

RESET

Title: Part 4 – “Finding Refuge”

Date: August 10, 2025

While everyone in the house is saying “Hi” I want to take a second to say “Hi” to everyone joining us online or on our app—we think you are a part of our family, and we're so glad you're here with us today! If there's any way we can pray for you or serve you this week, please don't hesitate to reach out. We'd consider it a privilege to walk alongside you in whatever you're facing.

Hey, before we get any further I also want to say whether you are watching online or here in the house, do NOT MISS next Sunday! We will be celebrating our 1,000th Sunday as a church and it is going to be an awesome experience. We will be celebrating baptism, sharing memories, doing a couple giveaways of these awesome new shirts that will be available... afterwards we've got a giant waterslide, and Don's Dogs will be here to feed you lunch. I can't wait to celebrate as a family all that God has done in and through us as we gather for the 1,000th time.

As I was preparing for today's message, I guess I have been a little nostalgic with this being the 999th Sunday, but there is no way I could have predicted what our world would look like today back in 2006. Like I didn't have a smartphone, teenagers were all talking about MySpace, as a country we were maybe doubting or debating the war in Iraq, but we were still unified by the events of 9/11, right?

There was just no way I could have pictured the world we live in now. It was the stuff of dystopian science fiction. BUT when we read our main text today from Psalm 91 it sounds like it could be describing our news cycle! The world this psalmist is describing sounds remarkably like our world—everything shaking, nations in uproar, pandemics, political chaos, natural disasters, everything feeling unstable and uncertain.

But here's what's remarkable: right in the middle of describing all that turmoil, the psalmist makes this incredible declaration about where real security is found. Not in governments that won't fail, not in economies that won't crash, not in technology that won't let us down—but in the God who remains our refuge when everything else is shaking. Listen to this... Psalm 91, verses 1 through 12:

¹ He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” ³ Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that

flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. 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 observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. ⁹ If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, ¹⁰ no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; ¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Today we're concluding our four-week collection of messages called "Reset." We started by diagnosing the problem—our souls have crashed from digital overload and chronic hurry. So, we learned to "Force Quit" the good things competing with the best things. Last week, we talked about getting back to the "Factory Reset" – Jesus' original rhythm of abiding, Sabbath, and solitude.

BUT here's what I've discovered: even after you slow down, even after you create margin, even after you learn to abide in Christ—we still live in a world that's actively working against our spiritual formation. **BECAUSE** here is the reality of our world today:

We're not just distracted by technology we're being disciplined by it.

And that discipleship is forming you into someone who cannot experience Jesus authentically. The question isn't just "How do you manage your time better?" The question is "Who is really discipling you?" And the uncomfortable truth is that most of us have become disciples of the internet rather than disciples of Jesus.

SO, today I want to preach a message I'm calling:

Finding Refuge.

We need refuge because faith has always been a fragile thing. Powerful, lifesaving, but fragile. It is something that should be protected. Would you agree with that?

I read something by therapist and author John Eldredge this summer that highlighted something I think many people have begun to feel in recent years. He writes:

"My concern is that our faculty of faith—the ability to trust and believe—has been secretly eroded by something most of us are

completely unaware of. It has to do with the fact that we are, all of us, Disciples of the Internet.”

Now if you are like me and push back when you first hear that, stop and think about this.

Discipleship isn't just about gaining information—it's about formation. It's about who you're becoming. And the internet isn't just giving you data, it's actively shaping your soul and here's how:

- **You expect immediate answers to every question.**

When you don't know something what is the first thing you do? You Google it, right? And within .003 seconds you've got the world's knowledge at your fingertips. The saints of ages past would be horrified by this because waiting, for thousands of years, was considered part of how God shapes our souls. But now, we pray and when God doesn't move immediately we assume He doesn't care or there must be something wrong with us. We have also, as Disciples of the Internet:

- **Developed a deep suspicion of mystery.**
- **We're addicted to what feels practical and concrete.**
- **And we've lost confidence that we can know anything for certain.**

Because what was fact yesterday is proven wrong tomorrow! Does that sound familiar? You get medical advice online, and the next week a new study says everything you just read was false. You research a topic, find expert opinions, and then discover those same experts have been debunked. You check the news in the morning and by evening the story has completely changed.

This constant flip-flopping of "truth" has created something devastating in your soul: it's trained you to be suspicious of believing anything—including believing God. The internet has made us all insecure in our ability to know the truth when we hear it or see it.

This is devastating on our souls! If you can't trust that anything is true, you can't trust God's voice. If mystery feels like deception, you can't embrace the mystery of faith. If you need immediate answers, you can't wait on God's timing. If you're suspicious of everything, you can't trust in Someone you can't even see.

The internet has rewired your brain and mine to be incompatible with spiritual life. We have become **functioning materialists**. People who theoretically believe in God but practically live as if the physical world is all there is. You turn to Google for answers

instead of God. You seek comfort in Netflix instead of in His presence. You find your identity in social media likes instead of in His love.

SO, let's begin working our way through a few takeaway truths as we relearn how to find our refuge from all this in God and learn to experience Jesus again in our daily lives. Because that is God's offer to each of us. To experience the everyday refuge, strength, and wonder available to friends of Jesus. So, grab something and write these down:

The world is not neutral—it's designed to destroy your union with Christ.

Here's something most Christians don't understand today: the world's system isn't just distracting you from God, it's actively working to destroy your intimacy with Jesus. AND this isn't accidental. This isn't just the byproduct of modern life. This is spiritual warfare as old as the Tower of Babel. The enemy wants to convince you that you don't need God and today he has far more tools to use than ever before!

Think about how your phone works. It's designed by some of the smartest people in the world using the same psychological principles that casinos use to create addiction. Variable reward schedules trigger dopamine in your brain. Push notifications create anxiety when you're away from your device. Infinite scroll keeps you engaged indefinitely.

Your phone is literally rewiring your neural pathways to crave digital stimulation over divine encounters. Every time you reach for your phone instead of reaching for God in a moment of anxiety, you're training your heart to find its refuge in something other than Jesus.

But it goes deeper than just personal habits. We're living in what the Bible calls "the world" – a system that's opposed to God's kingdom. It's not neutral territory. It has an agenda: to make you so distracted, so anxious, so dependent on digital comfort that you lose your capacity for spiritual intimacy.

The battle isn't just for your time; it's for your heart! It's for your capacity to hear and trust God's voice! It's for your ability to be still and know that He is God! The enemy knows that if he can keep you constantly stimulated, perpetually anxious, and digitally dependent, you'll never discover the refuge that God offers.

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote this to early believers, he says: (Eph 6)

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Church hear me, I want to be clear. Your phone, technology, the internet ISN'T the ultimate enemy BUT it is a weapon being used in a larger war over your soul. Yes, our story is a love story. God coming for His people. It's a love story but it takes place in the middle of a war. A war taking place not just in our world but one that rages in the heavenly realms.

And here's what breaks my heart: most Christians are losing this battle without even realizing they're in it! They think their spiritual dryness is because they're not trying hard enough. They think their anxiety is just part of modern life. They think their inability to hear God's voice is because God isn't speaking.

But the truth is, God is speaking. He's been speaking all along. He's been offering refuge. We've just been disciplined by a system that's destroyed our ability to hear Him or sense Him.

BUT here's the beautiful promise in the middle of this chaos, number 2:

Jesus offers Himself as your secret place.

Jesus offers Himself as your refuge. Not just help during hard times, but ACTUAL refuge—a secret place where your soul can find safety, peace, and restoration.

The psalmist talks about this. Look back at verse 1:

¹ He who dwells in the SECRET PLACE of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

The Hebrew word for "secret place" literally means a hidden place, shelter, or covering. It's not about privacy; it's about protection and safety. Think of it like a bomb shelter or safe room.

BUT here is what I want you to see. And this may be new to some of you, and it may even sound a little weird but that's because we are all Disciples of the Internet. The Secret Place is not just poetic language. It is a real location we can enter today! The Psalmist

doesn't write about the Secret Place as some kind of a distant metaphor. It's a reality we can enter into right now! An actual refuge that actually shelters.

So, where is this shelter? The Secret Place is God's heart. The very center of who He is. Just as your heart is the core of your being, the Father's heart is His and it is the safest place in the universe! AND if you are a follower of Jesus then God's heart now dwells in YOUR heart. Look at what Jesus says as He prays to His Heavenly Father, He says: (John 17)

²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity.

I know that is enough to make your head spin but as a follower of Jesus this means the Secret Place is:

- Accessible now: Not something you have to wait for heaven to experience.
- A place of communion: Where you can have intimate conversation with God.
- It is a place of protection from spiritual attack: Where the enemy cannot reach you AND...
- Peace in chaos: Available regardless of external circumstances

The secret place is God's heart AND because Jesus lives in you, you have access to that refuge right now, in this moment, regardless of what's happening around you.

This is what our spiritual fathers and mothers experienced in centuries gone by. This was the experience of the "everyday mystic" – someone who lived with a constant awareness that the spiritual realm is far more real than the physical realm. Someone who knew that God's presence was available in ordinary moments. Someone who had learned to turn their heart toward Jesus throughout the day, not just during formal prayer times.

My point is you don't have to wait until Sunday to experience God! You don't have to clean up your life before you can approach Him! You don't have to have perfect faith or perfect understanding to experience it! You just have to turn your heart toward Him and say, "Jesus, I need refuge."

When anxiety hits, instead of reaching for your phone, turn in your heart and reach for Jesus. When loneliness strikes, instead of scrolling social media, turn in your heart toward the One who promised never to leave you. When you feel overwhelmed, instead of binge-watching Netflix, you enter the secret place where perfect peace is available.

But here's the key: this requires practice. We've been disciplined by the internet for years. Our reflexes have been trained to seek digital comfort. Learning to find refuge in God instead of gadgets is going to take intentional, repeated practice.

It means starting your day by turning your heart toward Jesus before you turn toward your phone. It means taking moments throughout the day to consciously redirect your attention from the digital noise to His still, small voice. As I mentioned last week, tell your heart to find Jesus and it is remarkable how well it can with practice. It also means ending your day in His presence instead of with screen time.

BUT for now, understand that we have a real refuge available. The safest place in the universe. And we can access that Secret Place at any time with patience and persistence. AND that leads us to this:

Jesus is the integrating center of all things.

Here's one of the most profound truths I've learned from studying this: Jesus isn't just your Savior—He's the integrating center of all things. This comes from Colossians 1:17. The Apostle Paul says:

¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

The Greek word Paul uses here means to cohere, to be constituted together, to maintain unity. Paul is saying that Jesus isn't just involved in creation, He's actively holding everything together right now! AND that includes your life, your heart, and your fractured soul.

The world as a system has fragmented you. It's divided your attention, scattered your thoughts, split your loyalties, and caused trauma that's fragmented your soul. BUT Jesus offers integration. He offers to put the fragmented pieces of your life back together. Not through better time management or organizational systems, but through His presence that brings wholeness to everything it touches.

Think of Jesus like the hub of a wheel—everything radiates out from Him and finds its proper relationship to everything else through Him. Without the hub, you just have scattered spokes. Without Jesus as the center, your life becomes fragmented pieces that don't connect.

The truth is your inner world is a lot like Narnia. It is way bigger on the inside than the outside. There are places in your heart that have been wounded, fractured, hidden away.

Places where you've never invited Jesus to come. And those fragmented parts of your soul are crying out for integration.

Maybe it's the part of you that feels inadequate and constantly seeks validation through social media. Maybe it's the part that's anxious about the future and compulsively checks the news. Maybe it's the part that feels lonely and fills that void with digital entertainment.

Jesus wants to enter those broken places and bring healing. He wants to be the center that holds all the scattered pieces of your life together. **BUT that requires more than just asking Him into your heart once—it requires ongoing daily practices of turning toward Him and inviting Him into every area of your life.**

Call this the “prayer of descent,” going deep into your heart where Jesus dwells and allowing Him to speak to those wounded, fragmented places. It's about giving voice to the younger, hurt parts of yourself and letting Jesus bring His healing presence to those areas. **AND it works like this:**

Instead of praying "outward" to God (like He's distant or even in the room), you pray "inward" to where Jesus actually dwells—in your heart and soul. The "descent" is going deeper into your inner world where Christ lives in you. This is where we practice lovingly detaching ourselves from the world. We pray, “God I give you everyone and everything.” **AND as you do that, as you allow yourself to go deeper in you find Jesus.**

Maybe this will help access the healing He offers to us all:

Go inward.

Instead of trying to "reach up" to God, you quiet yourself and turn attention to your heart where Jesus lives like we just talked about. Then:

Identify the wounded part.

What's been triggered? What pain are you feeling? **What age does this hurt feel like?**
Now:

Give it voice.

Let that younger part of you express the pain to Jesus. "I felt so alone," "I was so scared," "I didn't understand why they left." Don't filter yourself. Identify the wounded part AND:

Let Jesus respond.

Listen for His comfort, truth, healing presence to speak to that specific wound. Then:

Receive integration.

Allow Jesus to bring that younger fragmented part back into wholeness with the rest of who you are now.

This is how you move from fragmentation to integration. Not by trying harder or being more disciplined, but by allowing Jesus to be the center that brings wholeness to every scattered piece of your life. That is what is available to those who take refuge in the shelter of the Most High anytime they need it!

I know that's a lot. You should go back and watch this message again this week. But number 4:

Practice turning your heart toward Jesus daily.

So, what else can we do to practically move from being a disciple of the internet to being an everyday mystic? Well, as I touched on, practice turning your heart toward Jesus.

This isn't complicated. Throughout your day, in ordinary moments, just consciously direct your attention and affection toward Jesus. Not because you have to, but because you want to. Not out of duty, but out of love.

When you wake up, before you check your phone, you turn your heart toward Jesus and say, "Good morning, Lord. I'm yours today." When you're driving, instead of listening to the news that makes you anxious, you talk to Jesus about your day. When you're eating lunch, you take a moment to thank Him for His provision and sense His presence with you.

When you feel stressed, instead of immediately reaching for a distraction, you turn your heart toward the Prince of Peace. When you feel lonely, instead of scrolling through everyone else's highlight reels, you remember that you're beloved by the Creator of the universe. When you feel uncertain about the future, instead of reading conflicting expert opinions, you rest in the One who holds your future in His hands.

This isn't about adding more religious activities to your schedule. This is about learning to live in conscious communion with the Jesus who lives inside you! It's about recognizing that every moment is an opportunity for divine encounter!

One more, you guys have been awesome:

Practice declaring truth over your life.

The internet has trained you to believe lies about yourself, about God, about reality itself. You need to actively counter those lies with God's truth.

- When social media makes you feel inadequate, you declare, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."
- When the news makes you anxious about the future, you declare, "God has plans to prosper me and not to harm me."
- When digital overwhelm makes you feel like you're failing, you declare, "His mercies are new every morning."

You're not just managing your digital consumption—you're engaging in spiritual warfare! You're taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ! You're refusing to let the internet disciple your soul and choosing to be discipled by Jesus instead!

And sometimes that means bringing the cross of Jesus Christ between you and your phone. Literally! I'd encourage you to pray this prayer regularly:

"Heavenly Father, I break any unhealthy spiritual bonds between me and this device. I choose to find my refuge, my identity, my comfort, my security in Jesus alone. Amen."

As we wind this down here's what I want you to understand: this isn't just about your personal spiritual life.

We're living in a generation that's drowning in trauma and anxiety. Mental health issues are skyrocketing. Suicide rates are climbing. Depression is epidemic. And a huge part of this crisis is because people are trying to find refuge in digital counterfeits instead of in the God who created them.

Your friends, your family, your coworkers—they're all looking for the same thing you're looking for: a safe place to rest their souls. They're scrolling through their phones at 2 AM because they can't sleep. They're binge-watching shows because they can't face their

own thoughts. They're constantly checking social media because they're desperately looking for connection and validation.

BUT you have access to something they don't even know exists: the secret place of the Most High. You know about the refuge that actually works! You've experienced the peace that passes understanding! You've tasted the love that never fails!

The world needs what you've found! They need to know that there's an alternative to digital discipleship. They need to see what it looks like to live as an everyday mystic. They need to witness someone who has found their refuge in God instead of in gadgets.

This is your mission field! Not some foreign country, but the digitally overwhelmed, spiritually hungry people right around you! They're looking for what you have, they just don't know where to find it.

Church, I hope you see what is really at stake here? This isn't just about better time management or digital detox. This is about whether the next generation will even know how to encounter God! This is about whether the church will be full of people who know Jesus intimately or just people who know about Jesus intellectually!

We've got to wake up to what's happening! We've allowed ourselves to be discipled by algorithms instead of the Almighty! We've sought refuge in devices instead of in the Divine! We've become disciples of the internet instead of disciples of the One who said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest!"

And the result is that we have churches full of people who are spiritually exhausted, emotionally fragmented, and unable to hear God's voice above the digital noise! We have believers who can quote Scripture but can't sit in silence for five minutes! We have Christians who know all the right theological answers but have never learned to turn their hearts toward Jesus throughout the day!

BUT I'm telling you today that there's another way! There's a refuge that's available to you right now! There's a secret place where your soul can find rest! There's an integrating center who can bring wholeness to your fragmented life!

His name is Jesus!

- And He's not just your Savior—He's your refuge!
- He's not just your Lord—He's your secret place!
- He's not just your teacher—He's the One who can integrate every scattered piece of your life!

But you're going to have to choose Him over your phone! You're going to have to choose His presence over digital distraction! You're going to have to choose to be discipled by Jesus instead of by the internet!

Come on, imagine what your life could look like if you really made Jesus your refuge. Imagine waking up each morning not to the anxiety of checking your notifications, but to the peace of His presence. Imagine moving through your day not in reaction to digital demands, but in response to His gentle leading.

Imagine being so grounded in His love that social media couldn't shake your identity. Imagine being so secure in His plans that the news couldn't steal your peace. Imagine being so filled with His presence that you wouldn't need constant digital stimulation to feel satisfied.

Imagine your children growing up watching you turn to Jesus instead of your phone when you're stressed. Imagine your friends seeing what it looks like to find refuge in God instead of in gadgets. Imagine being part of a community of everyday mystics who know how to experience Jesus really, not just talk about Him academically.

This isn't just a dream! This is the life Jesus died to give you! This is the refuge He's offering! This is the integration He provides! This is the peace He promises to all who will turn their hearts toward Him!

But you have to choose it! You have to fight for it! You have to be willing to swim upstream!

I believe some of you are ready to make that choice right now. You're tired of being discipled by the internet. You're exhausted from seeking refuge in digital counterfeits. You're ready to discover what it means to be an everyday mystic who experiences Jesus really.

If that's you, I want you to stand with me. This is your declaration that Jesus is your refuge, your secret place, your integrating center. This is your commitment to turn your heart toward Him instead of toward your phone. This is your choice to be discipled by the Savior instead of by the internet.

Stand up if you're ready to find your refuge in God as we pray.