



Psalm 91:1-7 - The Benefits of Dwelling in God's Shelter Part 1

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. What a Time to Be Alive
- B. Volatile time in Our Nation and globally
- C. Greater Storms are Coming (culminating the great eschatological storm preceding Yeshua's return)
- D. Entering the Storm: we are called to enter into the storm to help others
- E. My Backstory to this Teaching
 1. Memorized the psalm many years ago
 2. Looked into the 91st Regiment in World War I that had been miraculously protected—trying to find that story and discovered that it was more folklore than true
 3. Del & Pat Hicks supernatural story of Hurricane Andrew in Florida and of miraculous protection.
 4. Started me on a journey to open up more of the mysteries of this psalm.

II. EXEGESIS

A. Initial Thoughts

1. YHWH Initiated these Covenant Provisions: God is committed to providing protection, provision, and immunity. This psalm covers every negative except persecution for the sake of Gospel proclamation and living godly.
2. It is not Presumptuous to Claim Them: He is the initiator. This psalm was His idea and these provisions are for us to claim.
3. The Promises are Conditional: The psalm's promises are conditional, given to the ones who make Him their dwelling
4. The Backdrop of this Psalm is Intense Difficulty: Pestilence & Death

B. He Who Dwells (verse 1)

¹ He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

1. Intimacy with Him: Many believers are content with the fact that they said a prayer at an altar inviting Jesus into their hearts, and are living their lives investing their time, money, and energy into themselves, disconnected from Him. The call to make Him your dwelling place includes living an intentional life of abiding in Him, fellowshiping with the indwelling Spirit, obeying His small and large promptings, quickly running from anything or anyone who disturbs your conscience, and seeking to live in unity and intimacy with Him. (Correy Russell, Clinging to God's Promises in the Midst of Tragedy)
2. Abiding in Him: I want to call you to deeply abiding in Him, drawing on Him, and living in Him. As you seek to do this, He promises you that He will deliver, protect, and carry you through the darkest of nights. (Correy Russell, Clinging to God's Promises in the Midst of Tragedy)
3. Dwelling in One Place: We cannot "dwell" in two places at the same time. We have to learn to dwell in the secrets of God and His word (Clinton Macomber)

C. I Will Say (verse 2)

² I will say to YHWH, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!"

1. Say It! We are not told simply to think the Word. We are told to say the Word.
2. Confidence through Repetition: The more we say it aloud, the more confident we become in His protection.
3. More than Mental Agreement: So many times, as Christians, we mentally agree that the Lord is our refuge—but that is not enough. Power is released in saying it out loud. When we say and mean it, we are placing ourselves in His shelter. By voicing His lordship and His protection, we open the door to the secret place. (Ruth, 27)
4. Not a Mantra or Magic Wand: Some quote Psalm 91 as though it was some kind of magic wand, but there is nothing magical about this psalm. It is powerful, and it works simply because it is the Word of God, alive and active. And we confess it aloud simply because the Bible tells us to do so.
5. Proclaiming My Trust: When I'm facing a challenge, I have learned to say: "In this particular situation [name the situation aloud] I choose to trust You Lord." The difference it makes when I proclaim my trust out loud is amazing. Ruth, 29
6. Our Responsibility: Our part of this protection covenant is expressed in verses 1 & 2. Note very carefully these words: "he who dwells..." and "I will say..." These words which amount to our responsibility under the terms of this covenant, release God's power to fulfill His amazing promises. (Ruth, 31)

D. Deliverance from Snares & Pestilence (verse 3)

³For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence.

1. Snare: a trap intentionally set in place by someone else in order to harm the victim
2. Pestilence: Pestilence attacks people, not crops. Pestilence is "any virulent or fatal disease; an epidemic that hits the masses of people." These deadly diseases attach themselves to a person's body with the intent to destroy it. But God tells us in verse 3 that He will deliver us from these deadly diseases. (Ruth, 35)
3. God Made Everything Good. Take germs, for instance—germs are nothing more than microscopic plants and animals that the enemy perverted and uses to spread disease. (Ruth, 36)
4. A Diversity of Enemies: You will encounter enemies that attack your mind (thoughts), some that attack your body internally (germs), and some who attack with weapons (people). This is your verse, ensuring your deliverance from all the varieties of harm. (Ruth, 37)
5. Train Yourself: Some of you need to train yourself to stop during the split second when temptation rears its ugly head. Say out loud: "God delivers me from the snare of the trapper—that thing that makes me lose my temper, that lust that tries to rise up in my heart, that person who constantly offends me, that wrong thing that comes flying out of my mouth in a heated moment, and that situation that always causes me to get frustrated."
6. Two-fold Deliverance: Pay special attention to the twofold aspect to this deliverance: 1) from the snare of the trapper, and 2) from the deadly pestilence. This covers being delivered from temptation and being delivered from harm. It is similar to the request in the Lord's prayer: "Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil" (Matt 6:13)
7. Deliverance Coverage: What good would it do to be delivered from harm only to be caught in a sin that destroys us? On the other hand, what good would it do to be delivered from a sin only to be destroyed by a deadly pestilence? This verse covers both. Thank God from His deliverance from both traps and pestilence (Ruth 38-40)

E. Protected By Our Faithful God (verse 4)

⁴He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (cross reference - Deuteronomy 32:11)

1. Our Decision: Under His wings you may seek refuge"? Again, it's up to us to make that decision! We can seek refuge under His wings if we choose to (Ruth, 42)
 - a. Chicken farmyard example: She squatted down, spread out her wings and began to cluck. And those little chickens, from every direction, came running to her to get under those outstretched wings. then the hen pulled her wings down tight, tucking every little chick safely under her. To get to those babies, the hawk would have to go through the mother. (Ruth, 42)
 - b. Run to Me: God does not run here and there trying to cover us. He said, "I have made protection possible. You run to Me!"
2. From Words to Heart to Faith: So how do we put this promise to work? Since we can't physically run to God, how do we do it? this psalm gives us a great analogy to the animal kingdom, but how can we put this promise into practice in our life? Just like this woman, we run to God with our mouths; we run to God with our hearts; we run to God with our faith (Ruth 43-44)
3. His Shield: When the enemy comes to whisper fearful or condemning thoughts in your mind you can ward off his attack by saying, "My faith is strong because I know my God is faithful, and His faithfulness is my shield!"
 - a. Don't stay down (when you fall): We can no more earn or deserve this protection than we can earn or deserve our salvation. The main thing is that if we slip and fall, we must not stay down. Get up, repent, and get back under that shield of protection. Thankfully this verse says it is His faithfulness, not ours. (Ruth, 46)
 - b. He is our shield: The shield is God Himself. His faithfulness to His promises guarantees His shield will remain steadfast and available forever. Whether or not we stay behind that protection is our choice.
4. He is Our Bulwark: A bulwark is a "tower built along a city wall from which defenders shoot arrows and hurl large stones at the enemy." From that tower God is faithful to point out the enemy so he can't sneak up on our blind side (Ruth, 46-48)

F. No Fear of Night Terror or Arrows (verse 5)

⁵You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day;

1. Day & Night Protection: It is interesting to note that verses 5 & 6 of Psalm 91 cover an entire 24 hour period, emphasizing day-and-night protection. But what is more important is that these two verses encompass every evil known to man. The psalmist divides the list into four categories.
2. Overcoming Fear
 - a. the night before the battle: These words, "You will not be afraid of the terror by night or of the arrow that flies by day," are also addressing the anxiety that comes the night before battle. Fear comes when we think we are responsible for bringing about this protection ourselves.
 - b. repent for fear: When our eyes are not on God, fear will come. But let that fear be a reminder to repent.

3. Speak it! Our physical weapons are operated with our hands, but we operate our spiritual weapons with our mouths. the blood is applied by saying it in faith. (Ruth, 52-53)
4. God's Laws: No one denies the existence of gravity but just as the laws of aerodynamics can temporarily supersede the law of gravity, Satan's attacks can also be superseded by a higher law—the law of faith and obedience to God's Word. (Ruth, 53)
5. Terror By Night: The first, terror by night, includes all the evils that come through man: kidnapping, robbery, rape, murder, terrorism, and wars. It is the dread or alarm that comes from what man can do to you. God is saying, "You will not be afraid of any of those things because they will not approach you." The first thing verse 5 deals with is fear. (Ruth, 50).
6. Arrow that Flies by Day: The second category of evil is the arrow that flies by day. An arrow is something that pierces or wounds spiritually, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Arrows are intentional. This category indicates you are in a spiritual battle zone; specific enemy assignments are directed toward your life to defeat you. Arrows are deliberately sent by the enemy and meticulously aimed at the spot that will cause the most damage.
7. The Enemy Attacks our Weak Areas: The enemy seldom attacks us in an area where we are built up and strong. He attacks us where we're still struggling. That's why we have to run to God! And when we battle using our spiritual weapons, the enemy's arrow will not approach us. (Ruth 55-56).

G. No Fear of Pestilence or Destruction (verse 6)

⁶Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

1. Pestilence: The third category of evil God names is pestilence. This the only evil He names twice! Since God doesn't waste words, He must have a specific reason for repeating this promise.
 - a. *stated twice:* It's as though God is saying, "I said in verse 3, 'You are delivered from the deadly pestilence,' but did you really hear Me? Just to be sure, I am saying it again in verse 6, 'You do not have to be afraid of the deadly pestilence!'"
 - b. *further spelled out:* The pestilence mentioned in Psalm 91:6 is spelled out in detail in Deuteronomy 28. (Ruth 59-61)
2. Developing Faith
 - a. *struggling to believe:* When I first started studying this psalm, I remember thinking, "I don't know whether I have the faith to believe these promises!" This thought stretched my faith and my mind until I thought it would snap like a rubber band that was being pulled too tightly. (Ruth, 61-62)
 - b. *not a feeling:* God however, reminded me that faith is not a feeling. Faith is simply choosing to believe what He says in His Word. The more I chose to believe God's Word, the more I had a knowing I could trust and rely on it completely. (Ruth, 61-62)
 - c. *accepting what's available:* Faith is not a tool to manipulate God into giving you something you want. Faith is simply the means by which we accept what God has already made available. Our goals need to be the renewal of our minds to such an extent that we have more faith in God's Word than in what we perceive with our physical senses. God does not make promises that are out of our reach.
 - d. *others might not access this:* God is telling us that even though there may be some who don't believe, their unbelief will never nullify His promises to the one who do believe. What we as individuals choose to believe and confess will cause us to prevail during a time of judgment. (Romans 3:3-4) (Ruth 68-69)
3. Health & Healing
 - a. *persistent application:* Some people receive an instantaneous gift of healing, but Rene took it by persistence—by refusing to let go of her promises of healing and inch by inch claiming God's covenant promises. (Ruth, 63)
 - b. *author's battle:* Fear of illness was probably my biggest battle in my mind. Out of all that Psalm 91 has done for me, it was this passage that caused me to overcome. I shudder to think what we might open ourselves up to without the promise of Psalm 91 and without the determination to stand firm and refuse to entertain fearful thoughts. (Ruth, 64)
4. Destruction: The fourth category of evil is destruction. Destruction encompasses the evils over which mankind has no control, those things the world ignorantly calls acts of God—tornadoes, floods, hail, hurricanes, or fire! God very plainly tells us we are not to fear destruction.
 - a. *available everywhere:* There is no place in the world you can go and be safe from every destruction—every natural disaster. But no matter where you are in the world, God says to run to His shelter where you will not be afraid of the destruction—it will not approach you! (Ruth, 66)
5. Comprehensive Coverage: Did you know that every evil known to man will fall into one of these four categories (verses 5-6 of Psalm 91): terror, arrows, pestilence, or destruction? And the amazing thing is that God has offered us deliverance from them all.

- a. *specific promises*: This psalm is not filled with exceptions or vague conditions as if trying to give God an out or an excuse to fail to fulfill the promises. Rather, it is a bold statement of what He wants to do for us. (Ruth, 68)
- b. *it's available*: The secret is in knowing that everything for which God has made provision is clearly spelled out and defined in the Word of God. If you can find where God has offered it, you can have it!
- c. *God initiates this*: Without the promises of protection throughout the Word of God, and especially without our Psalm 91 covenant—listing all forms of protection made available in one psalm—we might feel rather presumptuous if, on our own, we asked God to protect us from all the things listed in these last four verses. But He offered this protection to us before we even had a chance to ask! (Ruth 70)
- d. *complete prevention*: Psalm 91 is the preventive measure that God has given to His children against every evil known to mankind. No place else in the Word are all of the protection promises (including help from angels, as well as promises insuring our authority) accumulated in one covenant to offer such a total package for living in this world. It is both an offensive and defensive measure for warding off every evil before it has had time to strike. This is not only a cure but also a plan for complete prevention! (Ruth, 73)
- e. *fire or life?*: "What kind of coverage do I have—fire or life?" God's Word is more than merely an escape from hell; it is a handbook for living a victorious life in this world. (Ruth, 74)

H. Though a Thousand Fall at Your Side (verse 7)

⁷A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you.

1. *It will not approach*. Namely, the plague that frequently broke out during military campaigns (Dahood, 332).
2. *The Enormity of this Promise*: Do we even stop to consider what God is saying to us in verse 7? Do we have the courage to trust God's Word enough to believe He means this literally? Is it possible for this to be true and for us to miss out on these promises?
 - a. *hold fast to His promises*: Not everyone will receive the benefits of this promise in Psalm 91. Only those who believe God and hold fast to His promises will profit; nonetheless, it is available. To the measure we trust Him, we will in the same measure reap the benefits of that trust.
 - b. *battle to overcome fear*: It is no accident that the little statement "it shall not approach you" is tucked right here in the middle of the psalm. Have you noticed how easy it is to become fearful when disaster strikes all around you? (Ruth, 70-73)
3. *Our Choice to Embrace*: God knew there would be times when we would hear so many negative reports, see so many needs, and encounter so much danger around us we would feel overwhelmed. That is why He warned us ahead of time that thousands would be falling all around us. He did not want us to be caught off guard. But at that point we have a choice to make. The ball is then in our court! We can either choose to run to His shelter in faith, and the storm will not approach us, or we can passively live our lives the way the world does, not realizing there is something we can do about it. (Ruth, 73)
 - a. Sometimes, even as a Christian, I have been an unbelieving believer when it comes to receiving all of God's Word.
 - b. Even if believers have never utilized this psalm in its full potential, the truth has never passed away or lost one ounce of its power. (Ruth 73).
4. *Not About Persecution for the Gospel's Sake*: There is a difference between the destruction of the enemy and persecution for the gospel's sake. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:12. "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." There are times when we will be mistreated because of our stand for the cause of Christ. Psalm 91 is a very distinct concept dealing with natural disasters, accidents, sickness, and destruction. Jesus suffered persecution but He did not face calamity, disaster, and mishap. Accidents never even approached Him (Ruth, 74-75)
5. *Victory in the Battle*: Yet to look at this verse in its true context, with thousands falling on either side, we observe the stronger description of casualty and calamity named in the psalm. If this verse isn't a description of actual combat, I don't know what is. Yet tied to it is a promise of protection beyond anything that could otherwise be envisioned.
 - a. *deliverance from affliction*: These are not written for our inspiration but for our protection. These are not words of comfort in affliction but words of deliverance from affliction. (Ruth, 75)

III. PRACTICALITIES/ACTION ITEMS

A. Overcoming Fear: come in the opposite spirit

1. Fear that is released in action is good. Fear that is not released in action turns into a spirit of fear, and that's not good. When fear comes, you respond in the opposite spirit: you respond with courage and action. (David Watson)

B. God's Word is Our Calibrator: Let God's Word be your calibrator (not your experience)

C. Memorize this Psalm: get it into your heart

D. Speak It! Speak portions of this psalm regularly (faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God)

1. Hearing Your Own Voice: I am convinced that the Apostle Paul is referring to you hearing your own voice and hearing your own self repeating what God has said. You have more faith in what you say than in what anyone else says. That is the way God designed you. (Capps, Chapter 1)
2. Faith Brings Clearer Vision: Faith is like radar in an airplane. If it is turned on when you are approaching a thunderstorm area, it will paint those storm cells on a screen that looks like a tv screen. You can tell exactly where the cells are and avoid them. That radar can see through that storm and show you exactly how many miles it is to the other side, and exactly what turns you must make to miss the heavy rain cells. (Capps, Chapter 1)
3. Things Not Yet Manifest: You use faith on things you can't see; things which are not manifest. (Capps, Chapter 1)
4. Your Words Set Things: Most people do not realize the power of words. Do you realize that the things you are speaking out of your mouth are setting the cornerstones of your life? (Capps, Chapter 2)
5. Faith or Fear: Words deceive us. Words transmit. Think about that. The words that you speak transmit faith or fear. So when we are talking about your spoken words, we are talking about things that are powerful.
6. From Mouth to Heart: It first gels in your mouth, then in your heart. (Capps, Chapter 2)
7. Be proactive at proclaiming Psalm 91 provisions over your life.

E. Use this Muscle

1. Practice: Practice when negative circumstances come your way; you don't have to feel it to practice it by speaking it out loud
2. Work in Weak Areas: Especially practice in working your faith in areas where you have trouble believing the provision found in this psalm
3. Takes Time to Develop: You develop in faith over a period of time. You will learn what works and what doesn't work. You will learn what will short out your faith and what will make it work faster (Capps, Chapter 1)
4. No Shortcuts: There are not many shortcuts. However, there are a few avenues which will cause faith to come more quickly to you. If you will use them properly, that spiritual force within you will build more quickly. For instance, if you speak God's Word out of your mouth, faith will come more quickly (Capps, Chapter 1)

F. Don't Give Up: When/if it "doesn't work" keep working the muscle

1. Great Success Often Preceded by Great Failures
2. Battling Poison Ivy: I also tell of Charles Capps and how he began speaking that he'd never break out with poison ivy. With Charles Capps, this did not happen immediately. At first, he still broke out with poison ivy. But he kept saying it, believing it, and acting upon God's Word until he came to the place where he could handle it with his bare hands and not be affected by it. I also tell my own testimonies and how I've not even had an aspirin since January 1980. These are important experiences to share and teach. Tony McCanless facebook post.
3. Battling Bubonic Plague: John Alexander Dowie was a pastor of a church in Sydney, Australia when the bubonic plague struck around 1875. He buried forty members of his church in less than one month and four more people from his congregation died and were yet to be buried. Many others became sick with this awful plague, in which there was no cure.

"After visiting the many sick members of his flock one day, Dr. Dowie returned home and sat in his study, his arms folded upon his desk, his head upon his arms, weeping before God.

'God, is everybody going to die?' he cried. 'Are you going to take everybody? Where did this plague come from? Are you the author of this?' He was heartsick at the thought of the families that would be torn apart by the plague; at the children who would be left orphans."

John Alexander Dowie later wrote that the words found in Acts 10:38 stood out before him as a light, showing Satan as the Defiler, and Christ as the Healer. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38

“My tears were wiped away,’ Dr. Dowey said, ‘my heart was strong. I saw the way of healing, and the door thereto was opened wide, so I said, ‘God help me now to preach the Word to all the dying around, and tell them how ‘tis Satan who defiles, and Jesus still delivers, for “He is just the same today.”’

He did not have long to wait. Within minutes, two young men burst into his study, pleading breathlessly, ‘Oh, come at once. Mary is dying!’ Dr. Dowie ran down the street after them, not even pausing to take his hat. He was furious that Satan should have attacked this innocent young member of his flock.

Dr. Dowie entered Mary’s room and found her in convulsions. Her medical doctor, having given up on her, was preparing to leave. He turned to Dr. Dowie and remarked, ‘Sir, are not God’s ways mysterious?’ The revelation Dr. Dowie had just received from the Word of God was burning in his heart. ‘God’s way!’ he thundered. ‘How dare you call that God’s way! No, sir, that is the devil’s work!

He challenged the physician, who was a member of his congregation, ‘Can you pray the prayer of faith that saves the sick?’

The doctor replied, ‘You are much too excited, sir, ‘tis best to say God’s will be done,’ and he left.

‘Excited! The word was quite inadequate for I was almost frenzied with Divinely imparted anger and hatred of that foul destroyer, Disease, which was doing Satan’s will,’ Dowie wrote.

‘It is not so,’ I exclaimed, no will of God sends such cruelty, and I shall never say “God’s will be done” to Satan’s works, which God’s own Son came to destroy, and this is one of them. Oh, how the Word of God was burning in my heart...”

Furious at Satan’s work, Dr. Dowie then prayed the prayer of faith for Mary and the girl’s convulsions immediately ceased, and she fell into such a deep sleep, so much so that her mother worried that she had died. “‘She isn’t dead,’ the triumphant Dr. Dowie assured them.

After several minutes, Dr. Dowie awakened Mary. She turned to her mother and exclaimed, ‘Mother, I feel so well!’”

Dr. Dowie quietly thanked God and then went into the next room where Mary’s brother and sister lay with the same plague. After prayer, they too were also completely healed.

From that day on John Alexander Dowie ministered to his flock on divine healing and continued to pray for their healing, and because of his belief in divine healing he never lost another one of his church members to the plague.

The Bible says that Jesus healed ALL that came to Him. (New Hope Brisbane facebook page)

4. *Overcoming Bubonic Plague*: Some know of John G. Lake and his experience with the Bubonic Plague. He stated that the virus died when it touched his body. He encouraged this to be proven, and so samples of the virus were examined under a microscope before and after being placed in his hands. He quoted Romans 8:2, that the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death. When this is big on the inside of you, then you can fearlessly act upon God's Word with boldness.

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