What can the righteous do when kids are being taught things in school that refute and discourage the things we teach them in our homes and in our churches?

What can the righteous do about all these school shootings and assassinations and these violent actions that are motivated by hatred? What can the righteous do about a number of things, we ask? that are destroying the principles our nation was founded on. In Psalm 11, David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, tells the righteous what to do.

[ 8 : 54 ] And it's the main idea for this morning's sermon. When the wicked take aim, the righteous take refuge in the Lord. When the wicked take aim, the righteous take refuge in the Lord.

David's friends were anxious. They were afraid. They had given up hope. They panicked, thinking the foundation of our society is shattered.

And they want David to join them. They want David to give the order, flee like a bird to the mountain, to abandon any last inkling of hope and make a run for it.

We hear their voice in the beginning of Psalm 11. But then we hear David's voice. His answer to his counselors who are gripped in fear.

He was going to do something different. He took refuge in the Lord. He took refuge in the Lord by staying put, by resting and trusting in the God who sees all, knows all, and superintends over all.

[ 10 : 01 ] He saw this situation as a test, a test of his faith. He had a choice to make. He could flee like a bird or he could remain and be bold as a lion.

He could run and he could hide or he could remain committed to where he was at, doing what was right. David's choice was to take refuge in the Lord and that needs to be our response too.

When the wicked take aim, the righteous take refuge in the Lord. Well, how do we do that? Through David, God tells us how by giving us two principles to apply to our lives when we faced wicked people bent on destroying the truths that we believe in.

Christian, if the assassination of Charlie Kirk two weeks ago were a Supreme Court ruling that was handed down 10 years ago or any other event, past or present, that has caused you to live in fear for yourself, our nation, or this world, the answer is not to flee, not to give up hope, but to remain faithful in the Lord.

The answer isn't to return evil with evil, but to overcome evil with good. If you aren't a Christian, I'm glad you're here. Friend, God has ordained this day for you to hear the truth of his word.

[ 11 : 26 ] This psalm has a word of warning for you. And God in his mercy has given you this day, this time, and this place to turn to him in recognition of who he is and what he's done to save sinners, taking them from death to life, from fear to faith.

And I hope that today you take refuge in the Lord for the very first time by putting your faith in Jesus Christ, his son, who suffered violence at the hands of wicked men to bring you peace with God through faith in him.

When the wicked take aim, the righteous take refuge in the Lord. How do the righteous take refuge in the Lord? Again, two ways to react when we fear the foundations are being destroyed and think there's nothing the righteous can do.

The first thing that we do in taking refuge in the Lord is to reject the temptation to flee. We reject the temptation to flee. Psalm 11 begins with David's headline.

His headline, In the Lord, I take refuge. Before he says anything about the wicked who bend the bow to take aim at him, before he says anything about the words of his counselors, his friends who advised him to run and to hide, David makes his declaration.

[ 12 : 54 ] In the Lord, I take refuge. David uses the name of God that God revealed to Moses that we talked about last Sunday.

Yahweh, I am, I am that I am. a name that reveals God's aseity, his self-existence as the uncreated creator.

He is God without beginning or end. He is all-powerful, he is all-knowing, he is all-present. He is the sovereign ruler of the universe. And so David begins this psalm proclaiming his faith in God.

He reflects not on the enormity of his troubles, but on the immensity of God. And friends, that's the right place for us to start too. When we feel like the foundations are destroyed, when we think there is nothing the righteous can do, we need to remind ourselves of who God is.

We shouldn't first turn to earthly counselors to get their take on things, to tell us how to think, how to feel, or tell us what to do. We need to first take refuge in the Lord and remind ourselves of who God is, that he's sovereign, that he's in control, that he's all-powerful, and he is good.

[ 14 : 10 ] Having made this declaration, David shares the voice of his counselors in the rest of verse 1. He's saying of them, how can you say to my soul, flee like a bird to your mountain?

That's what they were telling him to do. The Hebrew word translated flee means to wander, to lament, to show grief, to shake, and to move aimlessly, to and fro.

Growing up, my best friend had a really big backyard where all of us neighbor kids would gather to play baseball, football, shoot BB guns, and occasionally hit golf balls.

We tried to be careful, but sometimes a ball would hit one of our neighbor's houses. We'd watch it go up, up, up.

We'd see it start to come down, down, down in the direction of one of our neighbor's houses and we'd be hoping, we'd be praying that a gust of wind would just come and drive it off course, but when that didn't happen, as soon as we heard the thud or the shattering of glass, we dropped everything.

[ 15 : 34 ] We dropped our bats, our gloves, we dropped whatever sports equipment we had and we scattered like cockroaches who the lights had just been turned on. Every man for himself, everybody going in their own different direction.

Some ran into the woods, some ran to their house, some ran as far as they could until they just didn't have the strength to run anymore and they couldn't breathe.

We fled. We fled in grief for what we'd done. We fled in fear of the punishment that we would receive and we moved to and fro aimlessly until we felt like the coast was clear.

That's what David's counselors are telling him to do. They're thinking, that's what we should do.

Run for it. Run to your mountain, I'll run to my mountain, we'll scatter to the wind.

But that's not what David was going to do. There were times when David did flee. He fled from Saul, he fled from Absalom, but at this point, David knew that if he fled, that meant he would be

disobeying God and he wouldn't do it.

[16:52] You think of a soldier in the midst of a battle. His commanding officer gives an order and that order is to defend the fort from attack and do not surrender. As the battle wages, it appears that the enemy is winning, but the command from the superior officer hasn't changed.

If the soldier decides to flee, he's disobeying orders. He'll have abandoned his post. He'll have broken his oath. He'll be charged with desertion. And in our country, in times of war, in times of battle, if you desert the battlefield, you could be punished by life imprisonment or punished with your own life.

Whatever the situation was, David knew that it was a sin for him in this situation to flee. He would be abandoning his post.

He would be leaving his God-given appointment. He would show his enemies that he feared them more than God. He would be showing them and his people that his fear of his enemies was greater than his belief, than his faith in God.

And so he made the decision to take refuge in the Lord. He made the choice to remain faithful instead of taking flight. Now, we shouldn't think that this was an easy choice for David to make.

[18:23] He felt the temptation to flee in his soul. In verse 2, David recalls the counsel of his friends and the graphic terms they used to urge him to flee.

They said to him, For behold, the wicked bend the bow. They have fitted the arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright and heart. If an archer knocks an arrow and pulls back the bow, the string, it means only one thing.

He's about to shoot. Once he bends the bow, he can only hold on to the string so long before his arms shake and his fingers give way. Not only is the bow bent and the arrow knocked, the wicked are shooting in the dark.

They're like assassins. They're hiding in ambush to take out their unsuspecting targets. And as a result of this, the wicked are terrifying the righteous with the thought that they could strike from the shadows at any time in any place.

There's nothing honorable, noble, or courageous about the way these wicked men sought to destroy the upright in heart.

[19:52] David's counselors conclude in verse 3, if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? In Psalms for you, Christopher Ashe says, when Bible poetry speaks of the foundations, it means the moral foundation of society, what theologians sometimes call creation order, the pillars upon which the moral order of the world rests, the bulwarks protecting humanity from chaos, evil, disorder, and death.

These foundations are summed up in the Ten Commandments. David's counselors observe the zeal of the wicked to destroy these foundations, the foundations of the righteous, and they say to David, what we had is gone.

Why waste your life in a hopeless crusade? The only choice we have is to flee. The foundations of our nation cannot be preserved, but we can still preserve our lives if we leave right now.

This is a timeless temptation that God's people face, that the righteous face. Jesus' disciples faced it when Jesus told them that they were going to Bethany, that he would go there, that he would raise Lazarus from the dead.

John 11, 7 through 8, records the response to this unwelcome news. Then after he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again, the disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?

[21:37] After Jesus served the Last Supper with his disciples, Matthew 26, 30 through 35 says, and when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, you will all fall away because of me this night.

For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Peter answered him, though they all fall away, though they all take flights like birds to the mountains, because of you, Lord, I will never do that.

I will never fall away. And Jesus said to him, truly, truly, I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. And Peter said to him, even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.

And all the disciples said the same. However, when those who plotted Jesus' death in the shadows arrived at night to arrest him, the disciples' reactions betrayed their courageous words.

Matthew 26, 55 through 56. At that hour, Jesus said to the crowds, those who had come to arrest him, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me?

[ 23 : 06 ] Day after day, I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. And then see this, then all the disciples left him and fled.

church too often we act like the disciples in this moment than Jesus. We act more like David's counselors than David in Psalm 11.

How do we act like them? Well, I think for some Christians, we try to flee the culture that we live in. I'm not talking about protecting yourself and your family from the influences of the world.

That's a good thing. I'm talking about those who think the answer is to literally leave, to live off the grid, who move to remote locations, away from everyone.

The problem with that is you can't fulfill the Lord's command to be the light of the world if you completely cut yourself off from the world. You can't make disciples if you barricade yourself in from the world.

[ 24 : 21 ] Sometimes we do this without physically moving out of the world but by removing ourselves spiritually from the world. We isolate ourselves in fear of our neighbors, our coworkers, maybe even some of our family members from unbelievers.

We retreat from the opportunities that the Lord gives us to share the gospel with them. We flee conversations or situations where we could give a defense of the gospel and the truths that we believe in.

Some of us flee in that way. Some of us flee to the past. We long for the good old days, for simpler times, and we choose to live in an edited, photoshopped version of a time long ago forgetting that the past wasn't free of those challenges that we face today.

Our nation was once so divided that people went to war with one another. Sin has been in the world since the Garden of Eden.

Wicked men triumphed in David's day, in Jesus' day, in Polycarp's day, and today. But God has put us in this time and this place in redemptive history for a reason.

[ 25 : 47 ] Matthew 5, 13 through 16, Jesus said to his followers, you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Salt was used in this time as a preservative.

The task of those who follow Jesus is to preserve the faith handed down to us. As Jude 3 says, to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to us, the saints.

In our time, we are to be the light of the world. In the Bible, light symbolizes truth. Christians, we are stewards of the truth today.

[ 26 : 56 ] The truth of God, we are his torchbearers. We don't hide. We let the light of Christ shine brilliantly and brightly in our lives. We are commanded to flee from sin, but we are never commanded to flee from doing what is right.

If we flee from doing what is right, if we keep our mouths shut when we should speak, if we live in fear of the wicked, we disobey God and act as if we don't really believe in him or trust him.

we act as if preserving our lives in this world is more valuable to us than pursuing the kingdom of Christ and his righteousness and the eternal life that we have in him.

As Paul was in prison for his bold, courageous, fearless proclamation of the gospel in Rome, he wrote to the church in Philippi in Philippians 1, 18 through 21, yes, and I will rejoice for I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death for to me to live is Christ and die is gain.

Our world needs more Christians like Paul. It needs, better than that, more Christians like Jesus Christ. If I live, I live with full courage in the Lord.

[ 28 : 28 ] If the wicked seek to shut me up by taking my life, let them, whatever I lose here is gain there. In 2 Corinthians 4, 7 through 12, Paul says, but we have this treasure, speaking of the

gospel, this good news, the only news that saves sinners, but we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

And now he talks about what he's gone through in sharing this treasure, the gospel. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies.

For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh so death is at work in us but life in you.

Paul faced death daily and he was willing to pay that price if it meant that more people would hear the gospel and more people would be saved.

Now I have a question to ask you. Are you willing to pay that price? Let's be honest.

[ 29 : 58 ] Sometimes in fear of losing a friendship we value, sometimes in fear of losing a job, sometimes in fear of losing anything of this world, we would rather play it safe than be bold for our faith.

We play it safe to preserve our lives when the Lord commands us to reject the temptation to flee. And we reject the temptation to flee by resisting the temptation to do that and now secondly by resolving to remain in the Lord.

Resolve to remain in the Lord. David's friends want him to flee but David is resolved to remain in the Lord. In the beginning of verse 4 he says, the Lord is in his holy temple.

The Lord's throne is in heaven. In other words, God's not fleeing. God's not running. God's not hiding. He's in his temple in heaven.

He's not alarmed. He's not in a state of panic and neither will I be because as he continues in verse 4, his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.

[ 31 : 08 ] God isn't asleep. He says, God sees everything. Even if his eyelids appear closed, even if it seems like he's doing nothing. Parents, have you ever done that?

Pretended to be asleep? See what your kids are going to do? They think you're asleep but you're not. The wicked think God's asleep but he's not.

Even the righteous are tempted to think that God's asleep but he's not. And so David's saying, rest assured that God sees all and he is fully aware. He sees the wicked hiding in the shadows ready to shoot from the dark at the upright in heart.

He sees more than we see. He knows more than we know. In the beginning of verse 5, David adds, the Lord tests the righteous. The word translated as test refers to the process of testing precious metals.

It's like a goldsmith who uses intense heat to melt the impurities of the gold or the silver to refine it. God refines our faith in troubling times.

[ 32 : 14 ] When we're tempted to fear, when we're tempted to flee, he uses them to make us more like Jesus. He teaches us that we can live in faith in him. However, that's not the case for the wicked.

Again, in verse 5, David says, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. If the people that you're listening to or follow on social media or associate with celebrate violence like the death of Charlie Kirk, then you seriously, and I'm speaking to you with love, you seriously need to re-evaluate who you are listening to and who you're associating with.

In fact, I would encourage you to stop listening to people like that who love and who celebrate violence. how can you rejoice over the death of a 31-year-old man who was willing to have civil discussions with people, who put the microphone down and let them talk, who disagreed with him, and whose wife now has to explain to her little children why daddy isn't coming home as she grieves.

to have no sympathy for anyone who is killed in this way, to show no charity, to rejoice in that kind of suffering, that's demonic.

David says, God hates the wicked and those who love violence.

[ 34 : 17 ] I'm just going to let that sit for a second. God hates the wicked and those who love violence. Some of you have heard or believed that God doesn't hate anyone or anything, but if you believe that the Bible is God's word, you've just heard that isn't true.

Now, it's important that we read this verse in light of what else God has revealed about himself in his word. We know that it was God's love, that it was his love for the world, it was his love for

sinner that motivated him to send his son Jesus to die for sinners, to die for the wicked. But when someone spurns God's love, when they reject his offer of salvation, when they refuse to repent of their sins, when they choose to oppose him and his ways and the righteous, choosing instead to cling to their sins and their hatred, God will judge them. Verse 6 says that. As David here says, let him, let God rain coals on the wicked, fire and sulfur and scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. What is this a picture of? Sodom and Gomorrah. God rained down fire from heaven on those wicked cities until they were completely destroyed. So again, if you haven't trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I say this to you in love. [ 35 : 54 ] If you reject God's grace, all that's left for you is God's wrath, God's judgment. He is a holy God.

All of his attributes are motivated by his holiness, his perfectness. And God is too holy to let sin go unpunished. But God is so loving that he would send his only son to die for sinners who have rejected him.

And so his desire for you today, friend, is that you would repent of your sins, that you would turn to him in faith, that you would no longer be counted with the wicked but with the righteous. Not because of who you are, of what you've done, but because you've been clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ through your faith in him.

And if you've done that, his desire for you is not to take vengeance on the wicked but live righteously. How do we take refuge in the Lord?

What should we do when it seems like the foundations have been shattered? Verse 7, For the Lord is righteous. He loves righteous deeds. The upright shall behold his faith.

[ 37 : 20 ] We keep serving. We keep following. We keep sharing. We keep declaring. We keep showing the love of Christ through our lives and what we say and what we do.

And so how should we adjust according to what we've heard in God's word? Pursue the kingdom of God and his righteousness. righteousness. Whatever's happening in the world, whatever is happening in our city, our state, our nation, and our lives, we are always to be pursuing the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

How do we do that? I think if you've been in the church, you know the answers I'm about to give you. Read the Bible. This is God's word.

Read the Bible. Know what the Bible says. More importantly, believe what it says. If you believe what it says, you'll do what it says.

Read the Bible. Pray. Pray for our nation. Pray for the world. Pray for opportunities to share the gospel with unbelievers, to not live in fear of those who have rejected the Lord, but to say, Lord, like Isaiah, here I am, send me.

[ 38 : 48 ] Pray for those opportunities and then when you have those opportunities, engage in them. Speak the truth in love. Engage culture with the light of God's truth.

How else do we pursue the kingdom of God and his righteousness? I think it's through as Christians preserving the truths of God in our hearts and in our homes.

Spend time with your husband and your wife, with your kids. Read the Bible. Pray with them. Share praises.

Invite your unbelieving friends over to your house. Have a meal with them. Talk with them. Pray for them. Preserve these truths.

If you're a parent with kids, then you should encourage your kids, hey, whatever you're hearing, whatever is confusing you at school and your friends or whatever you're watching, please come talk to me.

[ 39 : 52 ] Don't be afraid to share with me those things that are troubling you. And in the church, we need to do the same. To love one another.

To pray for one another. To encourage one another and all the more hoping that the day of our Lord's return is soon. Be like Jesus who never ran, who never hid and who never fled.

Live your life for him knowing knowing that to live is Christ, to die is gain. Proverbs 28.1 The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

Let's live righteously. Let's live courageously. This is our time. This is our place. Let our light for Christ shine. We're not going to flee.

We're going to remain because we know what we believe is the truth. And if you're here this morning and you've heard that gospel truth, friend, I encourage you that what you need to do is turn to the Lord in repentance of your sin.

[ 41 : 07 ] Turn to him and acknowledge of your need for salvation and seeing Jesus as that salvation, your only hope. And if you do that, you will be saved. You will be clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

You will be one who is righteous. You will have a boldness and a courage that is unlike anything in this world because you will know to live is Christ but to die is gain.

And you will take refuge in the Lord and you will not be afraid. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, this psalm is fitting for the time and the place that we're currently living in as people of God in this nation.

Lord, we know as Paul prayed earlier that all across the world there are wicked people who are taking aim at the righteous who are plotting their death, their execution.

But God, we have this reminder from your word today and your reminder throughout your word and especially in the example, Lord, that you set for us that the righteous don't flee, we don't take flight, we don't scatter to the wind, but we remain where we're at.

[ 42 : 27 ] We commit ourselves to continue to do what is right and what is good in service to you. We let our light shine in the hopes that others will see and be saved and give glory to you.

Lord, you've not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of courage. Lord, forgive us though that too often when we encounter things that scare us instead of living courageously, instead of being bold, we seek to take flight.

And so God, I pray that through your word this morning you've convinced us, that you've persuaded us, that that choice is a sinful choice and that instead, Lord, we would choose to do what is right to remain where you have us and to let our light shine for you.

God, we pray for our church, we pray for your church, that, Lord, we would be people like Jesus, that we would live unafraid and that it would truly be our conviction that to live is Christ, but to die is gain.

Lord, we know, we know that our nation, we know that this world is in desperate need of hearing the gospel and we know that you have given us that command to be the ones who go and share it.

[ 43 : 53 ] And so God, we pray that we would be obedient to that command and that more and more would be saved, that the wicked would be made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, your Son, in whose name we pray.

Amen.