

Psalm 91: The Song of God's Protection

We welcome all our visitors this morning, and hope you brought your Bibles. We really use the Bible here. If you come to our church very long, you will discover that.

This morning, let us open to a special, very beloved chapter and find what the Lord has there for us. Psalm 91. We will begin with verse 1:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Oh, what a glorious promise that is! Are there not times when you need a friend! times when you need a place of refuge from the cares of life? Oh, my friend, you can find it in God! Psalm 27, verse 5:

"In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me."

Here on earth, the pavilion of the Lord, the place where we can hide, is the time when we are alone with God in prayer. Psalm 31:20 says we can be "in the secret of His presence." That is what we want, dear friends: the secret of His presence! Turn with me to Psalm 32, verse 7:

"Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble."

When the hard times hit and troubles seem to pile up, we can go to our hiding place and there be safe! It matters not how serious the problems you may encounter. In God, you can have peace; in Him you can find solutions. He will be your hiding place.

The promise is given in Psalm 17:8, that you can go to Him and cry, "Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings,"—and He will do it!

But there is more. Psalm 91, verse 2:

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust."

How can we find a better helper than our God? The marvel is that so many stay far from Him. Yet He is loving and kindly, so willing to help them. Isaiah 26:3-4 adds to the promise. Let us turn to it:

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."

And there is more to the promise. Consider the next verse:

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Who can match His loving care? Who can equal the strength of that power? He can provide us with protection that we could find nowhere else! In thankfulness, we cry out, "I shall not be moved!" Turn with me to Psalm 62, verses 5 to 8:

"My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense. 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."

Our God is not only a hiding place from the storm and a rock of refuge, He is also a tower of strength. When Satan comes to tempt and harass, we run to Jesus and find all the help we need! According to Psalm 61:3, He is that "strong tower" that we can run to and be safe.

Prophets and Kings, 571: "Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands."

Turn with me to Isaiah 12:2.

"Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation."

In Psalm 91, verses 1 and 2, we have found the most thrilling assurances of God's protecting care! But there is more courage in this chapter for us. Verse 3:

"Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence."

This world is full of most terrible dangers of all kinds. But our heavenly Father declares that He will protect us from them all! The fowler goes out to catch the little birds, and he uses a wire snare to entrap them. How like the fowler is Satan and his evil methods! But in God we can be safe. Psalm 124, verses 2 and 3:

"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us."

But what happened when they tried to overcome us? We fled to the Lord! Read verse 7:

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers."

Beware of the first approach of temptation. Immediately cry to the Lord for help. Resolutely determine that you will stand faithful to Him! Even if, in the past, you have been overcome, God can set you free. If the devil attacks you unawares, flee quickly to Jesus. Do not wait! The promise is given in 2 Timothy 2:26, that those who have been taken captive in the snare of the devil can be delivered by God.

Cling to Christ your Saviour, trust in His promises and obey the commands of His Written Word, and you will be secure.

Counsels on Diet and Foods, 411: “Those who take God at His Word, and obey His commandments with the whole heart, will be blessed. He will be their shield of protection.”

Remember, He is the hiding place. There is no other! Flee to Him, and He will cover thee with His wings. Psalm 91, verse 4:

“He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.”

How can we remain under His protecting wings? The rest of the verse tells how to do it:

“ . . . Trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”

It is only in humble reliance upon God and obedience to His Inspired Books that we can have continued protection. God cannot protect us when we are in willful sin.

The verse said, “under His wings shalt thou trust.” And those wings are powerful! They can provide all the protection you need. Jesus explained this in a most beautiful illustration, Matthew 23, verse 37:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee. How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

There is both a sweet promise there, and a solemn warning. All of us have seen a mother hen cover her tiny chicks as they run to her for protection. Be humble enough to be His little chick! Run to Him, stay close by Him, and you will be safe.

But, in the passage we just read, Jesus spoke of those who steadfastly refused to come to Him for forgiveness and strength to obey. Because they refused, their hearts became hardened. Oh, my friends, we never want that for ourselves or our loved ones! Keep your heart warm and tender, ever pressing close to Jesus, ever listening to His words as you read His Written Word.

But there is even more to the promise of the wings. Your God will not only hide you under His wings, He will bear you up on His wings! Turn with me to Deuteronomy 32, verses 10 to 12:

“He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him.”

Oh, what love, what wondrous love is this! To think that God would so care for us! We, who have been so ungrateful so many times; yet He loves us with such an everlasting love. If we will let Him, He will *shelter us under His wings* from the power of Satan. And He will *bear us up on His wings*—strengthen us to obey His Ten Commandment Law and do all that He asks of us! And what peace and happiness it will bring us! Turn to Psalm 146, verses 5 and 6:

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God; which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; which

keepeth truth for ever.”

It says He will keep the truth with us forever; that is, if we will let Him keep the truth in us. As we cooperate, Jesus will, by His grace, empower us to do all that He asks of us in His Word.

A whole range of Christian experience is to be found in the 91st Psalm. In verses 1 and 2, we have surveyed God’s protecting power amid the troubles of life. In verses 3 and 4, we have found that He will protect us from Satan when he draws near.

And now, beginning with verse 5, we discover that our God will care for us even amid the greatest tragedies of life.

Psalm 91, verse 5:

“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day.”

As it was in the days of Noah, so it is today. The earth is filled with violence. Sin abounds on every hand. But we can have the protection of God. In Psalm 121:6, the psalmist tells us that “the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.” Nothing can hurt your soul—if you are sheltered in God’s protecting hand. Isaiah 43, verse 2:

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire; thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

Amid the greatest crises of life, God will see you through them all. And in that final crisis—when you come to the end of your life,—He will be there by your side. Fear not the flood, fear not the fire; the God of heaven is by your side! If you will be willing and obedient, He will be with you all the way to end. Even in the moment of death, you will find it has no sting. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 55:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

What a promise; what a promise is ours! Psalm 112, verse 7:

“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”

—And that is what it takes. Keeping the eye fixed on Jesus!

And, oh, how we need that help. Psalm 91, verses 6 and 7:

“Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.”

The promise of protection is to the humble, repentant, who in simple faith in Christ’s merits obey the law of God. They need fear no man, for God is their fortress and protection.

3 Testimonies, 373: “How graciously and tenderly our heavenly Father deals with His children! He preserves them from a thousand dangers to them unseen and guards them from the subtle arts of Satan, lest they should be destroyed.”

The evildoers will fall, but the obedient—those

enabled to be obedient through the grace of Christ—will be protected in the evil day. Psalm 91, verse 8:

“Only with thine eyes shall thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.”

You will see it, but you will not experience it. The terrible end which is destined for the wicked will not be yours. You will be safe in that dark hour. Proverbs 3, verses 25 and 26:

“Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.”

And the protection extends to physical health, beyond that of others, to the extent that we obey the physical laws which govern our being. Psalm 91, verses 9 and 10:

“Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee; neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”

Why will you receive that protection? The answer is given: “Because thou has made the Lord . . . thy habitation!” When you make God your dwelling place, He makes you His fortress. And, because of your decision to let Him be the one in charge of your life, “there shall no evil befall thee” which can overtake thy soul and destroy thee. The plague of sin need not come nigh thy dwelling. Resting in Christ, you rest secure. Proverbs 12:21 says, “There shall no evil happen to the just.” Look at this promise: Psalm 71, verse 3:

“Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou hast given commandment to save me, for Thou art my rock and my fortress.”

Do you see the cause-effect relationship there? Because you determine that God will be your habitation, the one to whom you continually resort, the one to whom you continually run for help. Because you do this, He gives command to save you. Wonderful, wonderful promise! You choose to become His little child,—so He chooses to become your rock and your fortress. It is a contract between you and your God.

Next, we go to Psalm 91, verses 11 and 12,—and there we find that the promise is even broader than we had imagined!

“For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

Our wonderful Saviour will keep us in “all thy ways.” But what does “all thy ways” mean? People sometimes get into a lot of ways they should stay away from. It means “all of God’s ways, all the ways of God’s leading.”

This is an important matter, for Satan tried to twist the meaning of that verse when he tempted Christ. Turn with me to the book of Matthew, chapter 4, verse 3:

“And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

Satan was tempting Christ to stop trusting in God to guide His life. He said to Him just as he says to us: “Run ahead of God and take care of yourself. Do what you want; you’ll make good decisions. Don’t bother asking God for guidance and help. Take care of yourself; no one else is going to do it for you!”

That was the temptation. How did Christ meet it? Verse 4 was Jesus’ reply:

“But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Christ was quoting the Bible when He said that. He was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.

So Satan decided to quote Scripture also. Verses 5 and 6:

“Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple. And saith unto Him, If thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written:

“ ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.’ ”

Satan omitted the part about “in all thy ways,” when he quoted Psalm 91. That verse means “in the ways of God,” “not in our ways.” Heaven protects us when we are walking in obedience to God, not when we are foolishly take risks on our own.

We repeatedly hear people blaming the Lord, because He did not protect them when they did something dangerous and got into trouble. But the Lord does not protect us when we are presumptuous.

There is a difference between faith and presumption. Here is a statement from *Desire of Ages* which explains this:

“Faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. For presumption is Satan’s counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God’s promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin.” *Desire of Ages*, 126.

All God’s promises are offered us on condition of obedience. And it is the Inspired Writings that we are to obey. Our only safety is to remain in the path of obedience. A little before that statement, we read this:

“When Satan quoted the promise, ‘He shall give His angels charge over thee,’ he omitted the words, ‘to keep thee in all Thy ways’; that is, in all the ways of God’s choosing. Jesus refused to go outside the path of obedience . . . He would not place Himself, unbidden, in a position that would necessitate the interposition of His Father to save Him from death. He would not force Providence to come to His rescue, and thus fail of giving man an example of trust and submission.” *Desire of Ages*, 125.

We are seeing most wonderful promises of God’s protecting care, all through Psalm 91. But that protection is for those who, by faith in Christ’s enabling

grace, obey the laws of God, both physical and moral.

And, oh, my friend,—those promises are for you and me today, to the degree that we will come in daily repentance to God, humbly submit to His molding, and become His little children!

The promise is that God's angels will bear us up in their arms. Elsewhere in Scripture, we are told that God Himself will bear us up in His arms! Let me quickly read you three examples:

Deuteronomy 1:31: "In the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son."

—Our God holds us in His arms, the way a man carries his small son in his arms!

Exodus 19:4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself."

—On eagle's wings, my friends; on eagle's wings!

Isaiah 63:9: "He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

"He bare them." That means carried them. Now, returning to Psalm 91, we find still more promises to the obedient! Verses 13 and 14:

"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

"Because he hath set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known My name."

David said he was delivered out of the paw of the bear (1 Samuel 17:37), and the Apostle Paul said he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion (2 Timothy 4:17). And here in Psalm 91:13, it says we shall not only conquer lions, but even the old dragon! In the strength of Christ—as we obey His holy Word—we can have victory over the temptations of the devil, and be perfect in Christ. Jude 24:

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

What a promise is that! If we will be faithful, God will be with us to the end. Isaiah 33, verses 15 and 16:

"He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly . . . he shall dwell on high. His place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks. Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

But there are still two more glorious promises in Psalm 91. Verse 15 for the first of them:

"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver Him, and honor him."

To the humble, trustful, obedient child of God, the Sovereign of heaven bends low and says, "Call upon Me when you need help!" Here is the promise,

Psalm 50, verse 15:

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

Does God hear when you call upon Him? Psalm 18, verse 6:

"In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God. He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears."

Oh, fear not; fear not! You are the beloved of God! You are precious to Him. For you Christ died, and He will be with you to the end. Read that precious promise again: Isaiah 43, verse 2:

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

And now we come to the final promise in Psalm 91, verse 16:

"With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

God's plan is not only to help you in this life, but to extend it! He has a plan for your life and, to the degree that you and I will cooperate with Him, He will use us for years to come! Sweet, sweet promise!

And He will "show you His salvation." After this life will come an eternity beyond.

At His Second Coming, Jesus will return to earth and resurrect all those who, during their lives, have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. They were willing to forsake the follies of earth for clean, honest, obedient living. Truly, a sacrifice which was no sacrifice!

And, in return, God promises to give His faithful ones far happier lives here on earth and the promise of eternal life beyond.

We turn to Psalm 21, verses 4 through 6. The passage is talking about David the king, but the promise applies to all of God's faithful ones:

"He asketh life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in Thy salvation. Honour and majesty hast Thou laid upon him. For Thou hast made him most blessed for ever. Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance."

If we will be faithful and obedient, we shall eat the fruit of the heavenly land. The promise is that we shall have "length of days, for ever and ever" (Psalm 21:4). Life without end. A life that measures with the life of God.

This is the message of Psalm 91. — *vf*

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