

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE -

10.20.2024

PSALM 91 - ABIDING IN THE
SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY

I. INTRODUCTION

PSALM 91:1-16

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”
- 3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
- 5 You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
- 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
- 8 You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.
- 9 Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—

the Most High, who is my refuge—

10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.

12 On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

14 “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.

15 When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.”

- No superscription appended to this psalm so the author is unknown.
- We can classify this as a wisdom psalm that contains a divine oracle.
- The theme of this psalm is how believers learn to trust in God’s promises of protection in the midst of ever present danger.

II. AN INVITATION TO TRUST IN GOD'S PROTECTION

- V1 furnishes the headline truth that this psalm declares: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.”
- “Dwells” and “abide” are synonymous terms for a place to live and lodge.
- Ps 90:1 declares that God has been the dwelling place for God’s people in all generations.
- “Shelter” and “shadow” are also synonymous terms for a secret, hidden and safe place.
- “Shadow” implies nearness.
- Dwelling and abiding are terms that imply an intimate knowledge of God.
- God is home for the believer. The saints are safe at home with God.
- V2 the psalmist expresses faith in that truth, this is not theoretical knowledge he is sharing, but experiential.
- V2 I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

- He believes what he has said, he trusts in the Lord, he dwells with God, he has found refuge and shelter in God.
 - His confidence in this truth of God's protection is grounded on who God is.
 - He is the Most High and the Almighty, that is he is the infinite and transcendent, all-powerful God.
 - He is Lord, "Yahweh," the covenant God of Israel, who loves his people with a faithful, loyal love.
 - The Lord for the psalmist is personally, "my God, in whom I trust."
 - The psalmist is expressing intimate faith, he trusts in the Lord's protection.
 - To dwell and abide in the shadow of the Almighty is wisdom; he is the believer's refuge and fortress.
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- Nothing else can provide the kind of safety and security that the believer longs for in this world when faced with troubles and danger.
 - When we don't know and trust in God as our ultimate place of refuge and security in this troubled world, we will look for safety and security in other things or in other people.
 - God intends for us to be safe in him, not in our circumstances or in relationships.
 - We can trust God in troubling and dangerous circumstances, we can know the safety and security that comes from abiding in the shadow of his protection, even when nothing about our troubling or dangerous situation is safe and secure and our circumstances remain unchanged.
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- We should all take this confession on our lips, "The Lord is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
 - Don't merely resolve to make God your fortress and refuge, draw near to him in full assurance of the divine promises, He is your God!
 - That is walking in the path of wisdom.

III. AN EXHORTATION TO TRUST IN GOD'S PROTECTION

- Because the psalmist has already experienced this, he can now exhort other believers to live in this truth.
 - He encourages and assures believers of their safety in God.
 - "He will" - this is an emphatic statement meant to amplify the care of the Lord who is intimately involved in the welfare of his people.
 - He employs bold imagery to illustrate the divine protection and deliverance which is promised.
 - God will defend them Like a mother bird hides her little chicks under her wings.
 - God's faithfulness is like the shield of a warrior.
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- What are the perils and dangers which God will protect his people from?
 - The snare of the fowler.
 - Deadly pestilence.
 - Because of God's deliverance and protection, those who trust in him will not fear anything day or night.
 - They will not fear the terror of night or the arrow that flies by day. They will not fear the pestilence that stalks in darkness nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
 - The whole gamut of things that could bring fear to a person are covered in that phrase.
 - No circumstance will terrorize those who trust in the Lord and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

- The point is that God's protection is comprehensive.
 - There is no limit to his care and protection.
 - The Lord gives his people, those who trust in him, security from all natural and supernatural causes of fear.
 - God will keep you safe at all times because of God's providential care over you.
 - God's providence is how in his infinite power and wisdom he upholds, directs, arranges, and governs everything in his creation.
 - That means that nothing happens in this world that is outside of his direction and control.
- And because he is the Most High, he has full authority over all things that happen on earth.
 - Jesus said to his disciples, prior to his ascension, "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Math 28:18)
 - There is no space in the entirety of the universe that exists outside of Christ's sphere of authority and measure of rule.
 - If that's true—what do you have to fear?
- The greatness of God's protection is further amplified in v7 by the ratio of thousand or ten thousand falling at your side.
- Now, this doesn't mean you will never experience troubles in this world.
 - It does not mean God will spare you from everything that wages war against you or that you will be spared from hard circumstances in life.
 - But we can take comfort that God's providential care of his people is comprehensive.
 - It extends to the smallest details of our lives.
 - If a circumstance befalls us, God will bring us through it, we may not see the circumstance change in the manner which we would desire to see it, but he will see us through it.
 - And sometimes he will deliver us out of the circumstance.
 - The presence of danger, trouble, or hard circumstances remaining in our life does not invalidate the promises of God's meticulous care and protection of his saints.
 - The saints of God are safe in God.
 - V8 The godly will see through the eye of faith God's salvation, as the Lord punishes the wicked.
 - This gives us assurance to confidently trust in the Lord in the midst of danger, even if our circumstances don't change, because we know the outcome in the end—the righteous will receive their reward, and the wicked will receive their just recompense.
 - There is no power in heaven or on earth that can stay the hand of the Lord from rescuing his people or from punishing the wicked.
- V9 echoes the profession of faith of the opening two verses.
 - Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place...
 - This is the resulting effect of the safety found when one takes refuge in the Most High:
 - V10 no evil will touch you except what is allowed, permitted by the Lord.
 - Whatever happens to us does not happen apart from his will.
- God's protection of those who trust in him and abide in the shadow of the Almighty involves the Lord directing the host of heaven to come to the defense of the godly.
 - V11 For He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.
 - God promises that the saint that is secure in him will be guarded and kept from stumbling, by the ministering work of angels.

- In Matthew and in Luke's gospel, we have the narrative of Jesus's temptation in the wilderness. (Matthew 4; Luke 4)
- Satan tempted Jesus to act presumptuously on the basis of the promises of Psalm 91.
- The Lord does charge his angels with the protection of the godly in all our ways.
- We see the Lord doing this in the life of Jesus:
- He sent his angels to minister to Jesus in the wilderness, after the devil left him.
- He sent his angels to minister to Jesus in Gethsemane to strengthen him in his time of need.
- Hebrews 1:14 tells us that angels are "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation"
- What confidence we can have in the Lord's care and protection in that he has at the ready for our defense, a numerous host from heaven commissioned to keep watch over every single one of his saints.
- Wisdom dictates that we don't commit to do reckless things and presume God is obligated to shield us from the consequences of those presumptuous acts.
- V13 is a powerful reminder and climax to this exhortation to trust in God's protection; the images of lion, serpent, and dragon that will be trampled underfoot by those who have made the Lord their dwelling place and refuge.
- These are all images used to describe Satan in Scripture. (Rev 12:9; 1 Peter 5:8; Gen 3:15)
- Christ secured victory over every one of our enemies.
- Because Christ has done this for us at the cross, we can be assured that "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under our feet" (Romans 16:20).

IV. AN ORACLE OF GOD'S PROMISE OF PROTECTION

- The final verses of this psalm are an oracle from God. He speaks directly to one singular person.
- Because this individual loves the Lord, because he knows the Lord's name, because he calls to the Lord the promises of security for him are:
 - I will deliver him
 - I will protect him
 - I will answer him
 - I will be with him in trouble
 - I will rescue him
 - I will honor him
 - I will satisfy him with long life
 - I will show him my salvation
- Who is this individual that God speaks to?
- It can only be to Christ first and foremost. It is to him that these promises are made because only Jesus loved the Lord perfectly.
- Jesus the fulfillment of everything declared in Psalm 91.
- To this Christ and to those in Christ—are given the promises of deliverance, of protection, of answered prayer, of his presence in troubles, of future and final rescue and glory, of satisfaction and eternal life, and of salvation in all of its fullness.
- We can claim these promises, not in some hyper-faith way, but by faith and trust in Christ alone.

- And he may deliver us out of our circumstances and troubles now, but we know that ultimately he will deliver and rescue us in the end.
- Christianity does not promise escape from suffering, from trouble, or from hard circumstances, but God promises to be with us in every one of those difficult moments, even if we aren't delivered from them.
- And he uses our suffering, which has come to us providentially, for our good and his glory.
- He did not spare his own Son from suffering, he did not dispatch a legion of angels to deliver him from the cross, he did not deliver him from his hour of trial, but the Lord brought him through it, ultimately by raising him from the dead.
- When you are facing moments of fear and uncertainty, worry and anxiety, make God your refuge through prayer and intake of His Word.
- Flee to him for shelter.
- Recite this psalm and claim the promises because of what Christ has accomplished for us.
- Remind yourself continually that God doesn't promise us a trouble-free life but assures us that he will be with us in every trial and circumstance of life and we can rely on God's presence and help.
- Rest securely in the assurance that your life and your future are secure in Him.
- The NT parallel to the precious promises of psalm 81 can be found in Romans 8.
- Romans 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- To Christ Jesus have been given first rights to the claims of the promises, and if you are in him, you can lay claim to the promises of Psalm 91 and Romans 8.
- Through Christ, we can dwell in the shelter of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
- Through Christ, we can enter boldly to find grace in time of need.
- And in Christ, we can take refuge in God, experience protection and deliverance, both here and then fully in the hereafter; when God will satisfy us with long life and we will behold God's salvation.
- May God grant us the faith to believe fully upon His Son, flee to him for refuge and security, and abide in his shadow, for he alone has the words of eternal life.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?

- With whom can I share the gospel this week?