

Resting in the Sovereign Refuge of God

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This evening, we'll be reading from Psalm 91. So, if you will go ahead and turn with me to Psalm 91.

This is one of the most beloved passages in all of scripture. It has comforted soldiers on battlefields, mothers in hospital rooms, saints in seasons of deep fear. We live in a world that often feels entirely out of our control. The digital age we inhabit, it's overwhelming. The news cycles can make our very lives feel unstable. But Psalm 91 is a Christ-centered promise, a declaration of God's sovereign protection and an invitation into the secret place of divine refuge, namely in God.

A brother in Christ has shared that he had a personal struggle with severe health anxiety. He would describe his anxiety that would wake him up at 3:00 in the morning with a racing heart spiraling into panic attacks over things that were not even real threats. Most panic attacks are such. He tried everything humanly possible to fix it. Dieting, exercising, counseling. But ultimate healing did not come from his own attempts to control his health. He found that true peace was found only when God revealed himself as a refuge.

Another brother in Christ writes that he would pray Psalm 91 over his family every morning. Yet wondering whether the promise truly belonged to him, he says this. Psalm 91 belongs to Jesus and I belong to Jesus. Therefore, Psalm 91 belongs to me. That is the foundation of this sermon that I'm about to preach. Psalm 91 is fulfilled in Christ, secured by Christ, and shared with all who are in Christ. God secures our access to the promise.

You see, before we can rest in the promises of Psalm 91, we must understand we must belong in Christ. We must belong in Christ. King David was the one that wrote this psalm. And as a Lord's anointed, his life pointed to Jesus Christ. That is the point of Psalm 91, a pointer to Jesus Christ.

We see that Jesus was tired and hungry in the desert. Devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12 to the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness, saying, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee." Matthew 4:6. Jesus counters that by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:16 and says to

the fact that establishing that one must trust God rather than test him. Satan removed the Psalm 91 promise from its context of trusting God, using it instead to urge a spectacular, prideful display. While Psalm 91 describes protection during normal life, Satan applied it to a manufactured dangerous scenario. Jesus showed that scripture must be interpreted by other scripture. Satan used truth scripture to promote a false self-serving action while Jesus modeled the proper biblical interpretation by hearing to the faithful context of God's word. Namely, he is God's word. Amen. He spoke the truth into existence.

You see, we don't earn these kind of promises that I'm about to share. There's no earning whatsoever at all. But rather, the New Testament tells us that everything God ever promised to his people has been fully realized in the person of Jesus Christ. As 2 Corinthians 1:20 says, "For all the promises of God, in him, Christ are yea and in him, amen." That's how it ends.

So with that said, if you will stand out of the respect of God's word, I'll read Psalm 91.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked, because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High thy habitation. There shall no evil befall thee. Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

May God bless the reading of his word. You may be seated.

I'm going to touch on verse one. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty. I don't know. Did you count how many shall there was in this verse in these in this passage rather? You see the psalm begins not with what we do but with where God places us. You see the secret place is not this mystical state we achieve. It is a position God grants to those who are in Christ. You see

this hidden space, this secret place, because it is unrecognized by the world and only found by those who actively live close in relationship with God. It is by that nature that God hides us in Christ. You see, Colossians 3:3 says this, "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

So this about this abiding not visiting the psalm emphasizes dwelling. You see that this word dwelling literally means living and important remaining rather than just visiting in and out. This secret place is to be lived and remained implying a life of constant fellowship with God. You see, through Christ in a new covenant context, this place is entered by abiding in Christ and his word. Jesus himself prayed, "I in them, us, and thou, God, in me." That's John 17:23.

And then a heart posture is that it represents a surrendered heart that trustingly relies on God's protection rather than self-reliance. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding." Important key is with all thine heart. There is no other relationship. I mentioned this in the previous sermon. There's no other relationship where you're to put your trust with all of your heart. Only in the Lord. Only in the Lord.

And when we do that, when we face trials, our human nature often tries to build up our own fortresses when trials come, right? Our instinct is I'm going to protect myself. But you see, we look for sec. You see the world rather finds security in governments, in economies, even in technology in our day and where we live in. But God establishes himself as our true refuge when everything else is shaking. The government, the economy, technology, right? Those are all shaky grounds.

But we are engaged in a battle we cannot see. The Apostle Paul warns in Ephesians 6:12 that our struggle is against spiritual forces of darkness in the high places. The world is actively designed to destroy our union with Christ. Know that believer the world is doing its best to strip you from your relationship with Christ. You see, even our very devices are built using psychological principles to trigger dopamine and create anxiety. Did you know that they literally thought about how to create more anxiety in your life? So, protect what has been given to you. God places his people inside his own protective presence.

Verse two continues, "I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God. In him will I trust." You see there, there's no thing about trusting in anything else but in God. Christ himself prayed these words as the perfectly man of God. He dwells in the shelter of the most high. He spent his time in this hostile world in the shadow of the almighty. He was doing that for us as an example to model after. And Christ trusted the father perfectly. Perfectly. If you would look at Jesus, he would never be full of an anxiety. The perfect man. and become and because we are in Christ, the father now

shelters us with the same protection he gave his son. Think about that. Same protection that he gave his son.

And then we look at verses three and six. Text goes on and says, "Surely he shall deliver thee." Notice the subject. He shall deliver. Not you will escape, but he shall deliver. That's key. He's constantly rescuing us. He's constantly rescuing us. It's not us trying to escape. He's rescuing us. Rescuing us from this thing, rescuing from that situation. And we'll see this. We'll see from all the things he is delivering us from. I hope you're amazed as I was. The first one he lists the dangers that he rescues us from that we don't have any control of.

Number one is snares. You see that in verse three. Snare of the fowler. So you got the snares which is a trap and the fowler is the trapper. So who's the one that's putting a trap? Well, you know, Satan. He's putting traps all around us that we have no idea because it's spiritual first primarily. And he sets these things up and these are essentially unseen danger meant to destroy you. Meant to destroy you. Can't destroy you, but meant to destroy you. And God is the one that lifts the trap. So the traps are set and he goes, "Nope, get that out. Get that out. Get that out. Get that out." That's what God is doing in the spiritual realm for us.

The next thing you see in verse three, you see there in verse sorry verse three the noisome pestilence. He shall deliver you from noisome pestilence. What is this? It's literally a storm of words. Picture a storm of words. Just noise. Noisome words. loud words. And what are these words? Is from the enemy. And he's speaking just over and over and over and over again. For what purpose? To subdue you, to turn you away to his voice instead of hearing God's voice. Whose voice is louder in your mind? Think about it. That's what the devil does. He uses words to get you away to turn your faith away from God's word to his words and then ultimately away from God's love to Satan who has no love in him but hate for you and wants to destroy you. Taking away from peace in God and security to instability and chaos. If you start thinking of it this way, it just it's clear. It's so clear. We need to constantly feed ourselves in the words of God. Jesus says, "Sanctify in the truth, in thy truth." And so that's where we are to go for refuge, secret place.

Another one is people spouting lies. So God will use people to spew all sorts of vicious lies about you or accusations that have no merit. That's the context. There's no merit. There's just lies or accusations. They're slanderous and there's no merit behind it. That's another way to pull you away again from God. And another one is this internally. Did God really say? Did God really say? Your evil heart will often say, "Did God really say that? Did he really mean that for me? Was that promised for me?" That's our sinful nature speaking there. And he wants to protect us from the outside as well as the inside.

Next verse five. Verse five. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night. Here it's the kind of terror I'm just going to give you the analogy is that where you cannot even speak. It comes so suddenly and it's so shocking to you that you have no words to speak cuz you're just so struck by terror. You ever felt that way? Again, that's not God. He never terrifies you that way. He makes you tremble at his word, but he doesn't make you terrified just for the sake of making you scared. So always know that. Always know that. So he protects you there in verse five. Thou shalt not, he says, thou shalt not be afraid. Don't be afraid in this kind of situation.

And then he goes on and says, thou shalt not be afraid for the arrow that flieth by day. So he's talking about night and now day and then a different context of arrows flying at you during the day. This is talking about sudden visible and now targeted arrows target attacks. God provides comprehensive protection. Remember in the text in Ephesians 6 the fiery darts of the enemy. fiery darts targeted to destroy you. So yes, Satan is also attacking us during the day and God protects us from those fiery darts by the shield of faith which is the what? Protection.

Next verse six we go on more protection. He says, "Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness." So he goes back to the nighttime scenario. And these are economic crisis in your life that strikes unexpectedly. You might have something that just came about and a huge bill comes up. You have no idea what you're going to do about this. God comes through. He may not come right away, but he comes through. Amen. He comes through. So he protects you from that.

Next, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. So he went from day to now noon day. And here he's talking about the middle of the day represents the peak of danger. Noonday was noted for the peak of danger. So everything now that has become before this is not the peak even the most dangerous time in your life the most intense in your life the most obvious crisis that are happening everything in your path and he says don't worry I've got you even in the worst of the worst he still has you in the refuge of his secret place there.

So these are all the threats no human can ever manage. Can you try to really manage all of this stuff? I will go insane. If you really thought about it and really try to do all of this yourself, you'll be crushed. So God declares in verse five, I love it. Look at it again. Thou shalt not be afraid. Thou shalt a promise not be afraid in all these situations. Don't ever be afraid. God will take care of you. Why? Because God himself stands between his people and every threat. That's why. He's the go in between. He's always ahead of you.

And read verse four. Look down. and read it with me. He says the emphasis here, he shall cover thee in what? Cover thee with his feathers. Essentially, this would be a picture of

it's that fatherly care. He's covering you, sheltering you from all these things that are happening on. See, he doesn't want you to even see it.

And then he goes on in verse four. He says, "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Truth. Truth. That's one way you know that you're in the refuge in the secret place when truth is just bubbling up from the word of God into your life. Have you noticed the security in the God's word in the worst of times? That's God. God is going right where you are. And this is a promise. It's not a promise of a trouble-free life. All these things happen are happening, will happen. He's not protecting you from a trouble-free life. But rather it is a promise that every trial is filtered through the sovereign care of God. Everything know that believer everything goes through his hands first. He knows how to take care of us.

Let's look at verse 7 and 10. Now 7 and 10. Verse 7 starts with a thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand but it shall not come nigh thee. Wonderful promises here. God's providence is deeply personal because God has made us fellow heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17 says this. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Why is this verse so important in this context? You see, whatever God gives to Christ is shared in full with us. That's both in suffering and glorifying together. very important and never separate the two. They go Christ with everything. Right?

So the devil can threaten as we see here. He can rant noisome pestilence, but he cannot take what God keeps secure for us in heaven. Know that our security is already in heaven. We just are not there yet. But he's protecting us even here on earth. You see, this describes an exact detailed providence of God. Not a simple defense against hardship. Meaning that this is not just a okay, I just got to trust in God and just leave it up to him. No, there's things that he shows to you, reveals to you what you're supposed to do and think. Namely that the point is that believers is not avoiding to avoid hardship. That's not the point either here. Remember, we are to take on all of Christ, suffering and all. Right? So, we don't avoid hardship. Christ never avoided hardship. The point is that God personally governs every detail of our lives. So if you think about it, everything that there's a threat or a rant from Satan, all those details, he's governing it.

It blows my mind in Job where Satan entered into heaven's throne room and talked with God, we have no idea what's going on right now. Do you realize that? You have absolutely no idea what's going on, but he is governing everything. He allows as one person said, theologian said, he can Satan only go so far as what God allows. He controls him. So know that he won't you cannot be destroyed ultimately spiritually. You can't. And this is the heart of Psalm 91. This is the heart of Psalm 91 that God cares. that it's not just general, but it's personal. He sees everything that's going on in your life, every detail of

your life. Know it. Know it. Believe his sovereign care. Sovereignty means he has ultimate control, ultimate power, ultimate governance of your body.

And so verse 10 says this, verse 10, there shall no evil befall thee. I love that. There shall no evil befall thee. This does not mean nothing painful will happen. Namely, Job. He experienced a lot of pain, didn't he? But here's the thing. It means here in the text, nothing truly evil, nothing outside God's good purpose can ever reach the believer. Job never said anything bad about God. He never sinned in that way. And that's your protection that he protects your heart from doing all types of crazy things that you would have done in your old nature, right? Protects you. He protects every believer for that purpose. Romans 8:28-35 just lifting out some things that goes in line with this context. Verse 10, it says, "All things work together for good, even in tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword." See, God does not promise a life without storms. He promises his presence in every storm. Every storm, his promise, his presence is always there.

Now, let's look at verse 11. If you shall look at verse 11, it says, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee." God has assigned a specific angel to see mine and your protection over all your care. Jesus affirmed this in Matthew 18:10. Their angels do always behold the face of my father in heaven. This context of this verse is that the angels who gaze upon God's face possess the status of continuous direct access to God enabling them to be constantly prepared to carry out their spiritual protective duties for every believer. That's what the angels are doing. They're just on it. Whatever God tells them to do to protect him, protect her. That's my son. That's my daughter.

And so the devil quoted this passage to Jesus in Matthew 4:6, but he twisted it by removing the phrase in all thy ways. Go home and look at it. He removes in all thy ways. Interesting. Satan always likes to remove, twist, and add, doesn't he? He removes this in all thy ways. And it's found here at the end of Psalm 91:11. Look at it with me. It ends with to keep thee in all thy ways. In all thy ways is removed from Satan's mouth. From he quoting from verse 11 and 12. God protects his people as they walk in his ways, not as they test him. You don't ever test God. Amen. That's from the devil.

And so verse 13 says, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder." This is speaking about the devil. And the devil does not quote from this verse because it is about him and his defeat. He will ultimately be defeated. Through Christ, the believer shares in his victory. Christ's victory over the enemy. Romans 16:20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

And then we look at verses 14 and 16. These are treasured promises of God. The psalm ends with God himself speaking now. This is God speaking now. This is not the psalmist

David's voice as we've been hearing. Not the believer's voice, not your voice speaking the words. This is the voice of the almighty God. And he makes eight promises here. Each rooted not in our effort but in his grace. God's promises is what? Fundamentally expressions of his grace. Every promise is produced by grace. By grace. And here they are. Here are the promises.

He starts off in verse 14. Because he has set his love upon me, therefore will I. Here it is. Will I deliver him? That's the first one. Continuing. I will set him on high. Next, he says, I will answer him. Next, I will be with him in trouble. Next he says, "I will deliver him." Again, double emphasis here. So repeat it twice. I will deliver him. Next, I will honor him. Next, with long life will I satisfy him. And then lastly, I will show him my salvation.

In summary of these promises, these eight glorious promises revealed the trajectory of Jesus Christ's life. A path every believer follows due to their connection with him. We are all connected with him. He went before us and did all this. So every promise God made to Christ is now shared with us because we are in him. Ephesians 2:8-9. For by grace you are saved through faith, not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

So much grace. So much things he has saved us from and will continue to save us from.

And then we continue here with the conclusion. God is our refuge in an anxious and chaotic world. And by today's standard, I would add a digitally distracted world. The world is not a neutral environment. It is structured to take apart your relationship with Christ. Today's world is full with anxiety, constant stimulation, particularly with digital distractions, all of which diminish our capacity to hear God. know that you want to hear from God, remove those digital distractions. God will give you the insight. God will give you the wisdom. Your heart has to just be in the right place. And you'll be able to hear his voice more loudly, more clearly than the world, Satan, and yourself.

Even amidst the digital storm and chaotic circumstances, here's what I discovered. Me personally, I discovered that God truly is a refuge, that his peace is accessible all the time. Here's a question I ask to you. Do you go to the device first, your phone, or to God in prayer first? First thing you wake up in the morning, what is the first thing you go to? That will be your test. Whose voice do you want to hear from first?

Psalm 91 is not about escapism. What does that mean? We leave from unpleasant realities. And how do we usually leave our unpleasant realities? Seeking entertainment or engaging in a virtual world and all different types of means. You see, this is talking about formation. Christ formed in us less of ourselves, less of the world, less of Satan's noise to having peace that surpasses all understanding. That gives you order where there is

disorder, where there's love, where there is no love in this world. Not like the love that Christ gives to us.

Do you see what you give up in your devotion to the Lord? It's not a light thing, is it? The secret place is not a metaphor. It is the believer's spiritual reality. You have him there waiting. The secret place is a real location you can enter each day. And Christ himself is that place. Spend time in your own devotional, whether that's in the morning, which I prefer the most. I want to hear his voice first. And if you're married with your spouse, make it an important part of your day that you spend in devotion. If you have children, have family devotionals. You see devotionals is what I not I use this term but I grab from a physical illustration. A devotional is like the keystone. The keystone is this. It's the very top center of a Roman arch. This part that part is what holds everything else together. It keeps the whole structure and stability. So your devotion there helps your family, helps yourself, your finances and so on and so on. That's the keystone is spending time with the Lord.

There's no excuse. If you have an excuse, that's your problem. Make it an important part of your day. It's the keystone of your life. It's a keystone of your day. Your spiritual stability will be secure in every storm if you live this way. If you spend time in the Lord as the Lord spent time with the father when he was here on the earth. How was he able to do so much in three years without any anxiety, without any worry, without any concern and he was able to accomplish it all in three years? There was a place he spent a lot and that was his time with the father. There's passages after passage he slipped away. He slipped away from this thing. He slipped away from that thing. No, that can wait. I need I must be with my father. So you can say I must be with the Lord.

When you put Christ himself in the right place of your life, when you spend time in your own devotional, you will truly be blessed beyond all measure. Your life will have some amazing peace and you can have all sorts of things going on externally, but you're just so peace with the Lord. And his voice comes through more and more clearly through all the distractions, all the noise. You see, you don't try to put down the phone first. You first understand what you are missing out on. Then this thing is easy. You're missing out. Don't miss out on this great opportunity have each day this week and forever more. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, we are so thankful that you offer us the kind of protection in our lives that in our own personal strength we would give up 10,000 times over. But yet, Lord, we have not fallen because of your protection. And as brothers and sisters in Christ, we can rest in you for a refuge in every storm. Even at the peak of danger in the noon day, as it says, we can still find refuge in the Lord. We thank you, Father, that you're always available and we can do this all through Christ. Help us forth, father, everyone in this room to remember this message and treat devotional as first place in their lives. Work it

out in their lives. Father, bless to this end, Father. Father, I want to see them continue to find greater strength, greater comfort, greater peace, greater understanding amongst all the chaos in their lives, wherever that may be. Bless us as father because in you we have everything that we need both here now and forever more. We thank you in Jesus name. Amen.