

Our Refuge

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[0 : 00] God is a refuge.

Psalm 9, verse 9, The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed.! A refuge in times of trouble.! The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed.

A refuge in times of trouble. I want to urge you today to find your refuge in Christ. To find your refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In times of adversity and trouble. As we face sickness and death. When we experience the dark shadows. Perhaps of abuse or pain or heartache.

Perhaps bitter disappointment and loss. Or family breakups and stress. Now all these things are very real for people today. They could be very real in your life.

[1 : 07] In your home. In your circle. God is here. God is here. Amen. Standing by your side. He is a refuge for the oppressed.

Now we think of this area. The needs. In Elizabeth in the north. Many needs. Much. A people oppressed. Oppressed. Enslaved.

The dark shadows. In people's lives. I know. Just this last week. Someone gave me his personal story. He wrote a book.

Describing. A life that he had lived. A life under the shadow. Of child abuse. This man had lived in a family. Torn apart by child abuse.

And what a dark. Dark shadow. He had cast over his life. His family. And his loved ones. A dreadful. Dreadful. Story. And yet God by his grace.

[2 : 09] Reached out. And saved that man. Saved him. As much as he was a victim. In many ways. Yet. Now he's got victory. He's got victory. He's found the refuge.

He's found the refuge tonight. And friends. Tonight. God is our refuge. A refuge for the oppressed. God is nearer than you think. Now sometimes we think.

Of God. Of our Lord. As somehow distant. Far away. Out of touch. Out of reach. No. He's here. He's here. Wherever two or three are gathered.

In his name. He is here. In the midst. God is nearer than we think. He's as close as a prayer away. When you're in that dark. Deep pit.

Of depression. Of anxiety. As that man was. There's a refuge. For the oppressed. There's a refuge. For you. And it does not matter. What your circumstances tonight.

[3 : 04] How far you might feel. From God. How heavy. You might feel the load. No matter what your circumstance. Your soul can find. Peace tonight.

Your soul can find. Refuge today. In him. A light passage is Psalm 46. Psalm 46. There's many scriptures that speak of this refuge.

It's a person. It's a person you can personally know. When I think of refuge. I think of wartime. And I know. We come from Pommy land.

I'm a Pommy. By birth. And I can recall seeing bomb shelters. Bomb shelters. Who's seen such things? You've seen such things?

You know. This was just a bomb shelter. It was just corrugated iron. Kind of in a. In a kind of doorway shape. With sides on it. And this was where the people would flee.

[4 : 03] When the. Warning sign would go off. They knew. They had to flee to the refuge. They had to flee to the shelter. Friends tonight. God is our refuge.

Psalm 46. It says. God is our refuge. And strength. A very present help. In trouble. Therefore will not be fear. Though the earth be removed.

And though the mountains. Be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar. And be troubled. Though the mountains shake. With the swelling thereof. Sea lar.

In other words. Think about that. Friends. Listen tonight. Though. The mountains be removed. Though the waters be troubled. God is our refuge and strength.

Where is he? In trouble. He's a very present hell. In trouble. So you can think of that. When you have trouble. Where is God? God is a very present hell.

[5 : 00] In trouble. In that trouble. Troubles will come. Troubles will come. God doesn't say. We're not going to have troubles. In this life. But yet. His faithfulness is constant.

God is. A very present hell. So his help is as sure. As his promises. It's as sure. As his word. Is true. Troubles do not mean.

That he has left you. You know. We can think. When trouble times come. Sometimes we can despair. And think. Well. God's forgotten me. He's forsaken me. No. Troubles do not mean.

That he has left you. Even the great servants of God. In the Bible. Had their share of troubles. And heartaches. We see. Such men as Job. You know.

What does it say about Job? It says he was the most just man. On all the earth. Yet. What happened to him? He lost.

[5 : 55] Everything. He was afflicted. Afflicted. God allowed him. To suffer. To suffer great loss. Great tragedy. He. He. Suffered.

In his body. And he didn't exactly have the health, wealth and prosperity gospel. No. Job didn't have that. He knew what it was to do it tough. And. Yet.

God hadn't left him. God was still with him. And you see people like Elijah. And Jeremiah. Many many others through the Bible. Have this wonderful testimony.

That they went through. They got through. And got through onto the other side. Of their trouble. Friends. There is a refuge. And there is a refuge. In Christ tonight. You can run.

And find shelter. In him. Just as. In wartime. They would flee. And find refuge. In that place of shelter. Psalm 62. 8. It says. Trust in him.

[6 : 49] At all times. You people. Pour out your heart. Before him. God is. A refuge. For us. Trust in him. Some of the time.

No. At all times. Pour out your heart. Before him. God is. A refuge. For us. Friends. I want to. Urge you tonight.

That you can depend. On him. You can depend. On him. Rock solid. Guarantee. 100%. 100%. He never fails. Depend on him.

You can. He never fails. Here's what someone said. He never fails. He never fails. The soul. That trusts in him.

Though disappointments come. And hope burns dim. He. Never fails. Though trials surge. Like stormy seas around.

[7 : 44] Though testings of fierce. Like ambushed foes. Abound. Yet this. My soul. With millions more. Has found.

He. Never. Fails. He. Never. Fails. He never fails. The soul that trusts. In him. Though angry skies. With thunder clouds. Grow grim. He. He. Never. Fails. Though icy glass. Life's fairest flowers lay low. Though earthly springs of joy.

All cease to flow. Yet still. Tears. True. With millions more. I know. He never fails. He.

Never. Fails. He never fails. The soul. That trusts. In him. Though sorrows cut. Should overflow the brim.

[8 : 41] He. Never. Fails. Though off. The pilgrim way. Sees rough. And long. Yet. I shall stand. Amid. Yon.

White. Robe. Throng. And there. I'll sing. With millions more. This song. He. Never. Fails. He. Never. Fails. There's truth there tonight. There's truth. You can know that he. Never. Fails. Our refuge.

He's a refuge. You can take shelter in. And know. That it's guaranteed. That you'll have safety there. Can you testify of this tonight?

Can you? Personally. Make it personal tonight. The Lord is. My. Refuge. Here's what Psalm 91 says. And this is a Psalm to. Take home and read tonight.

[9 : 37] Take it home and. Take it in. Psalm 91 verse 2. I will say of the Lord. He is. My. Refuge.

And my. Fortress. My. God. In him. Will I trust. Whatever battle it is that we face. He is our fortress. What is your battle today?

Maybe you need to find the fortress. That is your God. Find that fortress. And know his. Covering. Know his protection. Know his shield.

What is your battle today? Your battle. We all go through battles. Your battles are different. From mine. We all have battles. Of one kind or another. Perhaps your battle is an unforgiving spirit. Perhaps your battle is resentment. Or bitterness. A struggle with illness. The loss of a loved one. A struggle with an addiction. A struggle with a partner or a child.

[10:38] A struggle with conflicting emotions. He is my refuge. And my fortress. In him. Will I trust. He will be your guide.

He will be your refuge. He will be your strong tower. He will cover you. You can trust in him. Because. He. Never. Fails. Someone has said this.

In adversity. When trouble strikes us. We usually want God to do a. Removing job. He wants to remove. We pray. Lord remove this. Remove this thorn.

Remove this trouble. We want God to do a. Removing job. When sometimes. What God wants to do. Is an improving job. Amen. An improving job.

Sometimes he doesn't remove trouble. He helps us go through trouble. He helps us improve.

Through trouble. And someone else says this. To realise the worth of an anchor.

[11:34] We need to. Feel. The storm. Now the Bible says. This hope. This heavenly hope. This eternal hope. This confident assurance of salvation. That he gives to us.

Is like an anchor. Of the soul. Sure. And steadfast. It's guaranteed. It's taken. It's hold. In the rock. It's another name for our Lord. He is the rock. And to realise the worth of an anchor. We need to.

Feel the storm. So friends. Maybe that storm. That sometimes you will go through.

Is what is. Showing the strength. Of the anchor. Of your hope. Of your trust in Christ. Psalm 91 goes on to say. And there's much more. In this psalm. But we're just touching.

On some. Brief moments here. Surely. He shall. Deliver thee. Again. It's personal. That's the good thing about the King James. It's thee. It's talking to you.

[12:30] Personally. The. The. The. The. Surely. He shall. Deliver thee. You personally. He's going to deliver you. From the snare of the fowler.

You know. The snare was what. The bird catcher would catch. The birds. Under the trap. He shall deliver you from the trap. As it were. Of the bird catcher. And from the noise and pestilence.

That. You know. That. Evil. Affliction. As it were. He shall cover thee. With his feathers. And under his wings. Shalt thou trust. What a picture. Of the Lord God.

As being. Like a. A sheltering bird. For. Her chicks. Under his wings. Shalt thou trust. His truth shall be. Thy shield. And buckler. You know.

The buckler was a. A little. A little shield. He shall be your shield. He'll help you. He'll protect you. And it goes on. As much more. In this psalm. Uh. Neither shall thou be afraid.

[13:24] Of the terror. By night. Nor for the arrow. That flyeth by day. Nor for the pestilence. That walketh in darkness. Nor for the destruction. That wasteth at noon day. A thousand. Shall fall at thy side.

And ten thousand. At thy right hand. But it shall not. Come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes. Shalt thou behold. And see the reward. Of the wicked. Because thou.

Has made the Lord. Which is. My refuge. Even the most high. Thy habitation. They shall know evil. Before thee. Neither shall. Any plain. Come nigh.

Thy dwelling. For he shall. Give his angels. Charge over thee. To keep thee. In all thy ways. As these angels. He has said. That he will send.

Some angels. To take charge. Over you. That's a. An enheartening thought. Isn't it? Yeah. That potentially. They could be. Angels. Charged with. Our care.

[14:20] You are safe. You are safe tonight. There's a shelter for you. A safe haven. A safety. In Christ. There's a haven. Of rest. In this turmoil.

And chaos. At times. Of planet earth. God's presence. Can be a haven. For you. A shelter. In a time of storm. We must abide. In him. To be safe.

Back in the Old Testament. There was what were called. Cities. Of refuge. There were six. Cities. Of refuge. Places where. A man.

A woman. Who was accused. Could flee. And find safety. If there was some accident. And they were suddenly. Going to have a. A kangaroo court. And just suddenly.

Face a. Not a real justice. They could flee. And find safety. In six. Cities. Of refuge. And it's interesting. These are named. In Joshua. Chapter 20.

[15:16] Different names. Of these cities. And we can look at. These six. Cities. Six names. And see. There's something there. About what our Lord Jesus. Provides for us.

And number one. Is Kadesh. Kadesh. It means sanctuary. Or righteousness. Or holiness. Kadesh. It means that. The holy one. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Is called the holy one. The one who is holy. The holy one. Can sanctify you. Make you holy. As he is holy. And he is the one. The one mediator.

Between God and men. To know holiness. To find holiness. Is to find the holy one. He's the only one. Who can make us holy. Not by any doing. Or working of our own. But by his grace.

Granted to us. His holiness. Gifted to us. The second city. In Joshua 20. Is a city. Called Shechem. Shechem. It means shoulder. Or burden bearer.

[16:13] Now we know that one day. On planet earth. It says that the government. Shall be upon his shoulder. We know that. One day. The rightful. Reign.

And the rightful. King and owner. Of this planet. Shall find. That the government. Will be upon his shoulder. And for the meantime. We know that he is a light to. The good shepherd.

Of Luke 15. In verse 5. It says. And he goes and finds. The little sheep. The little lamb. In the thicket. Gone astray. And he joyfully finds it. And lays it on his shoulder.

And he comes home. Rejoicing. Jesus. Puts the lamb. On his shoulder. Now what a picture. You've seen lambs. So helpless. Especially if they've gone astray.

And Jesus does that for us. He's the good shepherd. He puts us on his shoulders. And he carries us. The third city. Is Hebron. Hebron. Means fellowship. Fellowship. Jesus invites.

[17:11] The unwanted. Into intimate relationship. Into friendship. Into fellowship. With him. Now we can be called. The friends of God. As Abraham was. Hebron.

There's a shelter. He is our fellowship. Our relationship. Is with him. A fourth one. Is Biza. Biza. It means rock. Or fortress. A strong.

Hiding place. Now the Lord Jesus. Is our stronghold. He is our fortress. For those. Unable. Who don't have a fortress. For those. Feeling unprotected. And vulnerable.

And at risk. Those who have no strength. Friends tonight. If you're feeling like that. He is your fortress. Your fortress. You know.

As a child. Back in England. I used to love. And I used to drive my mum and dad silly. When we went on a bit of a drive. And I'd see the old castles.

[18:06] The castles. And the strongholds. And the fortresses. And we just had to go and stop about every one of them. And I used to get the postcards. And I used to love. And just to picture what it would have been like.

Hundreds and hundreds of years ago. Maybe a thousand plus years ago. You don't see places like that in Australia. But you see. There's places. Such history. Such. And a fortress.

Where people would take refuge. And where they would be sheltered. From the invading army. And that's the picture. Of what Jesus is for us. He's a fortress.

Like the city of Beza. A rock. A fortress. A strong hiding place. The fifth city. Number five. Is Ramoth. Ramoth. That means high. Exalted.

The Lord Jesus says. I. If I be lifted up from the earth. Shall draw all men. To myself. And the Bible says. That when we save. He's made us. To sit together with him.

[19:03] In heavenly places. In Christ Jesus. It's like. It gives us a total. New perspective on life. Doesn't it? Yeah. We raised up with him. Our resurrected. We're risen Lord. And we made to sit with him.

It's like. It just gives you. A whole new perspective on life. But we just look at. This world. And we see people. Scurrying around. Like little ants.

Because. And scurrying about their. You know. Their attention is on things below. On this. Things on this earth. Yeah. That our attention. Is on things above. Yeah.

Because we're seated with Christ. We've got a new outlook. We've got a new perspective. We're lifted up. We're high. We're elevated. And ram off. And the sixth city. Is Golan.

Golan. It means joy. Or rejoicing. And friends tonight. There's no greater source. Of joy. Jesus says. I want you to have joy. And that your joy may be full.

[19:58] He's come to give us life. And life more abundant. There's no greater joy. You know. Joy unspeakable. I'm full of glory. Joy unspeakable. We can't put it.

It's a human language. The joy that we know. And. When everyone. Who trusts Christ. And says. The angels. Just jump up and down. With joy. Over one sinner. Who repents. That's what's going to be happening. When you're witnessing. That's what's going to happen. Hallelujah. It's not just going to be joy below. When there's tears of repentance. And someone trusts Christ.

With your witness. But there'll be joy in heaven. Hallelujah. The angels. Will rejoice. Isn't that great? And you can play a part in that. As you witness. And it's also interesting. The word go land. Not only does it mean joy. Or rejoicing. Some have referred. That it can mean to remove. Or deliver. And so. There's a sense. Where as Christians. We rejoice in God's deliverance.

[20 : 55] He sets free. He sets free. He's taken the chains. The bondage. The shackles. And he's broken them. And smashed them. And he's set us free. As a prisoner.

Released. And these cities are a type of Christ to us. Six cities of refuge. And in Hebrews 6. It says. That we can have the comfort. Who have fled for a refuge.

To lay hold. Upon this hope. That is set before us. We've got a strong consolation. A strong comfort. A strong comfort. And encouragement. For those who have fled for a refuge.

To lay hold. On Christ. Friends. I urge you tonight. If there's. Just one thing. That I can say tonight. Is lay hold. On him. Lay hold.

On him. And it's got the picture. It's on time. I think I saw it today. Where. There was a little tacker. And. And the little tacker. Grabbed the legs. Of his dad. And he just laid hold on him.

[21 : 54] And he clung to him. That's faith. That's where we cling to Christ. Yes. We embrace him. We hold him. We. Grab hold of God. That's what we need to do.

Isn't it? As Christians. We need to do that. Lay hold on God. Lay hold on him. You that have fled for refuge. To lay hold. Upon the hope. Set before us.

Hebrews 6. 18. So. Coming to. Close here tonight. God is a sure refuge for us. He's a sure thing. A sure refuge.

It says in Hebrews 13. Verse 5. Be content. With such things as you have. For he hath said. I will. Never. Leave thee. Nor.

Forsake thee. It's personal again. Isn't it? The. I will never leave thee. Nor. Forsake thee. You know. We can take that as a promise. And then it goes on. Verse 6. In Hebrews 13.

[22 : 49] So that we may boldly say. The Lord is my helper. And I will not fear. What man shall do unto me. Hmm. Whatever happens to you. Whatever tomorrow brings.

Maybe you're going to have a Job experience. I hope not. I don't want one. I don't want one. Myself. Hmm. But who knows what God has in store. Maybe there's trials.

Maybe there's persecution. Some of you face that in the workplace. Yeah. It's not all easy going. I've had that. Places I've worked. Me too. You get rubbish. And.

Mocked. But stand fast. Hallelujah. He's a sure refuge for you. The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me. So lay hold of God tonight.

Lay hold of him. God is able to do anything but fail. God is able to do anything but fail.

[23 : 48] Let's go to him in prayer. Let's lay hold of him. Lord we thank you tonight. For every soul here. Every precious, precious soul. Precious souls. Lord here tonight. And the precious souls in the streets.

All around about us here. We pray for this shop front outreach. We pray for the barbecue trailer. And the ministry. Of each one here tonight who's graduated.

And Lord help us to graduate as it were in the school of hard knocks. Help us to graduate as you might take us through the furnace of affliction. You might take us through the testing time.

So that our faith might come forth as gold. Lord help us to trust you. Lay hold on you. Help us Lord to flee to you. To find refuge in you. Our refuge.

Our strength. Our fortress. Our God. Lord we thank you for everyone here tonight. Help us Lord to continue in love. To continue in fellowship. Lord we pray that you bless.

[24 : 49] Bless the ministry here. And so that we close this time. Bless our time together. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.