**The Only Safe Place Series**

**“God’s Protection”**

**Introduction**

Last week I began a new series of sermons entitled “The Only Safe Place” looking at Psalm 91 to discover God’s Presence, God’s Protection, and God’s promises. Psalm 91 has been a source of comfort and encouragement throughout the ages for those who face the snare of the trapper, deadly pestilence, terror, and violent attack. In the first four verses of Psalm 91 God invites us to enjoy His presence as we experience times of turmoil.

*1He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.* ***2****I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!”****3****For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence.* ***4****He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.*

This morning we will look at verses five through thirteen that describe God’s protection. Remember that Psalm 91 is written in the style of Hebrew Poetry. The key to understanding Hebrew Poetry is that the Poet is concerned with matching ideas instead of matching words that rhyme. Hebrew Poets are “wordsmiths” or “thought-smiths” that use words to create visual images to create mental pictures that reinforce the main point of the poem.

Hear now the Word of God- Psalm 91.5-13:

***5****You will not be afraid of the terror by night,
Or of the arrow that flies by day;****6****Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.****7****A thousand may fall at your side
And ten thousand at your right hand,
But it shall not approach you.****8****You will only look on with your eyes
And see the recompense of the wicked.****9****For you have made the Lord, my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place.****10****No evil will befall you,
Nor will any plague come near your tent.*

***11****For He will give His angels charge concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways.****12****They will bear you up in their hands,
That you do not strike your foot against a stone.****13****You will tread upon the lion and cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.*

**The Pattern of the Poem**

While some may look at these verses as the Psalmist rambling and repeating himself this section is a masterful poem with parallel ideas that develop a pattern. This literary technique is known as “parallelism.” “Simple parallelism” is the most popular form of parallelism in the Psalms. “Simple parallelism” is when one idea is directly followed by a supporting idea.

Make me know Thy ways, O Lord

 Teach me Thy paths. (Ps.25.4)

“As the deer pants for the water brook,

 So my soul pants for Thee, O God. (Ps.42.1)

But in Psalm 91 we see “Complexed parallelism.” “Complexed parallelism” is when groups of verses follow a pattern of supporting ideas. The pattern in Psalm 91 goes like this:

God’s Protection (vs.5-6)

 God’s Protection From All Adversities (vs.7-8)

 God’s Renewed Promise Of Protection (vs.9-10)

God’s Protection (vs.11-12)

 God’s Protection From All Adversities (vs.13)

 God’s Renewed Promise Of Protection (vs.14-16)

These verses develop a pattern that repeats two times. And not only do you see the flow of the pattern but you can see the connection of ideas. God not only promises His protection 24 hours a day in verses 5 and 6 but He promises to send His angels to protect us in verses 11 and 12. God not only promises His protection from all adversities in verses 7 and 8 but He promises that we will be victors over all adversities verse 13. And God concludes the pattern by renewing His promised to protect us in verses 9 and 10 and again in verses 14 through 16.

Now that you understand the pattern of the poem lets look at each group of verses and gain confidence in God’s Protection.

**God’s Protection (vs.5-6)**

*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.*

God promises His protection from terror, flying arrows, pestilence, and destruction. One should not conclude that this is an exhaustive list but rather this is a summary of possible attacks. One should not be naïve to think that the Lord will not provide His protection from flying missiles because He only mentions flying arrows. God protects His children from all adversity!

But the main point of verses five and six is that God provides His protection 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and even on “leap day.” The Lord provides protection from the terror by night, the arrows by day, the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, and the destruction that lies in waste at noon. Brothers and sisters, our God who neither sleeps nor slumbers. (Ps.121.3-4) He is an omnipresent, omniscience, and omnipotent God.

**God’s Protection From All Adversities (vs.7-8)**

The Poet moves on to tell us that our God will protect us from all adversity. *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.* (91.7-8) As I mentioned last week that soldiers of every stripe and rank have quoted the Lord’s promise found in verse sevenlabeling Psalm 91 as “The Soldier’s Psalm.”

But the main point of verses seven and eight is that God will protect us above all odds. *A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you.* The modern imagery is like we see in the movies of a hero walking towards the enemy with bullets flying all around him but never hitting him. Miraculously the hero defeats thousands of the wicked enemy that seek to harm him, making his way to the ultimate villain, and with one strong punch knots him unconscious.

The main point of verses seven and eight is that God will protect us above all odds. It is one against ten thousand. And while most would never take those odds the child of God rests in the reality that God protects His children. While most would consider the odds of one against ten thousand to be like leading sheep to be slaughtered we know that we are overwhelming conquers through Him who loves us. (Rom.8.36-37) We are convinced that because of God’s promised protection there is nothing that able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus of Lord. (Rom.8.39)

**God’s Renewed Promise Of Protection (vs.9-10)**

The Psalm has reached the peak in this cycle of declaring God’s protection and returns to the reason why we can cling to these promises. *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.*

This does not mean that believers will never suffer. Jesus told us that in this world we will have tribulations but we are to take courage because He has overcome the world. (Jn.16.33) Brothers and sisters, even when the rains pour, and the floods come, and the winds blow we know that we have placed our faith on the solid rock, our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we wait for the storm to pass by as we cling to the promises of God. (Mt.7.24-25) The Lord is our refuge and the Most High is our dwelling place therefore we know that whatever happens that no evil will overtake us and no plague will devour us.

**God’s Protection (vs.11-12)**

With one cycle completed the Psalm returns to the pattern describing God’s protection. *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.* (91.11-12) Instead of describing God’s 24/7 protection as in verses five and six, the focus is on God’s divine protection through His security guards – His angels. *He will give His angels charge concerning you*.

While some think that the whole concept of angels is strange the fact is that angels are the Lord’s servants worshipping the Lord and caring for God’s people as the Lord directs. Some like to think that every believer has one “guardian angel” but the fact is all of God’s angels are at His disposal to watch over the believers. The promise that God has commissioned His angels to guard us reminds us that there is a spiritual dimension in this life. The virus has been called “the invisible enemy” and we all need to know there is an invisible enemy that fights against us everyday. I know we don’t talk about it a lot but we need to know that *our struggle* *is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God* that the Lord has given you.

And even though we don’t know actually how the Lord’s angels protect us or fight spiritual battles on our behalf the writer of the book of Hebrews tells us to show hospitality to strangers for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Heb.12.2)

And the most striking thing about these angels, God’s spiritual security guards, is that the Lord has commanded them to be concerned about the smallest affliction in our lives. *They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.* God is promising to provide protection against the most minimal affliction. Stubbing our toes. In verse verses five and six we are told that God provides protection because of a terrorist, or a deadly weapon, or a pestilence but here in verse twelve we are told that God provides protection from an affliction that would have been caused because of our own clumsiness. The point is that God protection extends to trials great and small from a global pandemic to us stubbing our toe. Thanks be to God!

**God’s Protection From All Adversities (vs.13)**

The Poet follows the pattern and once again expresses God’s protection from all adversities. In verses seven and eight he emphasized God’s protection over the great of odds, one against ten thousand, but in verse thirteen the emphasis is on God’s people not merely survivors. We are victors!

Verse thirteen reads, “*You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down.* (91.13) The thing that would cause us the greatest fear, stumbling upon a lion or cobra, is the thing we become victorious. Our victory is first seen in the word “tread” meaning “to walk over” or “to make a stand over.” The Lord promises that He will give us the strength to walk over, take our stand over, the thing we fear the most. But the imagery continues with the word “trample” meaning “to stomp out” or “to eradicate.” The Lord promises that He will give us the strength to stomp out the thing we fear the most. God has not called us to be merely survivors. He has called us to be victorious. *God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* (2Tim.1.7) Brothers and sisters, what is the thing your greatest fear? Is it the virus? The ecomony? An uncertain future? God wants us to know that we are not just survivors we are victors! Through Christ we will stand victorious over these things. *Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (ICor.15.57)

**Closing Thought**

I want to challenge you today to open your heart to the Lord to create in you a pattern of protection in your life. A pattern that embraces God’s 24/7 protection over the greatest to the smallest affliction in your life. A pattern that knows that God can overcome the greatest of all odds against you and cause you to stand victorious over your greatest fears. A pattern that causes you to cling to God’s promised protection even when we are in the midst of the storm.

Brothers and sisters, if God is for us then who can be against us? Let us be the people who “*say to the Lord, My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust.”*