

Psalm 91
The Secret Place in the Middle of Trouble
By Alex Salcedo

“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1 NIV).

I love that word: *dwells*.

Psalm 91, verse 1 doesn't say whoever occasionally visits the presence of God. It doesn't say whoever runs to God only when everything starts falling apart. It says whoever *dwells* there.

To dwell somewhere means you live there, you stay there, you make it home.

I think sometimes we can treat the presence of God like a place we go only when trouble comes. But Psalm 91 gives us a different picture. God's presence isn't supposed to be our emergency room; it's supposed to be our home.

Recently, that became incredibly real for me and my family.

My wife, Kristi, ended up in the hospital, and we walked through several very difficult and uncertain days. There were moments when we didn't understand what was happening. There were questions we didn't have answers to. There was fear. There was frustration. There was exhaustion. And there were moments when, as her husband, I simply did not know what to do next.

It is one thing to talk about trusting God when everything is going well; it is another thing to sit in a hospital room beside someone you love and not know what the next hour is going to look like. But in the middle of that the Lord reminded me that I may not understand everything that is happening, but I still know where to dwell.

Psalm 91:2 says, “I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust’” (NIV).

Notice what the psalmist does not say. He doesn't say, “I trust God because I understand everything.” He says, “He is my God, in whom I trust.”

There is a kind of trust that develops when you do not have all the answers.

During those days in the hospital, we made a choice: the hospital room was not only going to become a place of fear, but it was also going to become a place of His presence.

We prayed. We worshiped. We called on the name of Jesus. And we reached out to the body of Christ.

Then something beautiful began happening. People started praying, friends prayed, pastors prayed, churches prayed, and people we knew well and even people who barely knew us began lifting Kristi up before the Lord.

Suddenly, that hospital room did not feel quite so small anymore. We were being carried by the prayers of the body of Christ, and we knew we were not standing alone.

We watched God move. We saw circumstances change. We saw breakthrough. We watched Kristi come through moments where all we knew to do was call on Jesus and trust Him. There were moments in that hospital that I can only describe as the Lord meeting us and moving in a miraculous way.

God taught me something through it that I do not want to forget: sometimes the miracle is not only that God brings you out of trouble; sometimes the miracle is discovering how close He was while you were still in it.

In Psalm 91:15, God says, “I will be with him in trouble” (NIV).

That might be one of the most powerful promises in the entire book of Psalms.

God does not say, "If you follow Me, you will never experience trouble." He says, "I will be with you in it."

Maybe somebody needs to hear that today.

Following Jesus does not mean you will never sit in a hospital room. It does not mean you will never get the phone call you did not want. It does not mean you will never face uncertainty in your marriage, your family, your health, your finances, or your future.

Psalms 91 does not pretend trouble does not exist. Psalm 91 is declaring that trouble does not get the final word when God is your dwelling place. His presence changes the atmosphere of trouble.

That is what intimacy with God gives us. Intimacy does not mean I know everything God is going to do. Intimacy means I know Him. I know where to run, I know where to rest, I know whose voice to listen to when every other voice around me is screaming fear.

That is why this fast matters.

We are not fasting just to get something from God. We are fasting because we want God Himself. We are removing distractions and saying, "Lord, teach me how to dwell again. Teach me to recognize Your voice. Teach me to trust You before I understand You. Teach me to stay in Your presence when everything around me is trying to pull me into fear."

This is what I learned sitting beside my wife: you can be in a hospital room and still be in the secret place. You can receive difficult news and still rest under the shadow of the Almighty. You can have unanswered questions and still have peace, and you can have tears in your eyes and faith in your heart at the same time.

Faith is not pretending you are never afraid. Faith is deciding that fear does not get to determine where you dwell.

So, during this fast, I want to challenge you with one simple question: Where have you been dwelling?

Have you been dwelling in fear? In worst case scenarios? In people's opinions? In what social media says? In what your circumstances are telling you? Or have you been dwelling in the presence of God?

What you dwell in will eventually begin to dwell in you. Spend enough time in fear and fear will fill you but spend time in His presence and His peace begins to fill you. His Word fills you. His perspective fills you. Faith begins to rise inside of you, and then when trouble comes, you discover something incredible. You discover that you do not have to go searching for the secret place; you already live there.

That is my prayer for us during this Psalm 91 fast—that Psalm 91 would not simply become something we quote when we are afraid. I pray it becomes something we live.

I pray that we become people who know how to dwell and people who know how to stay. People who know that no matter what room we walk into, no matter what battle we face, and no matter what tomorrow holds, we are never walking into it alone.

The Most High is our shelter. The Almighty is our shadow. He is our refuge. He is our fortress. He is the God in whom we trust.

So, whatever you are walking through today, do not only ask God to get you out of it, ask Him, "Jesus, show me how to find You in the middle of it." Sometimes, right in the middle of the trouble, you discover the treasure: His presence was there the whole time.