

Summer in the Psalms - Psalm 91

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I. Introduction to Psalm 91

A. Psalm 91 is a covenant song that declares safety to those who live their lives in God's presence. It promises real divine protection, including miraculous interventions from physical danger.

B. The main promise of psalm 91 is that God's abiding presence is with us and we can have fearless confidence through every trial and challenge. The echo of Psalm 23 is found here, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil."

C. When we consider Psalm 91 with the rest of scripture in mind, the message becomes clear: God is with us and there is no calamity can thwart God's saving purposes, even through suffering or in the face of death.

D. There is a hierarchy of promises offered believers in Psalm 91:

- The foundation of the psalm is intimacy with God – He who dwells, will abide.
- Fearlessness – You will not fear.
- God's presence – I will be with Him.
- Answered prayer – He shall call and I will answer.
- Angelic assistance – He will command His angels concerning you.
- Physical protection – a thousand or ten thousand may fall, it will not come near you.
- Divine deliverance – I will deliver Him.
- Eternal salvation – I will show Him My salvation.
- The key to understanding the Psalm is recognizing that the promises of protection are real, but the psalm is firstly about intimacy. The promises flow from that place and are relational, not mechanical. Just as we preached earlier in the year about

faith that perseveres through trials and faith that prevails, Psalm 91 gives us clarity on that reality.

- When looking at the psalm there are two clear voices, the voice of faith (instruction, encouragement, and confession) and the voice of the Lord (confirmation). It's the believer's confession (vs. 1-13) and the Lord's confirmation (vs. 14-16).

II. Understanding Abiding

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

—Psalm 91:1

A. The Hebrew word that is translated “dwell” literally means to “sit down and remain”. Sitting down is ceasing from our own strength and works. It's setting yourself before Him without distraction and without request. It's coming near Him for the singular purpose of coming near Him. This is not about intercession. This is about sitting with Him with no agenda but to be with Him. It's the simplest way of ministering to Him, engaging with Him to simply be present with Him. This “dwelling” is the first step to abiding.

B. We sit down or dwell in His secret place. There are several verses that describe the secret place of the Most High. (Psalm 27:5, Psalm 31:20, Psalm 32:7, Psalm 61:4, Psalm 81:7, Psalm 119:114, Song 2:14, Mat 6:6, 18) Each of these verses makes it clear that the secret place is where God dwells. The secret place is with Him, in His presence. The secret place is the place of intimacy with the Lord.

- Psalm 27 calls the secret place His tabernacle or His sacred Tent.

*One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of
my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire*

in His temple. 5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

—Psalm 27:4-5

- Psalm 31:20 calls the secret place the secret place of His presence

*You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence
From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a
pavilion from the strife of tongues.*

—Psalm 31:20

C. When we dwell, we will abide. The key to abiding is dwelling. There is no abiding without dwelling. That means we must sit down, cease from distractions, worry, and hurry, and look Him in the eyes. Once we do this, we will begin to abide with Him. The word used here for “abide” literally means to remain or lodge. It has the sense of lodging with Him overnight.

D. And where do we lodge? We lodge in the protective shadow of the Almighty. The Lord’s shadow is a covering of protection. It is afforded to those who sit down and remain in His presence. The clear point is that the promise of protection is for those who dwell in His secret place.

III. The Secret Place

*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall
abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

—Psalm 91:1

A. The secret place of God is a real place. It’s not simply a figurative idea; it’s a literal place.

B. However, the secret place is not physically accessed it’s spiritually accessed.

C. Just because it’s spiritually accessed does not mean it’s not literal with very powerful, literal implications.

For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion;

In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

—Psalm 27:5

D. In Psalm 91 and in Psalm 27 the secret place serves as a shelter from times of trouble. The critical point to understand is that when we are experiencing physical trials and attacks, we must draw near to God and abide in His secret place.

E. Where is the secret place?

- Psalm 27 describes it as the secret place of His tabernacle.
- This is the heavenly courts of the Lord in the very throne room of God
- This place is described as “high upon a rock”. This recalls ancient military strongholds that were built in high places in mountains and were virtually impenetrable to enemy attacks.
- It also speaks of the New Jerusalem, the location of the throne room of God, which is atop heavenly Mt. Zion. When we are in that place, we are safe from every attack of the enemy.

You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues.

—Psalm 31:20

F. Psalm 31 makes it very clear that the secret place is the secret place of His presence. When we enter His presence by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19) we literally enter the secret place of His presence in the heavenly temple of God.

- By abiding in His presence, we can live in His secret place. No matter what is happening around us, we can live in this place of protection, life, joy, beauty and power.

Abide in me and I in you...

—John 15:4

G. Abiding in Jesus’ presence is ultimately abiding in Him. This truth is powerful. He is in His presence. When we abide in His presence, we abide in Him!

IV. The Declaration from the Secret Place

I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!"

—Psalm 91:2

A. Once we begin to abide in the secret place with the Lord, we will begin to have confidence to declare and intercede from that place. Oftentimes intercessors pray from the vantage point of earth or from the place of the trials. The key to intercession is that we pray and declare from the secret place.

B. Intercession is born from the place of intimacy. When we live in intimacy a natural agreement with God is birthed in our heart. It's from abiding in the secret place that we can say with the Psalmist, "I will say to the Lord..." Faith is born from the secret place.

- This is a prayer of declaration and faith. From the place of His presence,
we affirm our trust in His leadership and His protection,
- Furthermore, we declare that He is where we will run for deliverance from the light and the heavy difficulties of life.

C. "My refuge" – The word for refuge is similar to a shelter from a storm. This is the covering that a person seeks out in a light affliction, like a thunderstorm.

D. "My fortress" – This is an impenetrable stronghold. Ancient strongholds were high up in rocky mountain fortresses. When the Lord says He will set us high upon a rock (Psalm 27:5, Psalm 40:2) it's speaking of this high place of protection.

E. "My God, in whom I trust" – This is the turning point of the secret place. When we have lived abiding in His presence our hope and our trust begin to firmly be set upon the Lord. We don't trust in other things for our comfort, protection, or deliverance.

F. Abiding in the secret place is therefore a key to having our hearts connected in faith and trust in the Lord.

V. Outcomes of Loving and Abiding

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. 15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. 16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.

—Psalm 91:14-16

- A. I will deliver Him, vs. 14 (two times in two verses, a way through, and a rescue from)
- B. I will set Him on high, vs. 14 (vs. 2 my fortress)
- C. I will answer Him, vs. 15
- D. I will be with him in trouble, vs. 15
- E. He will honor you, vs. 15
- F. He will satisfy you with long life, vs. 16
- G. He will show you salvation, vs. 16