

## **Summer in the Psalms**

### **Part 1: The Nearness of God**

**Text:** Psalm 73:28

#### **Introduction**

Good morning, church!

Today, we begin a brand-new series called **Summer in the Psalms**.

When most people hear the word beauty, they think about something attractive, something pleasing to look at, something that captures their attention.

But throughout Scripture, we discover that the most beautiful thing in all of creation is not a mountain range, a sunset, or an ocean view—it is God Himself.

The beauty of God is found in His holiness, His faithfulness, His mercy, His love, and His presence.

And today, we're going to begin with one of the most comforting truths in all of Scripture:

**God is near.**

Listen again to Psalm 73:28:

**"But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds."**

What a powerful statement.

The psalmist doesn't say it's good to be wealthy.

He doesn't say it's good to be successful.

He doesn't say it's good to be popular.

He says:

**"It is good to be near God."**

There is nothing better than living in the presence of God.

There is nothing more satisfying than walking closely with Him.

There is nothing more secure than knowing He is with you.

Yet if we're honest, there are moments when God feels far away.

Have you ever prayed and wondered if God was listening?

Have you ever walked through a difficult season and thought, "God, where are You?"

Have you ever sat in church and felt disconnected from God?

The truth is that our feelings can fluctuate, but God's presence never changes.

Today, we're going to discover three truths about the nearness of God.

## **1. God Is Near Even When We Don't Feel It**

**Psalm 139:7-10**

**"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"**

David asks a question he already knows the answer to. It's ok to feel like God is absent, David did a man that was after the heart of God.

Can I outrun God?

Can I hide from God?

Can I escape His presence?

The answer is no.

Whether he goes to the heavens or the depths...

Whether he travels east or west...

God is already there.

Think about that.

Before you woke up this morning, God was already there.

Before you faced your struggle, God was already there.

Before you walked through your pain, God was already there.

You have never experienced a moment when God was absent.

**The problem is not God's presence.**

**The problem is our awareness.**

Sometimes our circumstances become so loud that we lose sight of God's presence.

Sometimes our disappointment becomes so overwhelming that we stop recognizing His hand.

Sometimes we become distracted by life.

I heard a story about a man who panicked because he thought he had lost his phone.

He searched his house.

He searched his car.

He retraced every step.

He called restaurants.

He called friends.

He spent nearly an hour looking for it.

Then he reached into his jacket pocket.

The phone had been there the entire time. Shawna was looking for her phone one time and it was strapped around her neck the whole time.

How often do we do that with God?

We desperately search for Him.

We wonder where He is.

We ask if He's abandoned us.

Meanwhile, He has been walking beside us the entire time.

You may not feel Him today.

You may not see what He's doing.

You may not understand the season you're in.

But God's presence is not determined by your feelings.

God is near because He promised to be near.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:20:

**"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**

Not sometimes.

Not only on Sundays.

Not only during worship.

Always.

When you're celebrating.

When you're grieving.

When you're confused.

When you're victorious.

When you're broken.

God is near.

## **Application**

If you feel distant from God today, don't assume He has moved.

Slow down.

Turn off the noise.

Open His Word.

Spend time in prayer.

Begin every morning this week with a simple prayer:

**"Lord, help me recognize Your presence today."**

### **2. God's Nearness Brings Refuge and Strength**

#### **Psalm 46:1**

**"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."**

Notice the wording.

Not a sometimes help.

Not an occasional help.

Not a future help.

An ever-present help.

There is something powerful about having a safe place during a storm.

When tornado sirens sound, people don't run outside.

They seek shelter.

Why?

Because shelter provides protection.

The psalmist says **God's presence is our shelter.**

His presence is our refuge.

Life has a way of bringing storms.

Unexpected diagnoses.

Financial hardships.

Broken relationships.

Loss.

Disappointment.

Fear.

Anxiety.

Pain.

Every person in this room is either coming out of a storm, walking through a storm, or preparing to enter one.

Storms are inevitable.

But here's the good news:

**You don't face them alone.**

God never promised a storm-free life.

He promised His presence in the storm.

Think about the disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee.

A violent storm arose.

The waves crashed over the boat.

The disciples panicked.

But Jesus was in the boat.

The storm was real.

The danger was real.

The fear was real.

But so was His presence.

And His presence changed everything.

Some of you today are carrying burdens that nobody knows about.

You're smiling on the outside while struggling on the inside.

You came to church exhausted.

Discouraged.

Overwhelmed.

Can I remind you today?

God is your refuge.

You don't have to carry it alone.

You don't have to fight the battle alone.

You don't have to figure everything out alone.

Run to Him.

Not away from Him.

The world offers distractions.

God offers healing.

The world offers temporary relief.

God offers lasting peace.

### **Application**

When trouble comes, make prayer your first response, not your last resort.

Memorize Psalm 46:1 this week.

When fear shows up, declare:

"God is my refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

### **3. When We Recognize His Nearness, We Tell Others**

#### **Psalm 73:28**

**"But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds."**

Notice what happens.

The psalmist experiences God's presence.

He finds refuge in God.

Then he tells others about God.

When we encounter something wonderful, we naturally share it.

When you eat at a great restaurant, you tell people.

When you discover a great product, you tell people.

When your grandchild does something amazing, you show everyone pictures.

Why?

Because good things are meant to be shared.

The same is true with God.

When God answers a prayer, tell someone.

When God provides, tell someone.

When God heals, tell someone.

When God carries you through a difficult season, tell someone.

One of the greatest testimonies in the world is simply saying:

**"Let me tell you what God has done for me."**

People can argue with theology.

People can debate doctrine.

But they can't deny your story.

Your testimony is evidence of God's nearness.

Somebody around you today need to hear that God is still faithful.

Someone needs to know they are not alone.

Someone needs to hear how God carried you through your darkest moment.

The beauty of God's presence isn't just something we enjoy.

It's something we share.

### **Application**

This week, intentionally tell someone one way you've experienced God's presence.

Encourage someone.

Pray with someone.

Share your testimony.

Be a reminder that God is still near.

### **Conclusion**

The beauty of God is that He is near.

Even when we don't feel Him, He is near.

Even when life is difficult, He is near.

Even when we're struggling, He is near.

Even when we're celebrating, He is near.

Psalm 73:28 reminds us:

**"It is good to be near God."**

Church, that's not merely a statement.

That's a way of life.

The greatest place you can live is in the presence of God.

The safest place you can live is in the presence of God.

The most fulfilling place you can live is in the presence of God.

God is not distant.

He is not absent.

He is not ignoring you.

He is near.

He is walking with you.

He is strengthening you.

He is carrying you.

And He is inviting you into a deeper relationship with Him.

Perhaps you're here today and you feel far from God.

Maybe you've drifted.

Maybe life has distracted you.

Maybe you've allowed disappointment to create distance.

Can I tell you something?

God hasn't moved.

He's been waiting for you.

The Father is still watching the road like He did for the prodigal son.

His arms are open.

His grace is available.

His presence is near.

Today, if you need to draw close to God, this altar is open.

If you need strength, come.

If you need peace, come.

If you need refuge, come.

If you simply want more of God's presence in your life, come.

Let's draw near to Him today, because it truly is good to be near God.