

## Sermon 8-13-17 Safety in God's presence Psalm 91

Dear Dwellers under God's wings:

Psalm 91 is one of the most loved Psalms in the Bible.

- **It is a Psalm that people turn to in times of....**
  - Distress
  - Fear
  - Sickness
  - Persecution
- Charles Spurgeon the great preacher in 1800's England said: "In the whole collection there is not a more cheering Psalm"

### **In the shelter of the Most High**

The theme of Psalm 91 is this: The one who delights to make his or her home in the shelter of the Most High will remain in the most blessed state.

- God regularly and repeatedly protects and delivers his people from all manner of harm
- God will watch over us
- God treats us with individual care and attention
- God sends his angels to watch over his children

The church father Athanasius recommended that we recite this Psalm:

If you desire to establish yourself and others in devotion, to know what confidence is to be reposed in God, and what makes minds fearless, you will praise God by reciting the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm.

Psalm 91 is often used in the Church around New Year's Day for what better way to begin a new year than to turn to our God for our daily protection. Psalm 91 is also used at the beginning of Lent because of Satan's infamous use of verses 11-12 when he tempted Jesus to test God the Father.

### **Refuge – Fortress - Shield**

Psalm 91 is a bold public profession of confidence.

- Its purpose is to encourage believers to place their trust in the Lord for protection from all evil
- The key word in this Psalm is “refuge” which is elaborated throughout the Psalm with other such words as shelter, fortress, dwelling place, wing and shield.
- The term “refuge” is the basis for the Lord’s protective care for his children
- To seek refuge means to look to the Lord for security from danger
- The Lord is pictured as a mother bird that protects her young with her wings
- We have no reason to fear: pestilence, demonic powers, violence or war
- With the Lord we have a safe place
- The Lord will command his angels to protect the believer on his or her life’s pathway
- Psalm 91 speaks of the Lord’s overriding commitment to protect believers who take refuge in him
- God’s overriding commitment is seen in this Psalm when the Lord says to us...
  - I will deliver you
  - I will protect you
  - I will answer you
  - I will save you
  - I will honor you
  - I will satisfy you
  - I will show you

Psalm 91 speaks of the intimate personal relationship we have with the Lord: “Because he loves me I will deliver him; I will protect him because he knows my name.”

In the midst of uncertainty, trials and suffering Psalm 91 urges us to say to God: “You are my refuge.”

Psalm 91

## Rest

V1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty

- The person walking close to the most High will have the shadow of the Almighty as protection
- The secret place ( shelter) of the most High is that special closeness to God
- The shadow of God describes His care and protection for us
- Walking with God is prayer, confession and meditation on God's Word
- We dwell in God and He dwells in us John 14:23; I John 4:15

V2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust

- King David found solace in God's protection Psalm 18:2
- King David knew the Lord was his fortress Psalm 71:3
- Trust God and pour out our hearts to him Psalm 62:5ff

V3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence

- Hunters (fowler) use snares to trap unsuspecting birds which for us is any plot against a believer intended to endanger life
- We often are the object of snares by the wicked Psalm 144: 7, 11
- The word "pestilence" means that which is troublesome, disagreeable, unpleasant, noxious and may refer to disease, plagues and epidemics.

V4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

- God's wings are our protection. Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 63:7
- God's care for Israel was like that of an eagle over her young Deut. 32:11-12
- As a mother eagle protects her young with feathers and wings, so the Lord protects us

V5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day

- The fear we often have is the fear of the unseen, the invisible and the unknown
- The silent flight of an arrow shot from a distance in the midst of battle
- The fear here is the fear of the unknown

V6 Nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday

- When a plague threatens the Lord will protect
- Even with the appearance of light there is no defense except the Lord

V7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you

- Natural disasters take many lives
- Wars and plagues take many lives
- Auto accidents take many lives
- Consider though how the Lord protects his own

V8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked

- God makes a difference between the righteous and the wicked Psalm 37:34; 92:11
- Now is the time to believe in Jesus, to repent of our sins, to praise the Lord

V9 If you make the Most High your dwelling---even the Lord, who is my refuge

- Make the Lord your dwelling place
- A dwelling is where you stay, find comfort, go for safety, return for rest

V10 Then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent

**“Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” I Chronicles 4:10**

- Jabez in the Old Testament prayed for such blessings and God gave a promise I Chronicles 4:9f

- There are exceptions when even believers suffer in this world but may we remember that in those times when we are tested with trials and suffering that God...
  - Still is at work strengthening our faith
  - Disciplines us as a loving father
  - Gives us grace to bear whatever we will endure

V11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways

- Angels were created to serve us Hebrews 13
- God gives orders to his angels to protect you personally
- God has hosts of angels awaiting any order he may give
- God allowed his people to see the angels protecting them I Kings 22:19ff; II Kings 6:16f

V12 They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

- God sent his angels to deliver...
  - Lot from Sodom
  - Hezekiah from Assyria
  - Daniel's 3 friends from a fiery furnace
  - Daniel from hungry lions
  - Peter from prison when Herod was about to kill him
- God sent angels to minister to Jesus after He was tempted by the devil

V13 You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent

**"I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Matthew 16:18**

- A cobra is a poisonous snake; a young lion is very strong
- Bible students take these to represent the devil
- But Jesus said the gates of hell will not defeat the Gospel Matthew 16:18

- The Apostle Paul said that believers would soon trample upon Satan Romans 16:20

V14 Because he loves me, says the Lord I will rescue him; I will protect him, for the acknowledges my name.

- Loves – deep longing or clinging to God
- We know His glorious name
- Loving God is the 1<sup>st</sup> and greatest commandment

V15 He shall call upon Me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

- The Lord hears our prayers Ps 34:12; 66:18; 84:11
- James 5:16
- We will have God's presence in trouble - we will not be alone
- James 4:8-10

V16 With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation

- Pr 3:16; 9:11; 10:27; 28:16
- We can never lose – even an early death here begins eternity in heaven

**When life become bizarre, only one's relationship with the Lord calms the soul.**