

## Psalm 11-20 choral reading

CHARACTERS: David, All, Antagonist, Leader 2

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes/page

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Psalm 11-20 (HCSB)

### Psalm 11

DAVID: I have taken refuge in the Lord. How can you say to me,

ANTAGONIST: Escape to the mountain like a bird!

DAVID: For look, the wicked string the bow;

ALL: they put the arrow on the bowstring to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart.

LEADER 2: When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

ALL: The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven.

DAVID: His eyes watch; He examines everyone.

ALL: The Lord examines the righteous and the wicked.

DAVID: He hates the lover of violence.

ALL: He will rain burning coals and sulfur on the wicked;

LEADER 2: a scorching wind will be their portion.

DAVID: For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteous deeds.

ALL: The upright will see His face.

### Psalm 12

DAVID: (*desperate*) Help, Lord, for no faithful one remains;

ALL: the loyal have disappeared from the human race.

DAVID: They lie to one another;

ALL: they speak with flattering lips and deceptive hearts.

DAVID: May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and the tongue that speaks boastfully. They say,

ANTAGONIST: (*arrogant*) through our tongues we have power; our lips are our own—who can be our master?

VOICE OF GOD: Because of the oppression of the afflicted and the groaning of the poor, I will now rise up.

ALL: says the Lord.

VOICE OF GOD: I will put the one who longs for it in a safe place.

DAVID: The words of the Lord are pure words,

ALL: like silver refined in an earthen furnace, purified seven times.

DAVID: You, Lord, will guard us;

ALL: You will protect us from this generation forever.

DAVID: The wicked wander everywhere,

ALL: (*sadly*) and what is worthless is exalted by the human race.

### Psalm 13

DAVID: (*beseeking*) Lord, how long will You forget me? Forever?

ALL: How long will You hide Your face from me?

D; How long will I store up anxious concerns within me, agony in my mind every day?

ALL: How long will my enemy dominate me?

DAVID: Consider me and answer, Lord my God.

ALL: Restore brightness to my eyes; otherwise, I will sleep in death.

DAVID: My enemy will say,

ANTAGONIST: (*gloating*) I have triumphed over him,

ALL: and my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

DAVID: But I have trusted in Your faithful love;

ALL: my heart will rejoice in Your deliverance.

DAVID: I will sing to the Lord because He has treated me generously.

### Psalm 14

DAVID: The fool says in his heart,

ANTAGONIST: (*arrogant and dismissively*) God does not exist.

ALL: They are corrupt; they do vile deeds.

DAVID: There is no one who does good.

DAVID: The Lord looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is one who is wise,  
 ALL: one who seeks God.  
 DAVID: All have turned away;  
 ALL: all alike have become corrupt.  
 DAVID: There is no one who does good,  
 ALL: not even one.  
 DAVID: Will evildoers never understand?  
 ALL: They consume My people as they consume bread;  
 DAVID: they do not call on the Lord.  
 ALL: Then they will be filled with terror, for God is with those who are righteous.  
 DAVID: You sinners frustrate the plans of the afflicted, but the Lord is his refuge.  
 ALL: Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come from Zion!  
 DAVID: When the Lord restores the fortunes of His people,  
 ALL: Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

### Psalm 15

DAVID: Lord, who can dwell in Your tent?  
 ALL: Who can live on Your holy mountain?  
 VOICE OF GOD: 2 The one who lives honestly, practices righteousness,  
 ALL: and acknowledges the truth in his heart—  
 VOICE OF GOD: who does not slander with his tongue,  
 ALL: who does not harm his friend or discredit his neighbor,  
 DAVID: who despises the one rejected by the Lord  
 ALL: but honors those who fear the Lord,  
 VOICE OF GOD: who keeps his word whatever the cost,  
 DAVID: who does not lend his money at interest or take a bribe against the innocent—  
 ALL: the one who does these things will never be moved.

### Psalm 16 Confidence in the Lord

DAVID: Protect me, God, for I take refuge in You.  
 LEADER 2: David said to Yahweh,  
 DAVID: You are my Lord; I have nothing good besides You.  
 ALL: As for the holy people who are in the land, they are the noble ones.  
 DAVID: All my delight is in them.  
 ALL: The sorrows of those who take another god for themselves will multiply;  
 DAVID: (*disgusted*) I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood,

ALL: and I will not speak their names with my lips.

DAVID: Lord, You are my portion and my cup of blessing;

ALL: You hold my future.

DAVID: The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;

ALL: indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

DAVID: I will praise the Lord who counsels me—

ALL: even at night my conscience instructs me.

DAVID: I keep the Lord in mind always.

ALL: Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

DAVID: Therefore, my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices;

ALL: my body also rests securely.

DAVID: For You will not abandon me to Sheol;

ALL: You will not allow Your Faithful One to see decay.

DAVID: You reveal the path of life to me;

ALL: in Your presence is abundant joy;

DAVID: (*happy*) in Your right hand are eternal pleasures.

#### Psalm 17 A Prayer for Protection

DAVID: Lord, hear a just cause; pay attention to my cry;

ALL: listen to my prayer— from lips free of deceit.

D; Let my vindication come from You, for You see what is right.

ALL: You have tested my heart;

DAVID: You have examined me at night.

ALL: You have tried me and found nothing evil;

DAVID: I have determined that my mouth will not sin.

ALL: Concerning what people do: by the word of Your lips

DAVID: I have avoided the ways of the violent.

ALL: My steps are on Your paths; my feet have not slipped.

DAVID: (*confident*) I call on You, God, because You will answer me;

ALL: listen closely to me; hear what I say.

DAVID: Display the wonders of Your faithful love, Savior of all who seek refuge from those who rebel against Your right hand.

GROUP ANTAGONIST: Protect me as the pupil of Your eye;

GROUP LEADER 2: hide me in the shadow of Your wings from the wicked who treat me violently,

GROUP ANTAGONIST: From my deadly enemies who surround me.

GROUP LEADER 2: They have become hardened; their mouths speak arrogantly.

DAVID: They advance against me; now they surround me.

ALL: They are determined to throw me to the ground.

GROUP ANTAGONIST: They are like a lion eager to tear,

GROUP LEADER 2: like a young lion lurking in ambush.

DAVID: (*shouting*) Rise up, Lord! Confront him; bring him down.

GROUP ANTAGONIST: With Your sword, save me from the wicked.

GROUP LEADER 2: With Your hand, Lord, save me from men,

DAVID: from men of the world whose portion is in this life:

GROUP ANTAGONIST: You fill their bellies with what You have in store;

GROUP LEADER 2: their sons are satisfied, and they leave their surplus to their children.

DAVID: But I will see Your face in righteousness;

ALL: when I awake, I will be satisfied with Your presence.

### Psalm 18 Praise for Deliverance

LEADER 2: This Psalm was written by David on the day the Lord rescued him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

DAVID: (*glad*) I love You, Lord, my strength.

ALL: The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,

DAVID: my God, my mountain where I seek refuge,

ALL: my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

DAVID: I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I was saved from my enemies.

ALL: The ropes of death were wrapped around me;

DAVID: the torrents of destruction terrified me.

ALL: The ropes of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me.

DAVID: I called to the Lord in my distress, and I cried to my God for help.

ALL: From His temple He heard my voice, and my cry to Him reached His ears.

LEADER 2: Then the earth shook and quaked; the foundations of the mountains trembled;

DAVID: they shook because He burned with anger.

ALL: (*in awe*) Smoke rose from His nostrils, and consuming fire came from His mouth;

DAVID: coals were set ablaze by it.

ALL: He parted the heavens and came down, a dark cloud beneath His feet.

LEADER 2: He rode on a cherub and flew, soaring on the wings of the wind.

ALL: He made darkness His hiding place, dark storm clouds His canopy around Him.

DAVID: (*glad*) From the radiance of His presence, His clouds swept onward with hail and blazing coals.

ALL: (*increasing volume*) The Lord thundered from heaven; the Most High projected His voice.

DAVID: He shot His arrows and scattered them; He hurled lightning bolts and routed them.

ALL: The depths of the sea became visible,

DAVID: (*awed*) the foundations of the world were exposed, at Your rebuke, Lord,

ALL: at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

DAVID: He reached down from heaven and took hold of me;

ALL: He pulled me out of deep waters.

DAVID: He rescued me from my powerful enemy and from those who hated me,

ALL: for they were too strong for me.

DAVID: They confronted me in the day of my distress, but the Lord was my support.

ALL: He brought me out to a spacious place;

DAVID: He rescued me because He delighted in me.

LEADER 2: The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness;

ALL: He repaid me according to the cleanness of my hands.

DAVID: For I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not turned from my God to wickedness.

LEADER 2: Indeed, I have kept all His ordinances in mind and have not disregarded His statutes.

DAVID: I was blameless toward Him and kept myself from sinning.

ALL: So the Lord repaid according to one's righteousness,

DAVID: according to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.

GROUP ANTAGONIST: With the faithful, You prove Yourself faithful;

GROUP LEADER 2: With the blameless man, You prove Yourself blameless;

GROUP ANTAGONIST: With the pure, You prove Yourself pure,

GROUP LEADER 2: but with the crooked, You prove Yourself shrewd.

ALL: For You rescue an afflicted people, but You humble those with haughty eyes.

DAVID: Lord, You light my lamp; my God illuminates my darkness. With You I can attack a barrier,

ALL: and with my God, I can leap over a wall.

DAVID: God—His way is perfect;

ALL: the word of the Lord is pure.

DAVID: He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

LEADER 2: For who is God besides Yahweh? And who is a rock?

ALL: (*shouting*) Only our God.

DAVID: God—He clothes me with strength and makes my way perfect.

ALL: He makes my feet like the feet of a deer and sets me securely on the heights.

DAVID: He trains my hands for war; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

ALL: You have given me the shield of Your salvation;

DAVID: Your right hand upholds me, and Your humility exalts me.

ALL: You widen a place beneath me for my steps, and my ankles do not give way.

DAVID: I pursue my enemies and overtake them;

LEADER 2: I do not turn back until they are wiped out.

DAVID: I crush them, and they cannot get up; they fall beneath my feet.

ALL: You have clothed me with strength for battle;

DAVID: You subdue my adversaries beneath me.

ALL: You have made my enemies retreat before me;

DAVID: I annihilate those who hate me.

LEADER 2: They cry for help, but there is no one to save them—

ALL: they cry to the Lord, but He does not answer them.

DAVID: I pulverize them like dust before the wind;

LEADER 2: I trample them like mud in the streets.

ALL: You have freed me from the feuds among the people;

DAVID: You have appointed me the head of nations; a people I had not known serve me.

LEADER 2: Foreigners submit to me grudgingly; as soon as they hear, they obey me.

ALL: Foreigners lose heart and come trembling from their fortifications.

DAVID: The Lord lives—may my rock be praised!

ALL: The God of my salvation is exalted.

DAVID: God—He gives me vengeance and subdues peoples under me.

ALL: He frees me from my enemies.

DAVID: You exalt me above my adversaries;

ALL: You rescue me from violent men.

DAVID: Therefore I will praise You, Yahweh, among the nations;

ALL: I will sing about Your name.

LEADER 2: He gives great victories to His king;

DAVID: He shows loyalty to His anointed,

ALL: to David and his descendants forever.

### Psalm 19 The Witness of Creation and Scripture

DAVID: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands.

ALL: Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge.

DAVID: There is no speech; there are no words; their voice is not heard.

ALL: Their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

DAVID: In the heavens, He has pitched a tent for the sun.

ALL: It is like a groom coming from the bridal chamber; it rejoices like an athlete running a course.

DAVID: It rises from one end of the heavens and circles to their other end; nothing is hidden from its heat.

ALL: The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life;

DAVID: the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise.

ALL: The precepts of the Lord are right, making the heart glad;

DAVID: the command of the Lord is radiant, making the eyes light up.

GROUP ANTAGONIST: The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever;

GROUP LEADER 2: the ordinances of the Lord are reliable and altogether righteous.

DAVID: They are more desirable than gold—

GROUP ANTAGONIST: than an abundance of pure gold;

GROUP LEADER 2: and sweeter than honey, which comes from the honeycomb.

DAVID: In addition, Your servant is warned by them; there is great reward in keeping them.

LEADER 2: Who perceives his unintentional sins?

DAVID: (*sincerely concerned*) Cleanse me from my hidden faults.

ALL: Moreover, keep Your servant from willful sins; do not let them rule over me.

DAVID: Then I will be innocent and cleansed from blatant rebellion.

ALL: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

### Psalm 20 Deliverance in Battle

LEADER 2: May Yahweh answer you in a day of trouble; may the name of Jacob's God protect you.

ALL: May He send you help from the sanctuary and sustain you from Zion.

DAVID: May He remember all your offerings and accept your burnt offering.

*Selah*

LEADER 2: May He give you what your heart desires and fulfill your whole purpose.

ALL: Let us shout for joy at your victory and lift the banner in the name of our God.

DAVID: May Yahweh fulfill all your requests.

LEADER 2: Now I know that the Lord gives victory to His anointed;

ALL: He will answer him from His holy heaven with mighty victories from His right hand.

DAVID: Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses,

ALL: but we take pride in the name of Yahweh our God.

LEADER 2: They collapse and fall,

ALL: but we rise and stand firm.

DAVID: Lord, give victory to the king!

ALL: May He answer us on the day that we call.

(NOTE: Selah a word used seventy-four times in the Hebrew Bible—seventy-one times in the Psalms and three times in Habakkuk. Though the meaning of the word is not known, it is probably a direction by the leader to raise the voice or perhaps an indication of a pause.)