

## Just Pondering – March 25, 2020

### Psalm 91:1-16 (HCSB)

- <sup>1</sup> *The one who lives under the protection of the Most High dwells in the shadow of the Almighty.*
- <sup>2</sup> *I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”*
- <sup>3</sup> *He Himself will deliver you from the hunter’s net, from the destructive plague.*
- <sup>4</sup> *He will cover you with His feathers; you will take refuge under His wings. His faithfulness will be a protective shield.*
- <sup>5</sup> *You will not fear the terror of the night, the arrow that flies by day,*  
<sup>6</sup> *the plague that stalks in darkness, or the pestilence that ravages at noon.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Though a thousand fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, the pestilence will not reach you.*
- <sup>8</sup> *You will only see it with your eyes and witness the punishment of the wicked.*
- <sup>9</sup> *Because you have made the LORD—my refuge, the Most High—your dwelling place,*  
<sup>10</sup> *no harm will come to you; no plague will come near your tent.*
- <sup>11</sup> *For He will give His angels orders concerning you, to protect you in all your ways.*
- <sup>12</sup> *They will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*
- <sup>13</sup> *You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the young lion and the serpent.*
- <sup>14</sup> *Because he is lovingly devoted to Me, I will deliver him; I will protect him because he knows My name.*
- <sup>15</sup> *When he calls out to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble. I will rescue him and give him honor.*
- <sup>16</sup> *I will satisfy him with a long life and show him My salvation.*

Welcome to **Just Pondering**. Many of you read my regular Sunday blog in each week’s bulletin. Because of our current COVID-19 situation, we as a staff are trying to reach out to you in some extra ways. I hope you are doing well through this stressful, unprecedented time. This morning as I was reading through my email – a better description might be deleting the junk – two of my regular devotions came in. Interestingly, both were about Psalm 91. That is not a coincidence. So, for this blog, we are going to study Psalm 91. Most of you know my love for the Psalms – they offer praise, joy, motivation, peace, and comfort.

The opening statement is so powerful. If we are God’s children, we have protection and we can live under God’s protection. The word dwell in the Hebrew means to stop and stay, like in a roadside inn. But the stay is permanent. Have you ever stayed in a hotel for an extended period? The hotel provides room cleaning, ice, shelter, security, and sometimes food. We don’t have to do anything but enjoy (and pay). When we lived in our parents’ homes, we enjoyed the same amenities. God wants us to stay in His shadow! As the psalmist said, God is my refuge.

The next verses expand upon this protection. We are spared from the hunter's snare and from the destructive plague, the archer's arrow and the terror of the unknown. I want to look at Numbers 25. Israel was encamped in Moab and the men began to take the Moabite women for their sexual desires. God had instructed Moses to put these men to death. One Israelite, Zimri, paraded his women in front of the whole assembly and took her into his tent. Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, rightly upset, followed him into his tent with a spear and drove the spear through Zimri and his woman. God already sent a plague to kill the offenders. Phinehas' swift action stopped the plague but only after 24,000 had died. Now the pandemic we are facing is way different, but God's protection is still there for believers. Think of the mother hen that covers her chicks with her wings when the predator attacks. God has broad wings. We might get the virus and even die, but God's ultimate protection and deliverance on earth is His peace and ultimately heaven's glory to the righteous. God tells us over and over not to fear and be strong and courageous. He is our dwelling place, refuge, and our fortress. God even provides angels to watch over us (v. 11).

The final section of Psalm 91 changes voice. The previous verses were the psalmist's words. Beginning in verse 14, God is speaking. How comforting to hear His voice as He speaks to the warrior. God loves those that love Him with all their hearts. God delivers and protects those that know His name. Look at Matthew 7:

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!'"* Matthew 7:21-23 (HCSB)

God is serious about us knowing Him and the rewards are great. He answers when we call. Do you have kids with cell phones? Do they answer? He rescues and protects us. I was babysitting my niece many years ago (she is 32) and we went to the grocery store. She did not want to be carried and she did not hold my hand. As we entered the store, the automatic doors slid open and several people were walking out. Emily grabbed my hand – she knew I would protect her. On top of that, God will honor us and let us experience His salvation.

Now, does this mean we are safe from COVID-19 or any other disease? No, rather we can be secure in knowing God will deliver us in His way and in His time. We can lean on that. In Matthew 4, as Satan was tempting Christ, the Devil quoted from Psalm 91 suggesting that God would send angels to protect Jesus even if He jumped off the cliff. Jesus told Satan that we shouldn't test God. That's good advice. Trust God's protection but be smart and don't put yourself in harm's way. The old hymn says it this way:

What have I to dread, what have I to fear  
Leaning on the everlasting arms?  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Join with me and lean on God through this troublesome time.

You might want to listen and watch these videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOkImV2cJDg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anBVgQbRg9M>

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