

Finding Security IN the Lord

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[0:00] If you need a Bible, there are some available on the back table that you're welcome to take as our gift to you. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say to the Lord, My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust. For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge. His faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place, the Most High, who is my refuge, no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against the stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

[1:19] Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him. I will protect him because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble.

I will rescue him and honor him. With long life, I will satisfy him and show him my salvation. This is the word of the Lord. We thank you immensely for today.

We thank you for all of those who are in your presence this morning as they join together in the congregation to both worship you and to hear your word.

Lord, we just ask and we pray and we plead that your word and your blessings through this message would be poured out on those who really need to hear it.

And that in doing so, that would bear fruit today. We thank you, Lord, for all of these things in your name. Amen. Good morning.

[2:27] For those of you who don't know who I am, my name is Caleb Maloney. I'm one of the members here at Shoreline. And I have been blessed and honored with the opportunity to preach this summer amongst all the other men who have been delivering words in the psalm as we work through our Summer in the Psalm series.

Bear with me on this psalm this morning, I guess I would say. There is a lot that this psalm could say.

Psalms 91 has a lot of different messages, a lot of different directions. My wife gave me a good reminder earlier in my preparation that probably one of the reasons that I kept getting stuck was because it could go in this direction or it could go in another direction.

And so that message kind of helped me focus. And while this psalm can mean many different things for many different people, I was able to kind of pin it down to one particular message titled in which we're finding security in the Lord.

And so bear with me in all that. Hopefully I don't get too many comments or messages saying like, well, I think this verse really means this. Yes. The answer overall is yes.

[3:51] So once again, I thank you for everybody who's here this morning and here to hear the message. And I'm just asking and praying that the good work through the Lord can be shown to you guys this morning.

Psalms 91, verse 1. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

So throughout much of my life, I have often needed direction, a reminder of my identity or the purpose at various stages in my life. I would not be where I am today without the people and the experiences that I have had.

I grew up in a family that while they may have been imperfect, loved the Lord. They strived and desired to raise me and my brothers in the church. And while my start might have been a little bit different than my brothers, the church my parents chose to bring us to truly helped to raise me. And when I say they raised me, they raised me both physically and spiritually in many different ways. And multiple people, leaders in the church, essentially kind of adopted me into the fold throughout my life.

[5:07] And then I grew up. Typical church kid who spent most of my week doing various church activities, including many Saturdays going with my dad to the church to do various maintenance and work within the church.

Even then, I think I had a bit of a lazy faith. One where I either didn't notice or took for granted the blessings that Christ had in my life. I was either, I was both on fire for Christ and lacking in my actual trust in him or what he had done for me.

And through that time then came high school. In high school, I once again had people from my church pouring themselves into me to keep me growing in God's presence. My main leader for all those years was Mike.

Not Mike Lusa, but his name was Mike. And he put up with a lot when it came to me. Whether I was simply not paying attention or being a bit of a distraction for others or shoving myself inside of a projector cart.

He decided to stick around and help me grow. The main thing he focused on for multiple years was testimony. How does your life testify how God has worked in your life?

[6:22] Where has God shown his presence to you? And how has he placed other people in your life or protected you in your times of need? He emphasized that testimony does not need to be flashy or dramatic.

He focused on how your testimony can reveal God to those around you. Even when you are a church kid who doesn't have those fancy coming back to Christ moments in your life. One of the ways he encouraged me during this time was by reminding me about his own testimony.

Showing the way in which God transformed his own life and how he would see God working in my life as well. And why I needed to put my total trust in God. In the same way, after they were established as a nation, the people of Israel were the original church kids of the world.

God was or should have been an integral part of their lives and identity. He provided for them. He cared for them. And he protected them in their times of need.

Yet the cycle was clear. They would often forget and fall away. They needed frequent reminders to return to the Lord. God had these testimonies of his care. And in the case of the Psalms, they were recorded and performed to help bring his people back to him.

[7:41] Psalm 91, at its base, is doing the same thing. We don't necessarily know who wrote the Psalm. It's not attributed to anybody within the Bible. There's been many assumptions over the years, but there's nothing clearly definitive who wrote this Psalm.

When I read it, however, it reads like an elder in the faith mentoring a junior. Think about maybe Samuel reminding David of the work God has done, or Moses mentoring Joshua for leading the nation of Israel.

Whoever it was, this Psalm is someone's personal testimony and historical reminder to others to remind them of God. More specifically, it's reminding the entirety of the people of Israel and us that we have security in God.

when we trust him completely. The main point in Psalm 91 comes to us in verse one. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Or another way, those that abide in the Lord are secure in his care. This sets the stage for everything that is said after. The psalmist, though, through the lens of testimony, is going to show us how we should trust God.

[8:54] The way in which Psalm 91 does this is in three ways. The psalmist tells us how God protects and cares for us.

Then he will show us when God has or will protect those he loves. And then the psalm ends with a promise that is coming directly from the Lord himself to those that are his.

So as we move into the how of Psalm 91, it is a practice in bragging about God. A good brag, a healthy brag.

It serves as a reminder of God's sovereignty and his inherent capability for his creation or to care for his creation. The psalmist starts off saying, my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

In this one verse, he is establishing the care, the unquestionable security, and the power of God. A refuge is a place that will give us a feeling of security and safety from that which troubles us.

[9:57] A fortress is a strong, imposing place of complete security. Many fortresses throughout history boasted about their impenetrability at the time.

And then by claiming my God, he's placing God where he belongs. On the place of both utmost power and devotion.

Relaying a supernatural ability to execute all that he wills. And the psalmist belongs to him. He's saying, my God in whom I trust. He trusts in the Lord and continues to show this as he continues in verse four.

He will cover you with his pinions and under his wings, you will find refuge. A little bit of trivia for those of you who don't necessarily know, pinions are part of a bird's wings.

So he's in a way saying the same thing twice. He continues to repeat the idea of finding security in the Lord. A bird will cover and care for their young from any dangers that they may face.

[11:01] This language is showing the love and the care that God has for his creation. And then at the end of verse four, it says his faithfulness is a shield and a buckler.

In this case, God is providing the tools required to protect oneself. This particular verse reminds me of times that I've worked with the youth at my old church and then currently with the organization of Trail Life.

We often have Nerf gun competitions and the kids go wild, just absolutely nuts. They show up at the events with a whole array of Nerf weapons and we let them kind of go at it in various scenarios.

However, one thing is true at all times. They're afraid of getting hit. And while Nerf guns don't hurt per se, whether they think they will get hurt or they just don't want to get out and miss the rest of the game, they do everything they can possibly do to not get hit.

That being said, the moment one of the adults hands them a shield, their whole demeanor changes. They seem to lose most of that fear they held before. And in some cases they start charging in.

[12:13] They seem to feel invincible throughout all of it because they have this shield in front of them. This is what the Lord is doing when he says his faithfulness is a shield and a buckler.

God through his faithfulness is giving you the shield and or the confidence to trust in him for whenever danger does arrive. The other thing I had a lot of fun with, oops, the other thing I had a lot of fun with, with this Psalm was finding all of the other references throughout scripture.

And honestly, for Psalm 91, there's a lot. There's quite a lot. In this case of verse four, the other place we see the same language used is in Ephesians six, when Paul is talking about the armor of God.

In Ephesians six, verse 16, it says, in all circumstances, take up the shield of faith. Shield of faith. I don't know about the rest of you, but I always understood that particular verse to point towards our faith in God being like a shield against the dangers around us.

But Psalm 91 here is taking it further, or I guess bringing us back to the beginning. It's reminding us that God's faithfulness towards us came first. God's faithfulness should be what gives us the confidence to press forward and find protection in him.

[13:36] As we keep moving forward in verse nine with the how, because you have made the Lord your dwelling place, the most high, who is my refuge. What is a refuge?

What is a dwelling place? A dwelling place is our home. It's our ultimate place of comfort. To dwell somewhere is to make a place your home permanently and continuously return back to that place.

A dwelling place is a place you have put your utmost trust in. You sleep there. You eat there. You raise a family there. You trust the most important parts of your life there.

The psalmist is saying the subject of the psalm has made the Lord their dwelling place. This person has trusted the Lord with their whole being. People do not choose to dwell somewhere that they do not feel secure and safe.

Dwelling in the Lord implies that he is the source of comfort, the source of peace and relaxation, and a place that both the psalmist and the subject of the psalm return to.

[14:42] Here's where things get into the territory where a lot of you are probably more familiar with. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all of your ways. On their hands, they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Some of you in the congregation may have been waiting for these verses. If you know your scripture, you will recognize these verses from Matthew 4, from the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.

When Satan tries to tempt Jesus with these verses, these verses are outlining a divine protection that can only come from God. Whether it be in the form of physical protections from very real dangers, like the one Satan is trying to put Jesus in, or that exists due to the spiritual warfare that goes on all around us.

And this was also happening at that same time between Jesus and Satan. God has the full, supernatural, omnipotent ability to protect us from anything that may come.

To be clear, and I will make this clear later, later on in the sermon, these verses do not mean that we will not see trials or troubles. More specifically, they highlight God's power and sovereignty overall.

[16:03] In accordance with his will, he is capable of sending his angels in people's greatest times of need, both physical and spiritual. Unfortunately for humans, being told this, and being told never fear for I am here, often does not go very far.

Unless there is some form of evidence, or history, or some kind of backed up promise, we may not actually feel very secure when given words in this form.

To solve this, the psalmist goes through the practice of both giving a current promise of God's ability here in the how, as well as giving historical or personal testimony of all that the Lord has done.

The psalms were kept to be corporately performed by the nation of Israel. So even subtle language could serve as a detailed reminder of what the Lord had done for them. This other focus is provided in the when.

The when, in which God provides his blessings and protections, some of the verses point towards a historical reminder. Some verses point towards a future promise. Many of the verses do both.

[17:11] This encouragement evokes many potential feelings within the listener, the reader, the performer, and so on. When we start in verse 3, for he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler.

The snare or trap is a dangerous situation for us spiritually or physically. The fowler or trapper represents those who are out to get you. The wicked often scheme the best way to trip you up. God in both, divine intervention, protected David from Saul as he searched for him high and low. When King Abhab and Jezebel were after Elijah, God protected him with both sustenance and a place to hide.

The psalmist repeats this idea when he's going on in verse 10, saying, no evil shall be allowed to befall you. The schemes of the wicked are not greater than the Lord's power.

The dangers experienced, however, do not just come from evil people, unfortunately. The end of verse 3 says, and from deadly pestilence. This promise is emphasized multiple times throughout this psalm with the discussion of protection from pestilence in verse 3 to the pestilence that stalks in the darkness in verse 6 and no plague will come near your tent in verse 10.

[18:33] A plague or pestilence is a region or world affecting occurrence. It's an event that does not discriminate and it potentially ruins or takes many lives. Just as pestilence was emphasized, the idea of God's protection from these and other natural dangers holds great significance for the nation of Israel.

Those that God chose to protect in his people were protected when God released the 10 plagues upon Egypt. Joseph was used to protect his family in a time of great pestilence and famine.

God even placed rules over Israel to protect them from potential disasters and God has continuously protected his people and remembering his faithfulness helps them to continue to dwell in the Lord.

As we pick apart the ideas of when God protects and cares for us, there is also a dichotomy of this protection shown in verses 5 and 6. You will not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

God protects those that are his from dangers both known and unknown both expected and unexpected both hidden and overt.

[19 : 59] When God chooses to protect those that are his he does not care if the danger is big or little seen or unseen his plan is already being executed and while we may not understand it we are being cared for.

He wants those that are his in reading this psalm to remember this it's as if he's saying remember all of the times you witnessed my protection I was also there in the times that you were unaware and then he states in verse 13 you will tread on the lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

Not only will God protect you from these dangerous but through God's power you will be victorious against those who wish you harm no matter what form they come in the lion and the serpent can be seen as analogy of different types of aggression or danger that presents itself.

The lion is an imposing strong danger that can confront you head on the serpent is a silent danger that strikes when you least expect it. However they pale in comparison to God and the strength or wisdom that he provides in our times of need.

Moving through this a reminder of God's sovereignty though is due here as well. The other times that we see the language of plague and destruction and pestilence used throughout scripture is when God himself is executing the judgment.

[21 : 25] Going back to the ten plagues in Egypt it is a clear distinct judgment on those that God deemed wicked. After Korah's rebellion in Numbers a plague broke out killing many until God through his instruction to Moses and Aaron intervened.

Or after David sinned God sent a pestilence killing 70,000 people until God told the angel of destruction to stop. We should be reminded that this language not only applies to the external dangers of the world or that those that wish to hurt us.

The Lord may also choose to use these devastating actions for himself in a form of divine justice against the wicked. The reminders in these verses are reserved for those who have chosen the Lord.

Those that make the Lord their dwelling place and their place of security. We have no reason to fear that which lies ahead because we are secure in his presence. God is telling us look and see all that I have done.

I have protected you in your times of greatest need. Then when I execute my justice those that remain in me are protected from these things. For he says a thousand may fall at your side ten thousand at your right hand but it will not come near you.

[22 : 45] You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. A little bit of a late addition to the sermon here I was thinking about.

In the book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, C.S. Lewis has a really great analogy for God through the character of Aslan. Early in the book when the kids are talking with the beavers they discuss Aslan and who he is.

He says Aslan, Mr. Beaver, said Aslan is a lion, the lion, the great lion. Then Susan says, ooh, I thought he was a man. Is he quite safe?

I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion. Safe, said Mr. Beaver. Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't safe, but he's good. He's the king, I tell you.

In the same way, God is the king over us all. From his own testimony provided throughout the Bible, he deserves a respect for his power and his ability to execute judgment, but he is also good and we should have confidence in that.

[23 : 53] The psalm closes out with the promise. Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him. I will protect him because he knows my name.

When he calls to me, I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will rescue him and honor him. With long life, I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.

The tone shift here is significant. We have moved from a passage of guidance in personal or historical testimony from someone to a response from God himself.

Verses 14 through 16 are God's promise to those that are his and abide in him. God's response in this psalm contains six I will statements that have eight promises within them.

I will deliver him is the number one. I will protect him. I will be with him in time of trouble. I will rescue him and honor him. I will satisfy him with long life and show him my salvation.

[24 : 56] We can and should take this as a pledge from God to his people. When God makes a promise, we know that he will come through with it. This is the ultimate reason why we should feel

secure in the Lord.

God has proven himself throughout history, including during our current lives. God is promising to be there for us and to bless us in our lives. With these promises, you can see the progression of them from our condition here on earth through the eternal.

God is promising his future salvation and gift of eternal life on those who believe in him. God does it mean to dwell in the shelter of the Most High?

God tells us here and gives us what we need. He says, because he holds fast to me in love. The first requirement is to love the Lord.

Loving means to make God the most important part of your life, obeying his commands and giving him the worship that he is owed. The second requirement being, because he knows my name.

[26:06] What does it mean to know the name of the Lord though? This implies an intimate relationship with God. To get that relationship with him, you need to spend time with him. You need to walk with him.

And for some throughout scripture, this meant even directly experiencing him. For example, Moses experienced God in ways that we can only imagine.

And this ended up setting him apart and placed him in a spot of importance for the execution of God's will. Through this, God did wonderful things, and he protected Moses in the midst of his own stumbling.

Moses experienced the consequences of his action, but because of God's relationship with him, God never abandoned him. The third requirement being when he calls to me, places the duty upon us.

God promises to answer when we call him. Those who love and know him need to go to him when we're in times of trouble. God will care for us and protect us when times are tough, but we also need to ask him for help in those times.

[27:14] Then, once we have asked, we must continue to trust God with what both he does and does not choose to do. We need to trust in God's answer. Once again, this is all going back to the faith in God.

This is God's answer to what it means to dwell in his presence and to make the Lord our refuge. It becomes a circular relationship. God promises to care for those who dwell in and love him.

Those dwelling in him find protection and guidance in his care. And then because he protects us, we feel security in his promises. And then that security and trust should draw us closer to God.

And then getting closer to God, we will get to know him better. And those who know him, he promises to protect and answer them. And so the cycle continues.

For us today, we have the privilege as Christians to see God's partial fulfillment of his promises.

Through this, the end of Psalm 91, the promise changes into the who.

[28:21] The who is Jesus. We get sight of how God ultimately plans to execute his salvation. Going back to Matthew 4, which I only touched on, he's laying the groundwork for Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises set in place here.

When Satan quotes verses 11 and 12, Satan himself is drawing the connection between Jesus and Psalm 91 and as God's promised Messiah and the method of his salvation.

Jesus then reminds Satan not to test the Lord and shows us that God serves and protects his people according to his will, not ours. Later in the discussions with his disciples, much later in his ministry, Jesus uses very similar language to Psalm 91.

in doing so, he's relaying God's promises to his followers.

In John 14, 18 through 24, Jesus discusses what it means to love him and the Father.

[29:38] And then he says, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.

If we dwell with God, Jesus promises to dwell within us. Then later in John 15 to 17, Jesus is continuing to tell us what it means to love and abide in him.

He says that if we abide in him, he promises we will bear fruit through his power, implying that we should have confidence in his ability to act in our lives. And then he says if we abide in him, ask whatever we wish and it will be done for you.

In John 15, Jesus is telling us what it means to love and abide in him and how to come to know God. All of this is occurring during the Last Supper and during the Last Supper, Jesus is giving his disciples and us what we need to have confidence and security in the Lord.

While this is different in many ways, it is the same message that is coming through in Psalm 91. It is further telling us of the promises God has laid out being fulfilled through Christ and to all those who dwell with him today.

[30 : 55] So as we bring this down to an application, in order to apply this, I want to ask you a question. Is there anything you fear that is keeping you from trusting him?

Is there anything in your life that is getting in the way of trusting Jesus with your security in life? This morning, ironically enough, was probably a great practice in that security for me.

And while it was a relatively minor occurrence, I get nervous before I come and do this each year with you all. And in that nervousness, I was trying to control my morning and my situation in my own power.

Which is kind of ironic because of preaching on finding security in the Lord and trusting him rather than trusting in myself. So, you know, while the situation was tense this morning, multiple times I had to take a step back.

And pray. And just trust that everything was going to work out. His message was ultimately going to be delivered. We would get to church on time. The kids would cooperate, at least I hope so. But I had to trust the Lord with that.

[32 : 09] So it was kind of like a little bit of an ironic eye-opener for me this morning in execution of my daily life before coming up here in front of you all.

So in the totality of Psalm 91, the truth is made clear that we have security in Christ. When life gets hard, we must go to him.

It is only through Christ that we may find eternal peace, both here on earth and in eternity. for all of us, I can confidently say that we're terrible at doing this, as evidenced by my mourning.

We try to accomplish life on our own, and in our own power, we fail. Those who don't trust the Lord may put on brave faces and present themselves with confidence, yet inside everyone knows that they're a wreck.

The mental load of life wears all of us down. And even those who on the outside may be credited with bravery greater than those that may be around them, will talk about how inside they're shaking in their boots.

[33 : 17] Us as Christians know all too well the weight of the world around us, the dangers that life presents, and in some cases the persecution from those around us. We, however, here get to have an advantage.

When we choose to dwell in the Lord, we get to have confidence in our eternal security in the Lord. Jesus promised his disciples that they would face danger in persecution.

In Luke 21, 16 to 17, it says, you will be delivered up even by your parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you will be put to death.

You will be hated all for my namesake. Doesn't sound fun, does it? This doesn't quite sound like the promise that was laid out in Psalm 91.

We just finished discussing all of the ways in which God promises to protect us. But Jesus ends this discussion in verses 18 and 19 saying, but not a hair on your head will perish.

[34 : 25] By your endurance, you will gain your lives. Here he's laying out a promise for our lives. We have an eternal security despite anything that happens on this earth.

When we abide in God's love, our earthly bodies may pass away, but God promises that those who love him, know him, and call to him, will be shown God's salvation.

Or as Jesus said, in our endurance in the pursuit of him, we will gain eternal lives. This is why we should feel secure in him. That when we find ourselves slipping and allow that which we fear more than God to influence our lives, we should call to him in prayer, asking him for peace and security that only he can provide.

If we go back to verses 5 and 6, you will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

God here is not promising that we will never experience times of trouble in this life. He doesn't promise that we will never suffer. He promises that we will not fear it.

[35 : 35] Then we can have confidence in God's testimony towards us that fulfills both his promises now and forever, in spite of whatever the world or Satan may throw at us here and now.

Let's pray. Dear Lord, we just ask in this time that you would pour out your reminders of your power and your grace and your love over us and that we would, through those things and through

examples like Psalm 91, just find security in your care.

That when we are having times of trouble or times of need or times of nervousness or times when we just can't do it ourselves, we reach out to you and call to you because our relationship with you is secure and that if need be, we pray through things like Psalm 91 that will give us the confidence we need to press forward and have hope in the eternal security that you have provided us.

I ask for your blessings over everybody here today and everybody who could not be here today. In Jesus' name, amen.