

## **Trusting God's Sovereignty**

### **Part 1**

**Text: Psalm 91:1-16** “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; 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. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. 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. 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. 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. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation...”

**Purpose:** The purpose of Psalm 91 is to remind God's people that since He is the only source of true safety, they must cultivate a daily pattern of trust in His care and encourage others from this source of strength in the face of terrifying uncertainties.

**Proposition:** God wants us to daily trust in His providential care.

**Interrogative:** How can we do this?

#### **Part 1: An introduction to the Psalm:**

We don't know who actually penned **Psalm 91**. Some have surmised it was penned by David, others that it was penned by Moses. Moses knew what it was like to be assaulted in the wilderness by the Egyptians and the Amalekites. David knew what it was like to be assaulted by the Philistines. Both men witnessed terrible pandemic diseases that rushed quickly through Israel's populations. In **Numbers 16**, approximately 15,000 people died and in **1 Chronicles 21**, 70,000 men perished. Interestingly, in both cases, the plagues were sent by God to humble the people and were stopped as a direct response to the intercession of godly people in the nation. In **Number 16**, the scriptures say: “And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed...”

- **As we move into the details of Psalm 91, please keep these two stories in the back of your mind as references that are related to this Psalm.**

#### **Part 2: Let's break down the Psalm into its basic thought progression: Five Divisions**

**Division 1: The psalmist declared a wonderful promise about God: 91:1** “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty...

- **Part 1: A Condition:** “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High...”
- **This statement is probably a reference a place of intimate communion with God or to the habitual practice of finding refuge in Him.**
  - **Three essential facts about a person’s heart for this to be true:**
    - **They must personally know the Lord**
    - **They must have a continual sense of vulnerability and dependence upon Him.**
    - **They must see that communion with God and trust in His providential care is their greatest need and continual hope.**
- **Part 2: A Promise:** “Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty...”
- **This statement is probably a reference to God’s loving care of those with whom He has entered into covenant: Ruth 2:11-12** “Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust...” **Psalm 17:5-8** “Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings...”

**Division 2: The psalmist resolved to continue to live in the light of that promise he has just proclaimed: 91:2** “I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust...”

- **Part 1: The psalmist wanted to publicly express His confidence in the Lord:** I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and fortress...
- **Part 2: The psalmist was committing to continuing to live according to His former confidence:** “In him will I trust...”

**Division 3: The Psalmist purposed to be a comforter and an encourager to those who were troubled: 91:3-8** “Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; 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. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked...”

- **1 Thessalonians 5:14** “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded (discouraged), support the weak, be patient toward all men...”
- **Observation 1: The Psalmist turned his attention to encouraging a friend:** “Surely he will deliver thee...”

- **Observation 2: The Psalmist spoke about two different categories of calamity:** “He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence...”
  - **Category 1: A calamity motivated by premeditated evil:** “Snare of the fowler...”
  - **Category 2: A calamity that cannot be controlled by human will:** “Noisome Pestilence...”
- **Observation 3: The Psalmist reminded his friend that in spite of his lack of internal peace, God would take care of Him:** “He shall cover thee with his feather... **Psalm 36:7** “How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings...”
- **Observation 4: When godly people struggle with anxiety about their current situation, being reminded of God’s word is their greatest comfort:** “His truth shall be thy shield and buckler...”
  - **A shield and buckler are defensive tools to protect soldiers in battle Ephesians 6: 6:16** “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked...”

**A Biblical example of reminding ourselves and other of truth:**

**Matthew 6:25-34** “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof...”

**Six Simple Facts to Remember When We Worry**

- **God commands us not to be consumed with worry.**
- **If God takes care of His most insignificant creatures, why wouldn’t He take care of you?**
- **You are powerless to change anything by worrying, so don’t waste your time.**
- **The way you face difficult times should be different than the way people who don’t know God face difficulties, so let your faith shape your reactions.**
- **If you will put eternal matters first, God will take care of the temporal matters.**
- **Don’t try to bear the burden of tomorrow’s unknowns. God’s daily grace will sustain you.**

**Conclusion:** God wants you to daily trust in His providential care.

- **Let's develop the daily practice of finding our refuge in Him.**
- **Let's continue day by day in those good patterns of thinking.**
- **Let's be sources of encouragement for those who are discouraged or afraid.**
- **Let's be well equipped with the scriptures to remind those whom we love of God's good hand of care over His people.**

## Part 2

- **Observation 5: Those who have their thinking rooted in truth will have an unshakeable source of confidence, in the most debilitating trials they could ever face:** "Thou shalt not be afraid..."
  - **Type 1: The fear of surrounding uncertainty that you cannot see:** "Terror by night..."
  - **Type 2: The fear of surrounding dangers that you can see:** "Arrow that flieth by day..."
  - **Type 3: The fear of uncontrollable diseases:** "Pestilence that walketh in darkness..."
  - **Type 4: The fear of watching everything around you fall apart:** "Destruction that wasteth at noonday..."
- **Observation 6: God manages all circumstances, even the most terrifying:** "A thousand shall fall at thy side...but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shall thou behold and see the reward of the wicked..."
  - **God is actively involved in the limiting and allowing of difficult circumstances, and has purposes for what happens. Numbers 16:46-50** "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and **go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.** And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; **and the plague was stayed...**" **Romans 8:28** "We know that **all things work together for good** to them that love God, to them who are the **called according to his purpose...**"

**Division 4: Because the Psalmist had confidence in God's character and ways, he again re-assured his friend that God was going to take care of him: 91:9-13** "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. <sup>11</sup> 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. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet..."

- **He restated the condition:** "Because thou hast..."
- **He restated the promise:** There shall no evil befall thee...

- **He explained the means that God used behind the scenes to defend His people:** For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways...

**Division 5: The Psalmist ended the Psalm in the strongest way possible, by recording not simply his own encouragements to His friend, but God’s assurance of His providential care: 91:14-16** “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. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation...”

- **God assured the Psalmist that He intimately knew his friend:**
  - **His friend loved God:** “Because he hath set his love upon me...”
  - **His friend knew God intimately:** “He hath known my name...”
  - **His friend believed He needed God and had established a reputation of fleeing to God in desperate times:** “He shall call upon me...”
- **God assured the Psalmist that He would actively, consistently, and personally act on behalf of his friend:**
  - **Way 1: Whether from, in, or through trials: God delivers His children:** “Therefore will I deliver him...”
  - **Way 2: God is attentive to the cries of His children and answers their prayers:** “I will answer him...”
  - **Way 3: No matter what is going on, God walks with His children:** “I will be with him in trouble...”
  - **Way 4: God will put tremendous weight on the prayers of His children:** “I will deliver him and honor him...”
  - **Way 5: God will lengthen the days of those who walk with Him and trust in His care:** “With long life will I satisfy him...”
  - **Way 6: God will use the trials of life to teach us that He is the God who delivers His people:** “And show him my salvation...”

**Conclusion:** Let’s practically apply this Psalm: God wants you to daily trust in His providential care.

- We can trust God no matter what we face.
- We can have strength and stability no matter the uncertainties we face.
- Let’s remember that even godly people can experience deep fears and need to constantly be reminded of who God is and how He works.
- Let’s remember that in uncertain times, we can be instruments of calm and encouragement to struggling Christians.
- Let’s remember that it is only through testing, that we can understand in an experiential way that God is sovereign and lovingly cares for His people.