

Our Refuge

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[0 : 00] Proverbs 18 and verse 10. It says, The name of the Lord is a strong tower.! The righteous runneth into it and are safe.

! What a picture that is to us of how the Lord is a strong tower that we can find our safety and assurance in.

And as it says, The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and are safe. What a picture we see there as that lighthouse so strong and sure and steadfast as the waves crash about it.

What a picture to us of how the Lord is to us a strong tower. And the towers of the Bible days we see as the castles of old.

I know as a youngster I used to travel in England with my parents. We had a holiday time there in our native land of England. And we travelled around the islands, England, Scotland and Wales, the United Kingdom.

[1 : 20] And I used to keep nagging my mum and dad. Oh, I want to go and see another castle. And we don't have too many castles in Australia to go and look at, do we? But we know that in European lands there's beautiful castles.

I know in Germany there's beautiful castles as well as across the United Kingdom. And likewise a castle, a fortress, is a beautiful picture of that picture of the strong tower that our Lord God is to us. And what does a tower represent? It represents a defence to the city walls. It speaks of a secure fortress, of a sure place of safety, of a certain, of a strong defence and stronghold.

And in our world of turmoil that we live in, as the waves crash all around us, as the storms of life are vented against us, in this world of unrest and uncertainty at times, it's good to have a stronghold. It's good to have a strong tower, a refuge, a place that we can go. As it says in Psalm 62 of our Lord, it describes our Lord in Psalm 62 and verse 6 onwards it says, He only is my rock and my salvation.

[2 : 28] He is my defence, I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory. The rock of my strength and my refuge is in God.

Trust in Him at all times, ye people. Pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us.

Selah. If we're needing a refuge, if we find that the storms are about at times around about us, He is for us a rock, a shelter, a strength, a reliable place, a reliable one that we can turn to and find that comfort and defence in.

And there's lots of scriptures we could share. The Word of God is replete with many passages that speak to us of the strength of our God, of the assurance, of the comfort, of the hiding place, of the refuge that our God is to us.

In Isaiah 25 and verse 4 it tells us, For there has been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in His distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.

[3 : 39] Psalm 32 and verse 7 it tells you, Thou art my hiding place. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Selah. God is your hiding place. If you're feeling like there's lots of things that could overwhelm you, think of that picture of that lighthouse, of the waves crashing.

Think of this picture of a fortress, of the strong defence, of the great safety that is in that fortress, in that stronghold.

And like that too, God is for you a refuge. God is your refuge and stream, a very present help in time of trouble. And we see here, often the fortresses, the strongholds, these garrisons were built on great rocky outcrops, on great rocky foundations.

And for you, for me, the Bible says that Christ is our rock. He is the rock, the good foundation. And as that popular children's song goes, that's based on a proverb of our Lord, of how a wise man built his house upon the rock.

[4 : 52] Solid and strong and sure, whereas the foolish man built his house upon the shifting sands, on those shaky foundations. There was no foundation for the foolish man.

And the Lord Jesus was illustrating the truth of His Word, that He was talking about building our lives upon, the foundation, the sure foundation, of His Word, of faith in Christ.

And as Christ is, the foundation stone that we can rely upon and build our lives upon. Because we know that life without Christ is really just a life on shifting sands.

There's no assurance, there's no safety there, there's no surety there. Whereas for the believer, we stand rock solid and firm and confident and sure, because we rely on our Saviour.

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed. A refuge in time of trouble. That's Psalm 9, verse 9. There's another picture that illustrates this, that the Psalms also give in Psalm 91 and verse 4.

[6 : 00] But Psalm 91, verse 4 tells us this. I'll just turn there. And of course, the whole passage of Psalm 91 is full of assurance and comfort for us, as it talks in the context of how there's a pestilence, there's a terror, but we shall not be afraid.

We shall not be afraid. It says of our Lord, Psalm 91, verse 2, it says, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God. In Him will I trust. And later on it talks about how He shall cover thee with His feathers.

And under His wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and bucklet. There's a story told of how there was a bushfire.

In some place the forest was decimated with a great bushfire, a great wildfire spread through the forest. And in all this terrible flame and fire, as they surveyed the remains after the fire had gone through, some farmer came along and kicked what he thought was just a pile of leaves.

And it was actually a dead hen. And as he kicked that hen, out from underneath her came all these little chicks that had been protected from the wildfire.

[7 : 19] because the chicks had been beckoned by the mother hen to come under the shelter of her feathers, of her wings, to be safe from the fire as it spread through the forest.

The mother hen sacrificed her life, but the little chicks were safe because they had been sheltering, covered and protected, hidden from the danger, from the heat of the fire by the mother who sacrificed her life for them.

And so too we see the picture of our Lord as our Lord God is compared to the same picture of a mother bird under which we can take shelter under the wings and find safety and refuge just as little chicks would flee to that shelter of the mother hen.

God is a refuge. Life is not always pleasant and easy. It's not always comfortable. An old time missionary, one of the great pioneers of the mission field who founded the China Inland Mission, I'm sure people would know, of Hudson Taylor, a man of God who braved the elements to go to a land far distant to take the gospel to the land of China.

And Hudson Taylor was talking one day to another young missionary who was about to start work in China. And the missionary was questioning about the dangers of the field that they were going to go to.

[8 : 54] He was concerned about the dangers that lay ahead. Good time to have a drink. And they had some cups.

They had some cups on the table. And as the Hudson Taylor, the experienced missionary, spoke to this fledgling missionary, this inexperienced one, he said, look at this.

He banged the table like this. Don't be careful. Pablo's just fixed this one. And he was going up this, pounding on the table. And the teacups were going up this.

And all over the place, the tea was spilling all over the table as they spoke. And I'm not going to be able to get this clean now. And as the teacups jumped and the tea was spilled, and the startled young man, oh, thank you, the startled young man was wondering, what on earth is going on?

What's this crazy man doing? Spilling my teacup here. And Taylor explained to him what he was trying to illustrate. He said, when you begin your work, you will be buffeted in numerous ways.

[10 : 07] The trials will be like blows. Remember, these blows will bring out only what is in you. Only what is in you. As a believer, blows and trials and suffering, troubles will come.

God didn't promise you that you won't have troubles in your life. But the troubles will bring out what is in you. That faith, that confidence, that trust, that hope, that eternal hope that you have will be brought out of you as the trials of life may come against you.

Christ will come out of your life. Your faith will just beam out in the midst of the darkness and the troubled times that face you. Believer, you can take refuge.

And you can shine God's light as trouble might come across your path. We can be as ones that would have that wonderful good foundation, that wonderful certainty, that assurance, just as old buildings of old that still stand today.

It's the buildings that were built with a good foundation. They are the ones that stand today. They are the ones that stand, as you see. For example, the Great Canal in Venice was erected in 1588.

[11:22] It now stands still. After four centuries, that bridge stands because it rests on 12,000 piles driven deeply into the soil.

What is true of buildings is also true of your life. If your life is built on the foundation that is Christ, you can stand and shoulder every trial that might attend your way and find his great comfort and strength.

David tells of how God is a refuge for the oppressed. That word oppressed, it means crushed, injured, afflicted. God is a refuge for you.

Maybe you will be oppressed. Maybe you will be afflicted and injured. You know, for some of us, we don't know what oppression means. I know I was talking to a colleague in the week and she was telling me that she came to this land from the land of Vietnam.

You know, I came from the land of England when I was eight in a jet plane. She came from the land of Vietnam aged 13 as a boat person. In a, as one of the boat people packed in a vessel of some 60 odd people.

[12:41] A very small vessel. You know, we don't know what suffering is like, do we? In terms of that, in terms of what many have to go through. God is a refuge. We can be a refugee and go to him and seek our refuge in him in that safety and that assurance.

And we are secure. Nothing can separate us from his love. God is going to secure us and hold us safe. And we see that in our passage that we've read here, God is a strong tower and the righteous run into it.

What is our part? All we can do is run into that refuge. We think of, as a little child would run into the arms of the mother and the father or father when trouble would come.

It's a picture for us of how we are to flee. When the storms of life come, when trouble comes, we can find our refuge in him. When we think, for example, of a picture of a storm, there was a story of a storm at sea as a disaster was approaching.

It would seem like it was a terrible future that lay ahead as they were on the vessel as it was rocked to and fro with the waves crashing about. Robert Lewis Stevenson's son was on board.

[14:01] He went to the pilot's cabin and started to ask if something could be done about the bad situation. Just then, the pilot turned and smiled at the young boy and Stevenson's son went back to the men and said, I have good news.

What do you mean, they said. What did he say? I've just seen the pilot's face and that's enough.

The boy had seen the pilot's face. He saw that the captain behind the steering wheel of the ship had a smile on his face.

The pilot knew, the captain knew what the vessel was going to be saved and likewise too, we just need to take a look at our Saviour's face. When the storms of life come, take a look at his face when trouble comes.

Flee to him. Flee to him. Run to him. Hurry to him. And we'll find that great assurance, that faith, that trust, that hope that a believer can know.

No matter what, we have that refuge that we can turn to. We can see in a picture here, a picture of a storm approaching and of a family seeking shelter from that storm.

[15:07] We likewise, as the storm of judgment comes, as the life around us unravels, as the world, as we know, is headed on a hellward course, that we can take refuge in Christ today.

We can flee to him for refuge. We can flee to the tower for shelter, for assurance, for refuge. And to flee to a refuge is really what it means to trust.

It's really a picture of faith. Faith means trust. Trust means to run to a refuge, to find shelter and to find comfort and safety. Just as I say, a child would naturally go to his or her parent.

A child's natural instinct is to flee into the arms of the parent when danger would come. So too for you, for me as believers, our believer's instinct is to run from danger to the Lord.

And our dependence is on God. Our dependence is on him by faith, by prayer, that we would find our trust, our refuge in him. It says of David in 2 Samuel 22, David spoke unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies.

[16:22] David was used to having a hard time. He was often pursued by enemies. And it says he was pursued out of the hand of Saul. God delivered him. And in 2 Samuel 22, verse 2, it says of David, he said, The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, the God of my rock.

In him will I trust. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, my refuge, my saviour. Friends, you can find that strong tower.

You can flee to that. You can find that trust. And what is it for us? The strong tower is the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord Jesus is our strong tower. We can find a wholehearted trust in his name.

We think of the name of the Lord Jesus. He's really got many names as pictured here. The one who created the universe. The one who created our lives. He is the one, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the name, the triune name of our Lord. Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, we can think of Master. Lord means Master.

[17:31] Jesus means Saviour. Well, Jehovah is our Saviour. And Christ, it means the Messiah, the Anointed One. His name just captures it all, doesn't it?

We can think of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in its various configurations occurs 80 times or more in the New Testament. And Philippians 2 says of his name that wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And Acts 4 tells us neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. There's no single one other name, not one other name, not one other faith that can save other than the faith that is in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No other religion, no other philosophy, no other thinking or planning or invention of man can save a soul from sin other than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And friends, we must put our trust in Him, put our trust in God's name, run to His name, find shelter, find refuge in God's name. And when we say in the Bible it's often mentioned the name of the Lord or the name of the Lord Jesus.

[19:03] The name, when it says God's name, it really means His power, His person, His nature, His work, His righteous character and faithfulness. It means everything about Him, who He is, what He is for you, who He is for you.

Our real source of safety and security is in that precious name. unto you that believe He is precious. We are delivered, we are free, we are fully protected from His name.

And the name of the Lord, it signifies His majesty, His greatness, His power, His glory, His attributes, His love. All God is in Himself, His mercy, His greatness, His power.

And a Christian is a Christ one. As a Christian, you are a Christ one. Christ comes and lives in you. We belong to Christ and He belongs to us.

And we are in Him and He is in us. And so God is our stronghold. As I say, of these great castles of old, I know I've seen Edinburgh Castle and many beautiful castles built on a rocky outcrop, high up, where whatever they might throw at them, the bows and arrows, would just bounce off those strong walls.

[20:18] And likewise too, as a believer, you've got a fortress, a refuge, a stronghold, a strength. And get into the fortress today if you're not a believer, if you're out of the fortress that is Christ today.

If you're not saved, if you haven't got that refuge, if you haven't taken shelter under the cover of His wings when the fire comes, when the danger comes. Friends, you need to rush, to run, to flee into that strong tower, to find that refuge, that defence.

And I can assure you that you can trust Him. You can trust Him one and all. You can trust Him fully and completely with your life, with your soul.

You don't have to live in fear and trepidation. I've met many believers who have said to me that they're worried about losing their salvation. You know, there's a danger there that when people have this concept that somehow their salvation is about what they do.

It's a wrong focus. It's about everything that He has done. If Christ has saved you, Christ has saved you. S-A-V-E-D He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

[21 : 37] You have it in the present tense, in the here and now, and the here and hereafter. And friends today, you can have a wonderful confidence and assurance. And these ones, I know I used to think that way at one time.

But when you actually think it through, on what are you depending? The Bible says it's not of works. Not of works, lest any man should boast. It's not of any one thing that I can do.

It's entirely and truly of what He has done for us. And we don't need to live in a fearful state that somehow we're going to do something that's going to take our salvation away from us.

It's Christ's salvation. He has given it to us as His gift. It's a free gift. And it's His work by His Holy Spirit. It's His grace that saves not of any works that we have done.

Not of works of righteousness that we have done. But according to His mercy, He saved us. And if you're relying on anything of your own self to keep you, then you've got it completely wrong.

[22 : 41] Because He is the one who secures, He saves, He strengthens. And we have that safe place as we take our shelter in His hiding place, as we take our refuge, as we get into that fortress that is the name of our God.

He is invincible. He is all-powerful. He is almighty. Get into the fortress today. If you're not a believer, friends, you're in great danger. You're in great peril.

And there is great risk of judgment and of condemnation for you. Friends, I urge you, one and all, take your shelter in the shelter of His wings.

Come under those feathers. Come under that fortress, into that stronghold, that garrison, that fortress, that shelter, that safe place, that place of complete safety for you.

How do I do that, you might say? How can I have this assurance? How can I know that I know that I know that I'm saved? It says in John 20, verse 31, But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you might have life through His name.

[23 : 54] These things are written. You can know this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and that His life is in His Son. For there is a wonderful assurance, a wonderful hope, a wonderful confidence that you can have, not a confidence in yourself, in any effort or trying or doing of yourself, but in everything that He has done, in that done deal, in that finished work, in that completed work of Calvary's cross, where Christ paid it all and He paid every last drop of His precious blood for you, for me.

There's nothing more that had to be paid. You just have to cash in the receipt of what He has done. You just have to acknowledge, yes, I'm a sinner and I need a saviour and you're the only one who can save me.

And friends, He'll receive you unto Himself. It says that He'll not cast away any that come unto Him by faith. And friends, just to close with this one assurance here today, that you can be just as this little child pictured here.

as the Bible says, that underneath are the everlasting arms. The eternal God is thy refuge. God can be that refuge. You can find that wonderful comfort and assurance.

And as our Saviour says, no man can pluck you out of my hand, out of the Father's hand. He's got us in His hand clasp. He's got us in His hands and He's holding us safe and sure and you can have a wonderful peace with God today.

[25 : 25] A wonderful refuge, a wonderful assurance by faith today. He says to you, in me, you shall have peace. You can have peace today. Perhaps for you, you're still outside that stronghold, that fortress.

You're in danger. Friends, I urge you, the righteous shall run into the name of the Lord. He shall be that strong tower for you today. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can find that peace, that comfort. Lord, if there's any knowing not today, that challenge today, that they would call out in simple faith that they would run to you, run into your arms and receive that wonderful faith, that wonderful gift of your salvation as they would put their whole trust in you, just as those little chicks would run to a hand, Lord, that we would just come unto your shelter that would come into that refuge and Lord, when troubles may come against our path as we tread our walk of life, Lord, that you'd help us to know within that wonderful assurance and peace that you have saved us, you've ransomed us, you've purchased us by your precious blood, by what you did and dying on the cross for our sin and paying the price for it

there.

We can have that wonderful peace that keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.