

The No Fear Zone

Psalm 91

Psalms: Encountering God's Heart From His Playlist

By Dave Urbanski

I don't know about any of you, but one of my rather faith-LESS sayings in times of trouble is as follows: "Once this bad situation is over, then I can have peace again."

Did you catch that utter ridiculousness?

Pastor Scott addressed that very attitude in his Sunday message, and I'm so glad it bopped me over the head.

Because instead of trusting God to deliver the peace he promises IN all situations — easy or difficult, good or bad — sometimes I default to relying on the *quality* of the situation to give me peace ... instead of on the One who not only provides the peace in the first place, but also lets my heart beat another second so I can have the opportunity to step forward in faith at all! To trust in what I *can't* see as opposed to what I *can* see ... but with frail, mortal, often shortsighted eyes.

Psalm 91 shines a lot of light on this issue, and Pastor Scott on Sunday broke it all down for us.

First of all, how cool and helpful is it that Psalm 91 just about lines up numerically with our modern-day 911 emergency call? Now *that's* a mnemonic device we all can use: If we're in a tough spot, turning to Psalm 91 as our 911 to remind us of God's promises is far from the worst thing we can do!

From the very first verse, we're reminded that the Lord is our SHELTER. As Pastor Scott said, it's not like a hotel room we get for a night and then when we pay the bill, we keep going on our trip: Instead, the Lord as our shelter is where we dwell continually, where we abide, where we live 24/7. In the same way, as we call on the Lord in our emergencies, let us not resist talking to him ALL the time. Indeed, let us spend the DAY with him, let him into our deepest places. Of course, the Lord wants to

help us in times of trouble, but he wants more of our lives — more of us — than merely being the person we call on ONLY when trouble comes.

And closely akin to the idea that we must trust in God's supreme qualities to get us through tough times rather than the degree of difficulty of whatever situation we find ourselves in, Pastor Scott also reminded us about very common stuff we tend to put our trust in: bank accounts, jobs, houses! So riddle me this: If none of those things is permanent or guaranteed, how could we worship them (even a little) bit as a source of comfort? Instead trust in the One who lets those things EXIST AT ALL ... and who can take them away at any time, or increase them one hundred fold at any time.

One of the other very helpful reminders Pastor Scott shared Sunday is that trusting the Lord is the biggest antidote to fear — and therefore, as we abide in the shadow of God's wings, how can we possibly "fear the terror of the night"? (v. 5) Now, obviously, there are things that happen in life that will still strike fear in us, since we're deeply flawed and can lack faith at the most crucial moments, but the Lord KNOWS that! And he loves us anyway, and he still wants us to call on him. What's more, Pastor Scott reminded us that just because God is capable of rescuing us from every bad situation — in fact, he's capable of preventing any bad thing from happening to anybody at any time — certainly doesn't mean that God will put a stop to all bad things at all times. (Not that any of you weren't already aware of that!) But indeed, the Lord has his own plans for us — and he knows how best to use bad situations in our lives to help us grow.

On the other side of things, when Pastor Scott noted the principle of Proverbs — that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom — something seemed to tell me that the more we take in that truth, the less we will fear other things that come upon us in life.

Let us, therefore, meditate on the Lord's closing words from Psalm 91 as promises of what he will do for us: "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Friends, in this life and after this life, there is no better or more glorious or deeply soul-satisfying place to be than under that shadow of our Maker's wings. There we needn't become conquerors, there we needn't defeat the siren calls to sin; instead, all

we have to do is be willing to place our will in line with his — to let him put his universe-shaking arms around us and hold us tight.

Where else could we possibly rather be?