

Will I Ever Feel Secure? — Delivery Transcript

Psalm 91 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, January 26, 2025 • Facing Fear

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Bibles, we're going to be in Psalm chapter 91 this morning. You can go ahead and be turning there. Psalm chapter 91. And as you're turning there, I want to share a story about a sentiment I had when I was growing up. I'd often go to my granddad's house, Daddy Bob, and one of the things I noticed about Daddy Bob is that every time I went to visit him He had something new to worry about or complain about. And I never could understand why he worried so much. And yeah, I mean some of the stuff he worried about didn't make any sense to me.

Some stuff does make sense, like he had bad back or you know he had all kind of ailments. He'd worry about that and then he'd worry about a one of his kids or a relationship that wasn't quite right or he'd worry about one of the grandkids in jail, which is a you know legit worry. Sometimes he'd even worry about people he didn't even like, like his enemies at the coffee shop would be in a bad way, so he'd worry about his enemies at the coffee shop. Worry worry worry and I remember thinking to myself, I hope when I get old I don't worry like that.

I don't want to be one of those worried people because I just didn't seem to kind of have that issue. And I was thinking about why young people don't worry as much as older people. I was reminded this week that one of the reasons is because young people haven't lived any life. And what happens when you're young is the bad stuff happens in the world, but it's kind of like happens out there. To those people that you know people die but they're not always your people or people get sick but they're not usually you know your people or people have financial disasters happen in their life, but at least they're you know your house is financially stable.

But what happens is as you get older you begin to realize it's not just those people that are getting affected by these bad things, it's also my people. And sometimes it's not even your people that are getting affected, but it's actually you. You get sick. In fact there's four things that you have absolutely no control over. That can take you out in an instant. You can have

people that you love suddenly die. You can have people or the health that you enjoy suddenly fade. You can have relationships that you treasure suddenly break and sometimes it's your fault but sometimes it's like out of your control and then there's can be financial Safety that can suddenly reverse.

And some of you are not in your heads because you know exactly what I mean. You didn't see it coming. It was just one day, boom, it happened and you were struggling with this question that many people struggle with. I would say older people struggle with it more as they age, but I think all people struggle with the question, will I ever feel secure. And you would think as you get older, you'd be able to say, finally, you know, I'm old enough. I finally feel like I'm secure. But what often happens is you feel less secure as you age and approach and approach the end of your life.

It's not just old people, I'd say also young people as I think about next week we have our foster three two five interest meeting in which we try to mobilize families in our church to embrace foster care and minister to foster families. Many foster kids in the city of Abilene, not only are they uprooted from their homes because of because of whatever reason and not only are the people whom they trusted for security and provision removed from them. Often what also happens is they are replaced or resettled in a brand new city, sometimes even a brand new state with a brand new set of moms and dads they or a brand new mom and dad, they have no idea even their name, much less anything else about them.

Incredibly disrupting and disturbing, and they began to wonder, just like if many of us wonder, am I ever going to feel secure the trauma of that experience forces young and old to wrestle with the question. Now Psalm 91 is going to attempt to answer that question. But as we've seen with a lot of the Psalms here lately, the approach that it takes to resolving that that anxiety is a little bit surprising. And the thing about Psalms, all of the Psalms have a unique organizing principle. They have this unique way of presenting their information.

And Psalm 91 is no different. I must say though, as I was studying Psalm ninety one, I was looking for the same things we've been noticing in the last couple of weeks, but there was no of those none of those organizing principles like a chiasm, which is a literary structure of putting the main point in the center. This psalm doesn't do that. Or the idea of an acrostic where you know, A B C D E F of the Hebrew alphabet, you kind of advance that way. This didn't have any of those things, and that's why I figured no wonder he didn't put his name on it because he's ashamed of his work.

This is an embarrassing song but it's actually not. It's actually does have some structure. And the thing that's unique about Psalm ninety one that none of the other Psalms have is how it switches pronouns. Now you don't always pick up on this, but if you read it carefully, you begin to notice there is switching of pronouns pretty rapidly up front. It starts out with this

third person pronoun of the one who dwells in the or the one who lives under the protection of the most high, dwells in the shadow of the Almighty, you see this third person pronoun.

But then in verse two you see a second person pronoun I will say concerning the Lord, my refuge, my fortress, just switches like that. And then in verse 3 it switches again. He will rescue you from the bird trap. You'll be covered with his feathers. You'll take refuge under his wing. And that second person pronoun is actually second person singular, which is even more crazy. It's not like y'all will be protected by his wings. Y'all y'all cra all y'all godly people. No, it's one person. One person will be protected, and it stays like that all the way from verse three all the way down to verse thirteen, and it's not until verse fourteen that it switches back to third person pronoun.

Because he has set his heart on me, except this time it's not the author describing the person who trusts in the Lord, but it's actually the Lord talking to the person who trusts in the Lord. Really pretty crazy. And so it's unique in that way and it's kind of falls in the same category of messianic psalms that seem to be about a particular person, a future king of Israel. And one of the reasons I think that is because when the Jewish scribes translated this psalm from the Hebrew to the Aramaic, they actually inserted in here the name Solomon They ascribed it to David and said, Solomon, my son, you will be rescued from the bird trap.

The problem is that's not in the original text. But the tradition seems to be that this psalm is about a future king of Israel. Who will take refuge in the Lord, and because he takes refuge in the Lord, all of God's people are going to likewise take refuge in him as well. And so, what does it mean to take refuge in the Lord? Some people's translation when it says the one who lives under the protection of the most High. It actually says the one who lives in the secret place. And I love that translation because it reminds me of a secret place that I had growing up.

When it's talking about Daddy Bob, when we'd go to grandmother's house who was married to Daddy Bob until they got divorced and remarried again and but that's a longer story I want to talk about. But when we go to grandmother's house we would play hide and seek and one of the best hiding places in grandmother's house, still unknown to this day until it gets broadcast on the internet, is this little gap between the top of the deep freeze and the ceiling, because the gap that they made for the deep freeze was made for a deep deep deep freeze.

But grandmother just had a normal deep freeze. So there was this huge hole and you could you could barely get into the hole, but once you were in the hole you could kind of stand up and move around. It's very comfortable. So it's the best hiding spot. Because nobody would assume you could get up there because the only way up there is to get somebody stronger than you to pick you up and put you in the hole, or for you to open the freezer, climb up the shelves and get in that way.

Good boy would ever do but I did quite often and that's why nobody knew about my spot. It was the best spot and it was a place of refuge. It was a place of kind of intimacy because it's like my special little place and me and grandmother had this little arrangement that we you know were sh she was good with it. At least I think that's what she meant by what she said. And so it was this place of security, this place of shelter, this place of intimacy. That's the word the Hebrew word that's being referenced here, and if you will dwell in the protection of the most High, you're going to rest in the shadow of his wing.

Again, you see this idea of proximity. If you're in the shadow of something you're close to that thing. You're in its shadow. There's proximity. There's relationship. There's intimacy. And there's shelter and refuge. And this is in the this is a promise given to the person who lives there. Notice God does the protecting, but you do the living. God does the protecting, but you abide in the shadow. And so it's no surprise that in verse 2 the psalmist says, well, I'm going to do that too. I'm going to make the Lord my refuge and my strength.

And we're going to talk about in this psalm not only that it promises protection to those who trust in the Lord, but why God is actually a better refuge and fortress. But before we do that I want us to examine this psalm through the lens of fear because the series is about fear and anxiety and mental health struggles and it's very dominant idea in our culture because a lot of people in our culture are just crippled by fear. And what's so beautiful about the Psalms is that they describe our fears in very poetic and metaphorical language and when you read it you just think to yourself finally somebody understands and that's no different in Psalm ninety one.

The fears are actually mentioned in verse three. And again in verses five to six, and I want to show you both of them. In verse three it says, He himself will rescue you from the bird trap. And right after it says from the destructive plague. Metaphors are not just stated, they are trying to articulate certain types of fears. And the type of fear that a bird trap would create is a fear that cannot be sensed. And what I mean by that, some of your translations say the fowler's snare. I was looking online for what is a fowler?

Thinking it was a bird. It's not. Fowl wild fowler is a bird, but a fowler is a bird hunter. And bird hunters would use a snare and it was sometimes a net, sometimes other things. Very common in the ancient near East because birds were used for sacrifices and things like that. But what they would do is they would create an environment for the bird to think everything's gravy, everything is awesome. Look at all this seed and foliage and I'm going to be safe and secure in here and just as the bird thinks he's in his happy place, the net drops, the bird is trapped, and he can't go anywhere.

And so it is a legit danger, intentionally concealed. By the fowler who intends the harm of the bird and results in the death of the bird. And I think a lot of people who live today realize I have enemies who seek my harm, if not a physical s relationship enemy, spiritual enemy and

Satan who wants to deceive me into thinking sin is good and rejecting God's design is safe and better and he gets me comfortable. Living in this life that's good on the surface but it's actually bad and then suddenly the bottom falls out and the net drops and you find yourself trapped and unable to move.

We know that that exists in the world and it's a danger, it's a true threat that we cannot sense. And the fact that we can't sense it is what creates all of the anxiety. And a lot of people are crippled by this and they kind of place scenarios up in their head. Well, you know, I know it's not I know I don't I know that it doesn't look that way right now, but it might be a false alarm, or it might be looks are deceiving and this could happen and that could happen and you play these scenarios in your mind and that unseen, unsensed threat cripples you with fear.

The next type of fear is not a fear you can't see so much as it is a fear you can't stop, and that's the destructive plague. And I got a picture here of the Black Plague. That's a very famous plague. You got the skeleton riding the horse. I think that's interesting. A plague also you can't see, right? When COVID-19 came, it's not like all of us were like, oh look, a COVID-19 particle. It was unseen. You needed a microscope to be able to catch it. But even though you couldn't see the plague, you could see the effects of the plague.

And the best you could do is hope I can survive it if I get it. And I remember those days. They were tough days. Everybody was trying to social distance and stay away from the plague. And then some people just got the plague and some people survived it and some people didn't survive it. But once you got it, you got it. Right? There was nothing you could do except take it. You know, just take the beating and survive. And that's why a lot of people struggle with fear today. There are things in the world that we know I can't stop it.

Even if I saw it coming, my limited power keeps me from doing what needs to be done. There's certain fears you can't see, and there's other fears you can't stop. And both of those fears are intensified in verses 5 and 6. It's really interesting. He takes those two ideas and he says, it's not just bad, it's really bad. He says that you, the one who trusts in the Lord, doesn't have to fear. Fear what? The terror of the night, the arrow that flies by day, the plague that stalks in darkness, and the pestilence that ravages at noon.

You notice the parallelism between night and darkness, the parallelism between day and noon, and then you have the same kind of re of hunter language of a fowler and an arrow and the same language of a plague or a pestilence which was a not a disease as much as it was a natural disaster but again you see the repetition. There's some things you can't see. They're dark, it's in the night, and there's some things you can't stop. Even though it's midday, the arrows are flying. There's no stopping an arrow. You're just going to dodge as best you can do.

Some things you can't see, those things you can't stop. And it's intensifying the terror of the night. This Hebrew word conveys the idea of deep dread. And the best way I know to think about it is if you can remember back when you were a little kid and you were in the bed and afraid of the dark. And you saw just enough of a light to create a shadow from your lampstand and you thought it was a gory demon who was going to take your soul if you went to sleep and maybe you didn't, that's what I thought.

I watched too many scary movies. And it was this idea that I see it, I know it's there, but I can't understand it. I can't really fully perceive it. Or another example I had growing up, I was coming home from a unsuccessful hunt, a deer hunt. And I had my rifle loaded ready to go, but I took a shortcut to get to my truck because I waited too long and it was going to get dark on me, so I was trying to get back to the truck before it got completely dark and I and I didn't.

And so it was it was super dark. I had no flashlight, my phone was dead, everything that I needed for protection was gone. And as I was making my way to the truck, I saw these two glowing eyes in the dark and just enough of the moonlight to show me that was some kind of a bobcat or mountain lion or something. Now you say, oh little kitty. No. Those things are lethal. I know that because my dad had a rifle and on his rifle was the teeth marks on the stalk of a of a bobcat, and I think it was a mountain lion, that that just tore into that stalk.

And he always told me growing up, every time I'd look at that mark, he'd say You better hope you never find a mountain lion when you're hunting or you're going to be deader than dead. And I was like, I'm going to die. And I just started freaking out. And so I didn't know what to do. I was paralyzed with fear I could see it was there but I couldn't see it enough to like dodge it or run away from it so I just started shouting like that making these noises and making and I don't know if it ran off or what but I just ran and here I am, I'm not dead, so I survived.

But I was crippled with fear. I mean it was the worst fear I think I've ever felt in a very long time. The terror of the night. You can't see it, but you can see it. You can sense it, but you can't see it. And then the arrow, again you can see it, but you can't stop it. And arrows are even worse than a trap. At least a trap, maybe you get out, an arrow strikes you and you're and you're gone. Or the pestilence that ravages at noon. Again, a pestilence is similar to a pest.

But think of a natural disaster like a tornado or a hurricane or something like that. Only God could stop it and they're they call them acts of God for a reason. And once they come You don't, you just try to survive. And so there are fears you can't see, and there are fears you can't stop. And because of that, you are exposed. There are two limits. Exposed about you as a human being based on those two fears. The invisible fears are going to expose your limited

perspective in that I'm not high enough or tall enough or I don't have enough light to see what I need to see.

So the invisible fears expose your limited perspective or your limited knowledge, you might say. But then the inevitable fears expose your limited power even if I could see it, I can't stop it from happening. And it also shows the relationship between our fears. And our limits. The reason that we have these fears is because God has made us with these limits. Theologians talk about the difference between communicable attributes of God and incommunicable attributes of God. It's a fun word to say ten times fast. Incommunicable, incommunicable, incommunicable. But all that means is there's certain things that are true of God that He shares with us.

Things like God is loving and we can be loving. Or God is personal and we can be personal. God is faithful and we can be faithful. So there's certain things he shares. But there's other ways that God is and we aren't, right? There are certain things that God does not share. Some of the big classics are the omnis. God is omniscient, which means he has all knowledge. God is omnipotent, which means he has all power. God is omnipresent, which means he's present everywhere at all times. God is immutable, which means he never changes, and we change all the time.

God is infinite and that he lasts forever and we're immortal. We could go on and on and on. The point is God has made us with these limits by design. We're made in his image to reflect God, but we're also mortal in that we're not like God. And those limits are the reason why we fear. We fear because we have limited knowledge and we fear because we have limited power. The thing is, I think God did that on purpose. I think God made us with limits because we were made to know him and to trust him and to love him.

And there's a direct relationship between your fears and your faith. Remember I said that fear is not the opposite of faith and faith is not the opposite of fear, that fear and faith can exist in the same heart. Often it's because of fear that we're animated to exercise faith and that's why people when they realize well I'm not strong enough I need to go trust somebody who's stronger than me. Or I'm not smart enough and so I need to go trust somebody who's smarter than me or higher than me or has a perspective that I don't have and it leads a lot of people to exercise faith and a power bigger and outside of themselves.

And what the Psalm is trying to encourage us to do is to let the Lord be that outside. Person in whom you trust. Let the Lord be that bigger power and that bigger source of knowledge. And you know that's true because of the way that God is described in the very first verse. The very first verse addresses directly the two predominant fears that we have around around feeling insecure or unsafe. He says the one who lives under the protection of the most High, that's the first name of God And then they dwell in the shadow of the Almighty, which is the second name for God, and then you have the name Yahweh.

The word translated most high is the Hebrew El Elyon. It we've I think we've looked at it in this series. It just it literally means most high. He's higher up, he's taller, he's he's up in heaven, he can see everything. He's he's in grandmother's hiding spot, right? But infinitely better. He can see anything and everything. And then the word translated Almighty is the Hebrew Shaddai. It means stronger than anybody. He has more power than anybody has power, and that's directly confronting the two fears mentioned in the psalm about our limited perspective and our limited power.

It's almost as if the psalmist is saying. There is a power in this world that is infinitely beyond all of your limited knowledge and power. And this greater power in the world actually desires to be your secret place, your fortress, your shelter. All that you have to do is to trust in him instead of trusting in these counterfeits and competitors for the affection of your heart. And so trust in the Lord. That's why the psalmist says I'm going to trust in the Lord. I'm going to make him my refuge and I'm going to make him my fortress.

Where we have less than we need, God has more than enough. And those two pictures are so helpful. The idea that he's a fortress, I took a picture here of this is not my picture, but I did take a picture of Masada in Israel outside of the dead Sea. It was originally built by Herod on this flat-topped mountain. You got all these valleys and then you have this huge thing and they built a city on the top of this mountain. It's incredible. You can see I mean you can see everything.

And if anybody tried to take you over, you're just like pew pew pew, you know, pew pew, you got the high ground. Nobody's taking you out He's your fortress. He's your strong tower. And then you see this other picture of the tree and the sheep. The reason I put that in there is because the idea of refuge means someone to whom You go for aid or assistance. There is this relational element, but there's also just like he can provide what you need. And that's why I have the tree because sheep.

As someone who owns sheep now, I'm a shepherd. I have four sheep and one ram. They are really dumb animals. I know people say they're dumb animals, but they're super dumb. And almost so dumb I don't want to have them anymore, but not quite that dumb yet. Because I had this when we bought our place there was this little shed that, you know, is a great shed to get out of the weather. It breaks the north wind, it does everything. And it was full of junk, and so I cleaned out the shed because the weather was about to get bad, and I wanted the sheep to have a place to be safe from the elements.

And it took a lot of work to clean that shut up. It was really dirt really dirty. And then here comes the snow, here comes the cold, like freezing temperatures, sleet and rain, and what are the sheep doing? Standing out there taking it bam bam bam and audra's worried sick and I was like those stupid animals but finally when it got bad enough I noticed that the sheep would find the biggest tree in the yard. And they would let right under that tree because the

tree would shelter them from the heat when the heat got really, really bad, or it would shelter them from in this case it was hail and like things falling out of the sky that that weren't real pleasant when it hit their hard heads.

Actually it probably didn't bother their head because they're very hard headed animals. But maybe other parts. And so they would get under this tree because the tree gave them shelter, and that's what the Lord is for his people. He is God Almighty. He is our refuge and our shield and he will be a fortress and a strong tower if you will trust in him. And that's the point of the psalm. And the promise of the psalm is you can have that kind of protection. But then it shifts into a particular person who experiences that protection in a very specific way.

And that's verses 3 to 13. So I want to show you this and then we're going to wrap it up. Notice these pronouns you, they're all second person singular pronouns. Okay? It's about one person. And this person experiences God as a refuge in three unique ways. I tried to highlight them color-coded so that you could see it. But this is what you look for in a psalm. You look for repetition, you look for repeated words or repeated ideas, and you see a set of three ideas mentioned in verses 3 to 8, and those same three ideas are repeated in verses 9 to 13.

I listed them as God is our shield, He is our strength and our salvation. But you might use the word refuge or deliverance or triumph or victory, you could use their one. But I just want you to notice these as we read through it. He himself will rescue you from the bird trap. We read about that. But verse 4, he will cover you with his feathers, and you will take refuge under his wings. His faithfulness will be a protective shield. And so you don't have to fear these things. Same idea in verse 9.

Because you've made the Lord my refuge, he repeats the same word, the most High your dwelling place. No harm will come to you, no plague will come near your tent. Same thing here. So God is a refuge, but not only that, God is also a source of deliverance. Though a thousand fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, the pestilence won't reach you same idea down here. He will give his angels orders concerning you to protect you in all your ways. They will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against the stone.

And then the final idea is this idea of judgment you'll witness the punishment of the wicked, and down here you'll tread on the lion and the cobra and trample the young. And so God is a better refuge and fortress because he is our shield and our strength. And these things are repeated over and over again in the Psalm. The Lord is our shield in times of danger, and the Lord is our strength in times. Of trouble. And if you take those ideas and go back into those verses, you can see the metaphors just stacking up one on top of the other of why God is a better shield and why God is a better source of strength.

In verse 4, you see the two metaphors. One is of a bird sheltering her young, and the second is of a shield. Of a warrior shield. I gave you some pictures to help you with this. I don't know if you've ever seen a bird shelter her chicks. It's really pretty fascinating because in order for the mother bird to protect her young, she has to suffer, right? Or he, I don't know if the boys do it. Do the boys do that? I doubt it. That's a motherly thing. She just takes the heat.

She takes the pellets of the hail. And then we also see God's faithfulness as a protective shield is what the CSB says. ESV says it's our shield and our bunker. Which I had no I Buckler, which I had no idea what that was because I haven't played Zelda in a long time. But I pulled up the graphics. The shield is the very big one that kind of if you've ever seen Gladiator, you know, it's a big one that guards you from everything. But then you have the metal buckler, which was a handheld shield that you would use for close-to-close hand-to-hand combat.

And so the idea is that God's truth is your shield and your buckler for the big things in life and the little things in life. The big philosophical questions and the little daily decisions. The big big decisions and the little bitty decisions, if you will live your life according to God's truth, He will protect you because He has a vested interest in proving his truth is true. That's one of the great things about the Lord. He has given us a design through his word. Here's how you should live your life.

And if you'll do life in this way, I will bless you. It doesn't mean you'll never have trouble, but your lifestyle will produce a blessing because you're doing it my way instead of your way or their way. Conversely, when you live your life on lies, when you base your life on a lie instead of God's truth, it may work in the momentary, it may work immediately, but eventually a lie is exposed for what it ultimately is, which is untruth. And as one of my favorite commentators likes to say, eventually reality gets a vote.

And when reality votes His vote is the loudest and the strongest, and he always wins. And so you want your truth to be God's truth so that it is a protection. And the big things and the little things of life, and to recognize God is not just distant, detached, and uninterested, but He's like a mother hen. Who motherly protects me and shields me from all harm. And then he switches. So he's a better refuge in times of trouble. And then he's a better source of strength. In or I'm sorry, he's a better refuge in times of danger, he's a better strength in times of trouble.

This is verses 7 and 11. I remember it because of the convenience store, 7-11. A thousand fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, the pestilence isn't going to reach you. You're only going to see it with your eyes. Verse 11, though his He, God is going to give his angels orders concerning you to protect you in all your ways. They'll support you with their hands

so that you will not even stub your toe on a rock. I mean this is incredible promise. In fact, these promises are so incredible, when I read them, I really struggle to believe them.

And I especially get frustrated when I hear preachers preach Psalm 91 with this health, wealth, name it, claim it, prosperity, gospel lens. That says, well, if you'll just trust God enough, if you'll be close enough to God, He commands a blessing from heaven, He commands His protection, because Psalm 91, He's promised. Those who trust in the Lord will dwell in the shelter of the Almighty. And so if you're sick, it's your faith is the problem, right? You're not faith isn't pure enough, your faith isn't strong enough, and I struggle with thinking that's actually what Psalm 91 means.

And there's a couple of reasons for that. One reason is because of what Psalm 91 says at the end. All you got to do is read the rest of the Psalm, and you can know that You know, TV preacher is not he does not know what he's talking about because God says to this one individual, yeah, you've got your heart set on me. I am going to deliver you. But you don't deliver people who need no deliverance right? If you're going to get delivered from something, there's danger, there's trouble. I'll protect him.

You don't need protection if your life is key easy street and no suffering. When he calls out to me, I'm going to answer him and I will be, look at this, with him in trouble. So the promise is not, trust in the Lord and you'll never have trouble. It can't mean that because the rest of the psalm obviously says, no, you'll have trouble. And Abraham had trouble, and Joseph had trouble, and Jesus had trouble, and a lot of godly men and women have trouble. So it's not protection in that way.

So it's got to be something else. Romans 8. 28, or no, Genesis 50, Joseph said, You know you intended this for evil? But somehow God worked it together for good and the saving of many lives. Romans 8. 28. Somehow God works things together. Not everything is good. Not everything is happy. But somehow God works everything together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. So it can't mean name it, claim it. I trust God, he has to protect me. The other reason I know it can't mean that is because that's what Satan believes.

And that's what Satan wants you to believe. And you say, that sounds kind of crazy for you to say. And I agree, it sounds crazy for me to say, but that's exactly how Satan interpreted Psalm 91 to Jesus in Matthew 4. During the wilderness temptations, Jesus is fasting 40 days and 40 nights, and he says he got hungry. That's my favorite part. He got hungry. After 40 days of not eating, he got hungry. And in his moment of greatest weakness, Satan appears to him at the very end of those forty days and nights.

And one of the temptations that Satan gives to Jesus is throw yourself off this cliff and see what God does. Because he said of you, right, you're Jesus, right? You're the Messiah, right?

Well he said of the Messiah in Psalm 91, if you'll throw yourself off the cliff, you won't even strike your foot on a stone, but God will command hordes of angels to come in to protect you. And what does Jesus say? Good interpretation, Satan. I think I'll try that. No, he doesn't do that. He says, no, you shouldn't put the Lord your God to the test.

So Jesus knew the right way to interpret this psalm was not God will never let me go through harm or physical suffering, but that through the physical suffering, God will sustain me and protect me so that the things that matter most, namely your soul, your eternal soul, won't be separated from God eternally in a place called hell, but that God will actually somehow use your suffering and hardship to redeem you and strengthen you and perfect you and position you for life ever after with Him. That's how God protects those whom he loves and those who rest in him.

So it can't mean what we sometimes think it means because it's not. In the rest of the verse. It's not about us. Remember, second person singular, it's about one man. And that one man is Jesus. And if you read back through Psalm 91, what you see is Jesus is our strength and our shield. Jesus is not only the perfect example of what it looks like to take refuge in the Lord, Jesus is also the ground or the reason for why we can have refuge in the Lord. You can just picture Jesus saying these words.

I will say concerning the Lord, who is my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust. Were there dangers that Jesus could not see coming? I imagine there were. In his humanity, he relied on the Lord's wisdom and truth to protect him from harm. Were there dangers that Jesus could not stop? In his humanity, certainly there was. He could have called down a legion of angels, but he didn't. He allowed himself to be arrested, beaten within an inch of his life, and crucified on a Roman cross. And even on the cross he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Not because he stopped believing. He's actually quoting Psalm 2 or Psalm 110. 1, that though I may feel forsaken, God will not forsake the righteous. He made God his refuge and his strength. And because he made God his refuge and strength, God can become our refuge and strength. We can find in the Lord a protection in his presence that is far superior to any hiding place we may have in this world. There is a protection in the presence of God that outweighs the tallest building and the highest fortress. And there is a strength in the presence of God.

It may not stop a hurricane, but in the hurricane visits your house, it will keep you from shipwrecking in your faith. You will be content with what you have, and you will see God gradually rebuild what was taken because he works all things together for good. And you'll be able to trust him and believe it every step of the way because of the strength of the Lord is your strength. The Bible says, work out your salvation because it's God who works in you to will and to work according to his good pleasure.

So Jesus is the source of our strength and he is the shield of protection. But the best part about Psalm 91. Is that Jesus embodies the judgment that's promised in verses 8 and 13. In verse 8, he says, you won't see the pestilence strike you, it will only You will only witness the punishment of the wicked. I think in many ways, this is a reference to the cross where Jesus disarmed the rulers and authorities. Preached to the spirits in prison, but it's ultimately a reference to the return of Christ where he crushes the serpent and casts him out.

And or binds him for a thousand years or however you understand your eschatology, this is a reference to the work of Jesus in judgment and the work of Jesus in redemption. In verse 13, you will tread on the lion and the cobra, you will trample the young lion and the serpent. This is a reference to Genesis 3. 15. Genesis 3. 15, God promised to the woman, from the seed of your womb will come a Messiah who will crush the head of the serpent. In other words, he will reverse the curse, he will restore Eden, he will liberate you from your sin, and he will usher in a He will usher in a relationship with God so that his presence and communion with him can finally be restored.

Now through faith. In the kingdom of God on earth in the meantime, but in full, when Jesus comes again and establishes his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. And we see the Garden of Eden restored. Jesus is our salvation on the day of judgment. He's our shield in the time of trouble or danger. He's our strength in times of trouble. And he's our salvation on the day of judgment. And because Jesus perfectly obeyed Psalm 91, when we didn't, we can through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus find all of the promises of Psalm ninety one to be true of us as well.

Doesn't mean a nice house and a big nice car and I declare that house. You know you know I'm not saying that any of that nonsense. I'm saying you can have a shield and a strength that keeps you believing even in the worst of difficult days. And it's a promise that is yours, not because you deserve it, but because God is gracious. And the coolest thing is the way that Jesus unlocked that redemption for you and for me is because he, like that mother bird took the heat of God's judgment and the punishment of God's wrath.

He received the hell storm. He received the storm of God's wrath onto himself so that he could protect you and me from what we truly deserve. There's a story, I don't think it's true because I couldn't find it, but there's a story in the National Geographic about a park ranger after the California fires. They saw this bird-looking statue made of ash covering its chick's wings and it kind of was so eerie that he took a stick and knocked it down. And then when he knocked it down these four little chicks came out of the out of the ash having been spared of the fire of judgment whether that's true or not of those chickens, I'm not sure, but it is true for you and for me because Jesus absorbed the heat.

He absorbed the fire of God's wrath so that you and I could be protected. And find a shelter in his presence. The presence of the Lord is a better secret place than anything else in this

world. And so will you say with the psalmist, I'm going to make the Lord my refuge. I'm going to make the Lord my strength. And if he's not, why not? Why would you put your heart and trust in these other things, these lesser things that will not satisfy. When God has done everything necessary for you to receive the sufficient grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

So I don't know what that looks like for you this morning. You may be here and you would consider yourself a Christian, but you're not living like one. And this morning would give you an opportunity to repent and to put your faith afresh and anew in the Lord Jesus Christ. Being reminded of the suffering he endured so that he could become a refuge for you in your storm. Or you may not be a Christian and you grew up thinking it's about what I do and it's not. It's about what Jesus Christ has done.

And if you're not resting in his perfect righteousness on your behalf, this morning is a great opportunity for you to come and say, I want to make Jesus Lord of my life. I am tired of being anxious and afraid. I want to rest secure in the arms of a loving, compassionate God Almighty, God Most high, that invitation is open to you if you want to receive it. So the altar's open. If you want to come down and make a public decision, you can. You can also indicate a decision in your connect card by scanning the QR code or filling out the card in front of you.

But Father, we thank you for this time and your word. We thank you for Psalm 91. And I know that many use it to over-deliver on what your promises are to us. But that's not even necessary when we recognize the ultimate gift of deliverance is the gift of salvation from judgment. That we could be delivered from the wrath of God that we rightly deserve because we don't love you and we don't trust in you and we rest in other things, whether people or drugs or money. And they never satisfy, they never deliver.

It's a life built on a lie that leads to sin and death and separation, and that's not what we want this morning. We want the eternal life and the secret place that you invite us to receive through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. And so would you help us to turn our eyes to Jesus, to look full in his wonderful face. So that these fears and things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of your glory and grace. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.