

DML970: Preaching the Psalms

Assignment One: Psalm 91 Sermon

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Intended audience: Women's Ministry Event

Good evening, ladies,

We welcome you and hope that you are feeling right at home. Tonight, we are going to spend some time in Psalm 91. Let me start out by praying for our time.

Father, thank you for this time. Thank you for the ladies gathered here. Thank you for walking with us through this day. Thank you for joining us tonight. We invite you to pull up a chair at every table and join our dialogue. We love you and desperately need you. In the strong name of Jesus. Amen

Before we read our text, I'd like to ask you to think about two questions. I invite you all to write down your answers and/or make a mental note for each question:

First - Where do you live?

And

Second - Who do you trust?

(Repeat questions)

Thanks for your participation. Hold on to your answers, we will revisit them near the end of our time.

Now let's look at Psalm 91. Our journey will include an examination of the beginning two verses, the middle eleven verses and the last three verses. We'll work with the New American Standard 1995 translation. Try closing your eyes and focus on the words.

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 it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper

And from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with His pinions,

And under His wings you may seek refuge;

His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

You will not be afraid of the terror by night,

Or of the arrow that flies by day;

Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,

Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

A thousand may fall at your side

And ten thousand at your right hand,

But it shall not approach you.

You will only look on with your eyes

And see the recompense of the wicked.

For you have made the Lord, my refuge,

Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

No evil will befall you,

Nor will any plague come near your tent.

For He will give His angels charge concerning you,

To guard you in all your ways.

They will bear you up in their hands,

That you do not strike your foot against a stone.

You will tread upon the lion and cobra,

The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

“Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him;

I will set him securely on high because he has known My name.

“He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble;

I will rescue him and honor him.

“With a long life I will satisfy him

And let him see My salvation.”

As I spent time in scripture preparing for this talk, I found myself thinking a lot about the first verse: He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

What does it mean to dwell in the shelter of the Most High?

It will help to unpack a couple of things.

- What does it mean to dwell?
- Who is inviting us to dwell?

Let’s start with:

What does it mean to dwell?

To dwell means to remain for a time and it also means to live as a resident.

Now let’s think about:

Who is inviting us to dwell?

The Most High, the Almighty-God Himself is inviting us to make His dwelling place our home.

The second stanza emphasizes that when you choose to remain for a time or live as a resident in the shelter of our Almighty God you “abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” Stated another

way: You will rest in the protection of Almighty God. Let's personalize verse 1. Please read this with me [projected on a screen]

- When I **choose to live** in the shelter of the Most High God, I will **rest in the protection** of Almighty God.

Note the bold words: Choose to live and rest in the protection.

As I pondered this verse I told God – Yes, God, I want to live in your house, but I don't know how. Will you teach me? And you know what... He did! As I walked through my days I prayed: God help me live in your house and the result was peace. Amazing peace. Was everything perfect? **No**. My days didn't go as planned. My computer froze in the middle of a Zoom meeting (*that I was hosting!!*) but it was ok. There was still amazing peace. Hold on to those thoughts as we move on to verse 2.

I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!"

The Message translation of this verse reads:

"God, you're my refuge.

I trust in you and I'm safe!"

God as a refuge and one deserving of our trust are frequent themes throughout the Psalms.

Again, we are going to take some time to unpack a few more things:

- What is a refuge?
- What is a fortress?
- What does it mean to trust?

So what is a refuge?

A refuge is shelter or protection from danger or distress. In my life, God as refuge means he's a place that I can retreat. A place of calm and rest. He is always a safe place no matter what is going on in my life.

- When I hurt.
- When I am tired.
- When I am confused.

God is a place of calm, rest, love, and security.

What about a fortress?

A fortress is also protection. It is a secure place. A stronghold. In war one might hear terms like a fortress or a fort. A place you can live, safe from the attack of your enemies.

Now let's think about what does it mean to trust?

To trust means to place confidence in; to depend upon; to be certain.

So, what does it look like when you trust God? Trust means you believe God when He tells you who He is and what He will do for you.

You are confident. You are certain that God will “rescue you from hidden traps and shield you from deadly hazards.” **You are confident. You are certain** that God’s “huge outstretched arms protect you – under them you’re perfectly safe; His arms fend off all harm.”

Let's be clear. This does not mean that your life will be challenge free.

- The cancer diagnosis may come
- Your children may not walk with the LORD

- Work may be challenging
- Battling depression may be part of your story

The challenges of life will come. **There is a 100% guarantee!**

And when they come, **You can be confident. You can be certain** God is God and He will do exactly what He said.

- No matter what it looks like
- No matter what it feels like
- No matter how long it takes
- No matter who is with you
- No matter who is against you

So, let's review the meaning of verses 1 and 2:

When I **choose to live** in the shelter of the Most High God, I will **rest in the protection** of Almighty God. He is a safe place where I am protected from my enemies. I am **confident** in who He is, and I am **certain** that He will do what He said.

And... what did He say He will do? Let's take a look.

In verses 3 & 4, we see that God will deliver us from those setting traps for us and pestilence/plagues. In the same way that birds protect their babies under their wings, God protects us. Underneath His wings we are safe and secure. His faithfulness is our **complete protection**.

Verses 5-9 remind us that when we choose to live in the shelter of the Most High God we can rest in the protection of Almighty God no matter what happens during the day or night.

Verses 10-13 help us understand we can be confident in what God will do for us. He will protect us from evil and command His angels to protect us. From those who intend to harm us and those intent on destroying us – **He will protect us**. I think here it's important to reiterate the importance of being **confident and certain** that God will do these things for us. **Period**. What we see and understand in the moment is not always reliable. Think with me about the story of a farmer.

One day, his horse ran away beyond the fields and across the border. His neighbors rushed to his side and cried, "How horrible! What a tragedy!," but he simply stated, "It's too soon to tell". Several weeks later, the horse returned. But it wasn't alone—it was accompanied by a splendid stallion! Well, this caused the neighbors to exclaim with joy at his great fortune. The farmer just replied, "It's too soon to tell." His response was confounding to the neighbors, who scratched their heads and returned to their labor. The farmer's household was richer with such a fine horse.

His son took to the task of training the horse for work in the fields. One day he was thrown by the stallion and his hip was broken. This appeared to be a catastrophe to the neighbors, who knew the farmer relied on his son to harvest the crops. The farmer took in the situation and thought to himself, "It's too soon to tell."

Soon after, nomad warriors stormed the nearby border and all able-bodied men from the farmer's village took up weapons and went into battle. The Chinese frontiersmen lost nine of every ten men. Only because of the son's injury did the father and son survive to take care of each other.

In our short lives it may be “**too soon to tell**” what things mean. God doesn’t often tell us “why” but He repeatedly assures us that we can be certain God is God and He will do exactly what He said.

I really like The Message translation for the last three verses of this Psalm.

“If you’ll hold on to me for dear life,” says God,

“I’ll get you out of any trouble.

I’ll give you the best of care

if you’ll only get to know and trust me.

Call me and I’ll answer, be at your side in bad times;

I’ll rescue you, then throw you a party.

I’ll give you a long life,

give you a long drink of salvation!”

In our journey through Psalm 91 have you noticed what we must do and what God does?

We are asked to:

- Love God
- Abide in God
- Trust God
- Call upon God

In response God does all the heavy lifting:

God

- Delivers
- Covers
- Hides

- Protects
- Guards
- Answers
- Rescues
- Honors

We can be **confident**. We can be **certain** when we **choose to live** in the shelter of the Most High God, we will **rest in the protection** of Almighty God.

So, let's revisit the questions from earlier:

First - Where do you live?

And

Second - Who do you trust?

As you leave this place today, I hope you have been encouraged to think more deeply about what it means to live with God. **When** the challenges of life come remember you can be **confident**, and you can be **certain** that God is God and He will do exactly what He said.

In closing I would like to share a quote from Charles Spurgeon:

“No angel will give in his account with sorrow, saying “I could not keep him; the stones were too many, his feet too feeble, the way too long.” No, we shall be kept to the end; for in addition to angels; we have the safeguard of their Lord.”

Let's close in prayer.

References

[Chinese Proverb, Too Soon to Tell – EU’s Motivational Monday Quote](#)

Spurgeon, C. (1997), Spurgeon’s Sermon Notes: Over 250 sermons including notes, commentary and illustrations, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.