

The Assassin of Faith

I. Slide#1 Announce:

- A. Slide#2 TOTG - Dr. Michael Beals (Pres. Vanguard Univ). John Sowers (Pres. of the mentoring project. Author of **the Heroic Path**, *In Search of the Masculine Heart*). Writer, comedian, our MC Ron McGehee.
- B. Slide#3a Join RCAHT Task Force has asked for volunteers Sat 1/17, 9am, to go around our city and ask specific businesses to hang posters.

II. Slide#3b Intro:

- A. What is to be prized more than safety? How do you handle demoralizing advice? What is the best way to combat fear? What do you first do when you're tempted to run away? What is the assassin of faith?

III. Slide#4 FAITH AGAINST FEAR (1-3)

- A. Slide#5 FLEE (2)
- B. Apparently David was in *a desperate situation* with his life in **danger**.
 1. The temptation to *run from danger* challenged David's **confidence** in God.
 - a) Ever feel like running/quitting? All of us have.
 2. Why **didn't** David follow the advice of friends?
 - a) Maybe *your mountain*...implies, we all have a place we like fleeing to? *We all do it :(*
 3. This is the same counsel Peter gave Jesus after hearing about the cross, *not so Lord, this shall not happen to you.*
- C. Slide#6 What is to be prized more than **safety**? Well, your **confidence** in your God.
- D. Isn't safety overrated? When we talk about **safety** let's be clear, there are 2 different ways of being safe: *The world's way & God's way.*
 1. **The world's way:** *you be safe David. Run away. Hide from your enemy. Cover up your problems.*
 2. **God's way:** be safe in God. Trust in Him. Even in troubling environments/situations.
 - a) Slide#7 Ps.4:8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For **You alone, O Lord**, make me dwell in **safety**.
 - b) Mark 8:35 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever **loses his life** for My sake and the gospel's will save it. [should David/you save your life at all costs?]
 - c) Luke 14:33 So likewise, whoever of you does not **forsake all** that he has cannot be My disciple.
 3. **Better to give than receive** - is risky, not safe to give away your funds (your security).

4. **Opening up** with one of your friends is risky/not safe. It makes you vulnerable (*can you trust them?*). It's dangerous (*will they think you are less spiritual?*)
- E. **What I'm *not* saying:** no, we are not supposed to *put ourselves in harms way* (Jesus/jump frm temple).
- F. **What are you being challenged to flee from?**
1. For some it is **environmental** (fleeing a job, a career, a neighborhood).
 2. For others, **relational** (fleeing a friend, a boyfriend/girlfriend, a neighbor, a prayer mtg)
 3. Still others, **financial** (fleeing tithing, being generous, opportunities to help others)
All because you can't trust God in that area of your life?
- G. **Slide#8 FOUNDATIONS (3)**
- H. **If the foundation are destroyed, what can the righteous do? - Are we fighting a losing battle? A lost cause?**
1. **If the moral or theological foundations of society are crumbling under the evils of wicked men, aren't we helpless?** [I was amazed what I heard from many conservatives, after Obama won his 2nd term...*"what now" "we're doomed" "it's over"* mentality]
 2. David was a man with a deep sense of **responsibility** for his community & an unshakable **faith** in God.
 3. **Slide#9 What can the righteous do when the foundations are destroyed? BUILD AGAIN!**
 - a) During Israel's "*second Exodus*" (from Babylon) Zerubbabel returns to Jerusalem & finds the foundation of the temple in ruins...**what did he do? He built again!**
 - (1) So, **if the foundations are destroyed, lay the foundations again**, like Zerubbabel.
*It may be what **each new generation** will have to do?*
- I. *Now we'll go back to the answer he already tipped us off to in vs.1.*
- J. **Slide#10 FAITH (1)**
- K. Their view was **experiential and earthward**. David's view was **higher**.
- L. **Slide#11 What gave him the confidence to stand in vs.1? *In the Lord I put my trust.***
1. *Run for the hills David! Why run? The Lord is in control :)*
 2. **So, in spite of danger to himself, in spite of the advice of friends, in spite of the seemingly hopelessness of his cause...**David affirms his steadfast **trust** in God.
- M. So, vs.1 started out with **a statement of Faith**...also found in other Psalms (7,16,31,57,71)
- N. **So, *Fleeing* to what is *comfortable*, *Fleeing* to what is *worldly-safe*, or *Fleeing* to what is only for your *self-focused safety*...is *the Assassin of Faith*.**
- O. **That is *Faith against Fear!***

IV. **Slide#12 GOD AGAINST THE GODLESS (4-7)**

- A. (4,5a) The fainthearted advised David to **flee** like a bird to a mountain where he would be safe. **But instead** he **fled** to the Lord for safety.
- B. Instead of **flying away** like *a frightened bird*, how about **trusting God & mounting up with wings as eagles**?
- C. David **contrasted** the problem on **earth** with the exalted position of the Lord in **heaven**.
- D. **Concentration upon evil** has led his friends to **despair**, **but** the psalmist's **faith** in **God** is the basis of a **true optimism**.
- E. **Slide#13** David shows his **faith & focus** is **on** the Lord. Or we can say it's his **faith in focus**
- F. **Temple & Throne** - **Temple** represents *God's presence* amongst His people. **Throne** in heaven represents *God's universal sovereignty*.
1. **Throne** also reminds us that God doesn't just *dwell* there, **but** He **reigns** there.
 - a) **Slide#14** Remember the King is in **residence**, **not** in **flight**.
 2. When you feel like running or flying away...remember *God's throne is secure*. **Isaiah** looked up & saw the Lord on His throne, high & lifted up. **John** in his Rev saw the Lord on His throne & it gave him **new courage**.
- G. **Eyes & Eyelids** - Eyelids normally *contract* when examining closely (squint).
1. This bold *anthropomorphism* stresses the **precise omniscience** of God.
- H. **Slide#15** Remember the formula: *When tempted by the enemy, Flee! When tested by God, Stand!*
1. Can you give an example of each? (Joseph from Potiphar's wife/Jesus in wilderness)
 2. **Flee temptation, but not from duty**.
- I. **Slide#16** (5b,6) As a **Refiner**, God **tests** the **righteous** (gold) & **discards** the **wicked** (dross).
- J. **Tests** - *The lapidary does not waste his time in cutting common pebbles*.
1. Lapidary (one who *cuts, polishes, & engraves gems*)
- K. **Slide#17** (7) The **1st line** showed where our **safety** lies; the **last line** where our **heart** should be.
1. The psalmist knew the experience of **seeing God** w/the *inward eye in worship*.
- L. **Slide#18** When you feel like **quitting** or **running away**, **remember** that you can't run away from **your troubles** & you can't run away from **yourself**...
1. The solution is not running *away* **but** running *to*.
- M. What is to be prized more than safety? (Being in God's will)
- N. How do you handle demoralizing advice? (Look up & see the Lord)
- O. What is the best way to combat fear? (faith)
- P. What do you first do when you're tempted to run away? (stand)

Q. What is the assassin of faith? (fleeing, taking the easy way out, for you!)

R. Prayer: Lord help us to not *flee to our mountain* but flee to Your throne of grace.