

Back to the 90's
Dwelling in God's Protection
Psalm 91:1-16

Hey Newsong!

I want to take an opportunity to welcome all of our first time guests! We are so glad that you can join us today as we begin Newsong's 2nd summer sermon series called "Back to the 90's", In this series we'll dive into four psalms from "the 90s"—Psalms 91, 94, 95, and 99—to meditate on the attributes of God: his protection, justice, kingship, and holiness.

Today I will be in Psalm 91 and the title of my message is Dwelling in God's Protection.

Throughout this message there are three points I want to make for all you note takers, so let's dive into the scripture.

Psalm 91:1-16 1 HE WHO DWELLS in the shelter 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 MAKE THE MOST HIGH YOUR DWELLING— even the LORD, who is my refuge— 10 then no harm will befall 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. 13 You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. 14 “BECAUSE HE LOVES ME,” says the LORD, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. 15 HE WILL 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 will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

Life is hard. Adulting is hard. Middle School is hard. High School is hard. College is hard. Aging is hard. Family life is hard. Living

alone is hard. Change is hard. There are unexpected twists and turns.

There are trials that are packed with a forceful punch. Life never gets easier. We need help. We need protection. We need power. We need the Lord.

Psalm 91 gives us so much help. It is a passage I am going to commit to memory. In 16 verses we are given assurance of God's presence in our lives, of His desire to help us. We are also given direction about what we must do in order to experience the protection God offers.

The First point is we need to :

1. Choose to Dwell in the Lord-(vs. 1 and 9) Verse one says "He who DWELLS in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Where are you dwelling this morning? If we are going to be protected by the Lord, we need to dwell where the protection is found. God gets a bad rap from many who think they can live the way they want to and then expect God to shield them from the consequences of sin.

They get mad at God for hardships they have created for themselves. God can and will forgive sin, but when we are bent

on living our own way, there will be earthly consequences that come with that kind of self-will and rebellion.

You may be enticed to live like the world. For example, drinking and drugging and sexual experimentation, look for excitement or fun.

Satan is good at making stuff look fun, but not everything that looks fun is safe. Not everything that looks fun will feel fun the next day.

You can't say you are dwelling in the Lord if you are always taking field trips with the world!

What do I mean when I say we need to dwell in the Lord?

I would say we need to Live with a God consciousness. (vs. 1)

We need to live with a daily recognition of who He is and what He can do.

Verse one calls Him the Most High (El Elyon) and the Almighty (El Shaddai).

El Elyon is an adjective and comes from the Hebrew root which means “to go up” or “ascend.” To call God “El Elyon” stresses His highest supremacy.

There is good and there is evil, but they are not equally matched. Nothing and no one is higher than God.

The name El Shaddai refers to the sufficiency of God. He will nurture us and nourish us and provide all we need no matter the circumstance.

In verse 2 we read that God is a refuge and a fortress. We need to live with this mindset.

When we are in trouble, when life gets hard, we are not without help.

There is a refuge and fortress to keep us safe, and if we have been dwelling in the Lord, we don't have to go running for safety.

We are already there. We don't have to sprint for shelter. We are already there.

It's tough to build a relationship with anyone when we find ourselves in a storm, but if we have already cultivated our relationship with God, we are where we need to be when the storm hits.

We are already with the One who is high above all and with the One who will provide what we need.

See the reason I have found healing from the pain of my past, it's because I choose to dwell in the presence of the Almighty, I choose to hide in the His shadow where I find covering, I find Shade in the heat of the day.

In order to dwell with the Lord, we need to:
Walk in relationship with Him in relationship.

Think about Psalm 23...It's probably the first psalm everyone learns early in their Christian walk:

A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I

will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

(vs. 2) The person who wrote Psalm 91 knew God personally. He wasn't just name dropping because he was looking for a way out of trouble.

He says in verse 2, I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.

Do you hear the personal pronouns? "My" refuge. "My" fortress." "My" God.

Listen, I am glad each one of you are here today, but if coming here is all you do to cultivate a relationship with the Lord, you're missing out on so much that could be providing for you before difficult times come, before the disappointment, before the discouragement.

Church I want you to understand, you need to walk in a relationship daily with God in order to gain the spiritual

strength, the emotional stability, the confidence in God's promises so that you aren't easily overcome when bad things come your way.

A relationship with Jesus will prepare you for the storm before it even hits.

Matthew 8:23-27

23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.

24 Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The

disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" 26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are

you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. 27 The men were

amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

I've been through a few storms. I have navigated some rough waters. From a Spiritual standpoint things are good, but it doesn't mean that I have not been going through some rough patches and some personal struggles, stress and strain.

Jesus is the captain of my boat but don't get me wrong there are times where I feel like He may be sleeping on the job so I try to take over the wheel, then I'm reminded that I can not navigate through the storm I need Him.

So I do everything I can to keep His presence on board every day and He assures me that I am OK.
I am more than OK.

It is well with my soul. He helps me have a positive outlook...and that's where I find true joy and deep peace.

This Is Called Unshakable Faith.

I have an overcoming spirit and I know it has a lot to do with my gratitude toward what God has done for me, especially in my childrens lives...I see His hand.

I have had to face some of the greatest challenges in my life and personal pain. And Dwelling in Him is the only way I have been able to get through and that's what makes me feel closer and more confident in Christ.

Things that used to affect me deeply don't affect me anymore.

The fiery darts of Satan are being extinguished by the victory God daily gives me.

My feet are on the rock, and I will not be moved. What I am testifying to you all is real because I have a growing relationship with Jesus.

It can't be casual. Jesus can't just be a hobby for you. He can't just be something to insert in your weekly schedule. In order to experience His maximum protection, He has to be at the center of your life.

I would also say that to dwell in the Lord, you need to Rest in the Lord's ability to deliver you ("in whom I trust").

Trust the Lord. You have to say it out loud on a regular basis, "God, I trust You." We have to say it not for God to hear it but for you to hear it so that it can penetrate deep in your soul and then you will begin to believe it so you can then walk in confidence In Him.

When you pray for healing, say, "God, I trust You to heal me."
When you pray for your children, say, "God, I trust You to be at work in their lives."

When you pray for your spouse to be saved, say, “God, I trust that in Your time You will bring about salvation to my spouse.”
When you pray for your finances, say, “God, I trust You to provide for my needs.”

And then demonstrate that you do trust God. Look for ways to show God you have put the weight of your circumstances and the weight of your needs on His shoulders.

When your doctor says, “The outlook is grim,” say, “That’s OK, God will have the final say, and whatever He has in store is good for me.”

When your kids don’t seem to be pursuing godly friendships or when they seem to be distancing themselves from you or when they start making bad decisions, don’t panic and yell and scream at them, lovingly instruct them and get on your knees to pray to the One who can have their attention any time He wants.

Don’t stop witnessing to your spouse just because they say they aren’t interested. Trust God to use your faithful witness to convince them that God has something special for them.

Don't quit tithing and giving to the Kingdom just because things get tight. Keep demonstrating that you trust God by giving anyway.

Don't let go of God's hand just because it gets dark. That is when you need to grip it even tighter.

Don't stop coming to church. Don't stop reading your Bible. Don't stop praying. Don't stop listening to Christian music. Don't stop worshipping.

Stay engaged with God. Dwell with Him. He is your best option. He is the safest place.

2. Cultivate Your Love for God

I want to encourage you to cultivate your love for God.

I have already suggested this in my previous remarks, but how intentional can you be about growing in your love relationship with God?

Even in the tough times? Let me encourage you to acknowledge God's name (vs. 14)

Listen to verse 14 again, “**BECAUSE HE LOVES ME,**” says the LORD, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.”

When you love someone, you talk about them. You aren't embarrassed to be seen with them. You post about them on your social media. You want people to know you belong to them and they to you.

You post about the sweet things they do for you and how they make you feel. You put a kissy face emoji or a heart emoji on the post! You acknowledge that person publicly!

Luke 12:18 says, ***“I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man (Jesus) will also acknowledge before the angels of God.”***

We see in Psalm 91 and here in Luke 12 that publicly acknowledging God is a demonstration of our love for Him. He delights to help those who love and acknowledge Him. When someone acknowledges you publicly, doesn't it make you feel good?

Whether it is a significant-other or just a friend who gives you a shout out, doesn't it grow your affection for them? It is the same with us and God.

You also need to spend time with Him. The more you are with God, the more you will realize He is with you.

Get into the Word. We are more than half way through the Bible in one year, and I tell you church that you don't have to complicate things just begin to listen to it as you're getting ready or while you're driving JUST OPEN UP YOUR BIBLE whether it be listening or reading.

And hey don't judge all those who get up at 5am to read, not everybody is where you are and guess what back in Jesus' time most people would only be able to listen anyway.

The bible recap we are doing is great and all you have to do is just listen and the host Tara-Leigh breaks the scripture down so you can understand it better.

And guess what? It doesn't take time from anything you want or need to do, but it will build you up...so you have no excuse.

Going through the plan has encouraged me. It gives me a Heavenly perspective. And It increases my faith. And gives me a greater sensitivity to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

When you know God's Word and His will as is revealed in His Word, you are going to know God's voice more clearly when He speaks to you.

I dare you to sing worship songs in your car. I dare you to pray as you walk for exercise. I dare you to take a half hour during lunch and just read the Word and pray in response to what you read.

Sign up for a daily devotional, there are so many plans you can find on the YouVersion app. Spend time with the Lord, and watch your love for Him grow.

Avoid things that extinguish your love for God. If you can't picture Jesus standing next to you at the bar, get out of the bar.

If you can't picture Jesus standing next to you while you watch certain things then you should think twice before watching them.

If you are doing anything, anywhere that you think Jesus wouldn't want you to be doing or anything you think would offend Jesus or hurt Jesus if He was standing next to you, you need to remove yourself from those environments.

Think of it this way, if you were doing things that your spouse didn't want you to do, and you were trying to hide those activities from your spouse, don't you think it would impact the love you share? Of course it would.

You can't be intimate, truly intimate with someone if you are hiding stuff from.

The same is true with God. You can't try to live a double life and think it won't impact your relationship with God.

Guilt and shame enter the picture when we dabble in sin. It creates awkwardness. Then we feel like we aren't good enough to come to church or good enough to serve the Lord, and before you know it, we are out of fellowship with God and God's people.

The third thing I would share in God's protection is that we need to:

3. Call Upon God Every Day (vs. 15) Listen to verse 15 again: **HE WILL CALL UPON ME**, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

Prayer is one of the key ways you can experience God's protective help. When you can't do anything about your situation, and when all you can do is pray, you are actually doing the best and most important thing you can do. God isn't afraid of anything.

Trouble doesn't scare Him. He will be with us in trouble. It doesn't matter if it is a fiery furnace or a lion's den, He will come to both. It doesn't matter if it is a desert or a valley, He will come there.

He is with us in trouble, and one way, the main way that we experience His presence is through prayer. He will be present in ways that assure you He is listening.

Notice what the end of verse 15 says, "I will deliver him and honor him." He not only will deliver us from trouble, but he will honor us. Like, He will promote us. He will bless us.

We will be better off after the trial than we were before. He will honor us, why? Just because we are His. Just because we have

trusted Him. Just because we have loved Him. Just because we have acknowledged Him. Just because we have called upon Him.

I have said this before, but I'll say it again, You need to make God your first refuge and not your last resort.

There is anyone that wants to be there for you more than Jesus. Call upon God every day.

He has shelter to give and Psalm 91 says we can rest in His shadow.

I love that image. We need a shadow when the sun is hot. We need some shade when the trials of life are beating down on us.

God says to us, "Here, hide here under my wings. They make shade. They offer protection from the scorching sun." He will take some of the heat off of us. He won't permit a direct hit from the sun. He will shield us. He'll take the heat, and He'll give us some shade, but you can only abide in the shadow of someone that you are standing close to.

Only when you are walking closely with someone can that you be in their shadow.

Prayer is a mechanism where we get close enough to God to stand in His shadow!

Psalm 91 tells us we can Live Securely and Supported (vs11-12)

Satan wants to trap us and makes us into slaves. Verse 3 tells us we can be saved from his trap.

The trials of life are part of a warfare strategy to eliminate you. Satan doesn't want you holy and he certainly doesn't want you happy in Jesus.

Jesus is his enemy, and because of that reality, anyone who aligns themselves with Jesus becomes an enemy of Satan. You don't have to be afraid of Satan, and you don't have to put up with his shenanigans.

Plead the blood of Jesus over your life and rebuke the devil. Don't argue with him or get sucked into discussion. Tell him he is defeated and turn him over to Jesus.

Your faith and peace can remain intact no matter what Satan tries.

Verses 3 and 6 also talk about pestilences and plagues. Listen, God has power to deliver us from diseases and to prevent us from getting things that won't be for our good.

Verses 5 and 7 talk about the worries of warfare. God says He will keep us from fear.

God is with us to support us. We don't have to lose our minds when trouble hits. We don't have to lose sleep when calamity strikes.

The closer we are in fellowship with Jesus the more peace and clarity we will have. Security and support are absolutely cultivated as you grow your relationship with Jesus.

Satan wants to plant seeds of doubt any way that he can. He wants you to think that someone is talking about you.

He wants you to believe you aren't good enough for some task. He wants you to doubt the direction that God has told you to go.

He wants you to think you are the only one who is struggling. He wants you to go to a dark place in your mind, to a place where you believe everyone is against you.

He wants to create misunderstandings between you and people you love so that you get offended and say and do things that make things worse. I am telling you, you don't have to put up with it. You can live securely.

I let God deal with Satan. I am sustained by the presence and promises of God. Like a tree that is planted by the waters, friends, I shall not be moved.

It is your right as a Child of God to Live Protected and Live Powerful (vs. 13). I love verse 13:

You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

How much strength and power would it take to tread on a lion and to trample the great lion and the serpent?

God can give you mighty strength. Perhaps you aren't stronger than you think you are, but God is stronger in you than you can begin to imagine.

I love that verses 5 and 6 talk about God's protection in terms of time. You don't have to fear the terror of the night. At nighttime, God has you covered. You don't have the fear the

arrow that flies by day. During the day, God has your back. This Psalm speaks about comprehensive, 24-hour coverage.

Where are you dwelling? Are you close enough to God that you are shaded from the heat of life's battles?

God's protection is comprehensive, but it is conditional on our willingness to stick with Him. Be comforted by all of the promises of God in Psalm 91.

Be comforted by all of the things He says He will do for you, and the list is long. But be challenged to love Him more faithfully, to call on His name more regularly, and to acknowledge Him in your public as well as your private life.

Choose security and safety over sin, the shade of God's protection over the shenanigans Satan would dangle in front of you to cause you to doubt and to drift away from the dwelling that is the Lord.

So as I am concluding the service I always like to ask, What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?