

Finding Refuge In The Secret Place

by Ian Robson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, drawing insights from Psalms 90 and 91. It highlights the significance of trusting in God's protection, seeking refuge in Him, and living a life of faith and obedience to experience His deliverance and presence. The speaker encourages believers to find their anchor in God's unchanging promises and to abide in His presence continually, even in the face of trials and challenges.

Scripture: Psalms 90:1, Psalms 91:1, Psalms 91:9, Psalms 91:14, Hebrews 6:18, Hebrews 6:19

Topics: "God's Protection", "Abiding in His Presence"

Description

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Transcript

Bless my heart, not just now, but all the years that I've sought to follow the Lord. And it would do well to memorise this psalm. I'm speaking about Psalm 91, Psalm 91.

You know, Psalm 90, 91, I think 92 also, and maybe a few more, was written by Moses. Psalm 90 is a prayer of Moses, the man of God, it says. He says, Lord, you have been our dwelling place, Psalm 90, verse 1, Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were born, for you gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

A wonderful psalm, it says, teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom, and verse 12, that is Psalm 90. Psalm 91, it's said that it's known as the soldier's psalm, in World War I. There was a commander of a battalion who was a born-again believer, who wrote on a card and gave to all his battalion this psalm, Psalm 91, and he asked them to read it every day, believe it, and pray it. Interestingly, it's said, it's known, that not a soldier in his battalion died in one of the bloodiest wars in World War I. Many other battalions suffered severe casualties, but not his battalion.

Now one man's faith can affect many people, affect a whole battalion, can affect a whole home, a whole family, a whole church, and that is why I say it's good to memorize, not just memorize and read it, but

believe it. I believe it with all of my heart, not just believe it, I've seen it through all the 52 years that I've sought to follow the Lord, and it begins like this, it says, he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, King James says, in the secret place of the Most High, it says in the shelter of the Most High, it's the same thing, he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

Who can say that? He who abides in the secret place of the Most High. We sang a little while ago, you hide it, my soul, in the cleft of the rock. You know where that comes from and what it's based, a very beautiful word in Exodus in chapter 33.

Turn there for a moment. I've known it before, but when we sang it this morning, it came afresh to my very, very beautiful. When Moses asked the Lord, show me your glory, and God said, you know, I will show you my glory.

You cannot see my face, but I will make all my goodness pass before you in Exodus 33. The Lord says, I will also do this, verse 17, of which you have spoken, you have found favor in my sight. I've known you by name.

And Moses said, I pray you, show me your glory. And God said, I myself will make all my goodness pass before you and proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and I'll be gracious to whom I'll be gracious, and I'll show compassion to whom I will show compassion. But he said, you cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live.

Here's this word, what we sang. Then the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me, and you shall stand there on the rock, and it shall come about while my glory is passing by, and I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I pass by, and I'll take my hand away and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen. Isn't that very beautiful? And just imagine it, and God said, you know, there's a place by me.

You stand there on the rock, and that speaks of Jesus, and I'll put you in the cleft of the rock, the rock that was cleft for us on the cross of Calvary, and then you'll see my back, you'll see my glory. That is God's will for us, my brothers and sisters, not just to shelter us, protect us, but to show us his glory. There's a place by me, God says.

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Have we found that secret place? Are we living there? Not just when trouble comes, when we have some trial that we face, some problem in the office, some problem in the home, but all the time, all the days of our life, all the time, 24 by 7, we live in that secret place. That is God's will for every child of his.

Not just now and again we go in and come out, but all the time. And he who dwells there, resides there, and that word means permanently resides there, can truly say, I will say to the Lord, verse 2, my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust. To reside there permanently, to live there, that is our calling.

That is why we have been saved. Not just that our sins are forgiven, we have a ticket to heaven, but that I can find that secret place and live there and behold God's glory and be protected no matter what happens. And that we could say like Moses said, I will say to the Lord, my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust, and I will always trust.

Not like those two disciples on the road to Emmaus, just imagine, thinking of that, reading something the other day, when they were saying to Jesus, you know, Jesus, why are you so down, why are you so, your faces are fallen? He says, are you a stranger here? Have you not heard what's happened? And then they begin to relate. He said, we trusted, we trusted that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Isn't that sad to the one, you know, who walked with them for three and a half years, we trusted.

Isn't that how we feel? I trusted you Lord, but you failed me to trust Him, that we can say my God in whom I trust no matter what happens. Like Job says, even though He slays me, yet will I trust Him. That is the faith of God.

That is what God has put into our hearts, that's how we are to live. He will never let us down, our faith will not be disappointed, He will not put us to shame, if we trust in Him and believe in Him and live in that secret place permanently. Not just when everything goes well and when He answers our prayers and we get what we ask God for, but even if we don't get what we ask God for, Lord, I will still trust You.

Even though You slay me, I will still trust You. That is what it means, my brothers and sisters, that's the faith, that we have to live by all the days of our life on this earth. And we are not like some people, you know, say, you know, is it okay to do this, is it okay to go here, is it okay to watch clean movies, and all these things, and the answer that is given, you know, you would have heard it.

Would you be doing the same thing when Jesus comes? Now, would you, you know, if our sister wants to dress a certain way, would you dress that way if Jesus were walking beside you, if Jesus came? A very low level that we are to live, but if I'm living in the secret place, I don't have to think that way. Would I be doing this when Jesus comes? Would I say this if Jesus was here? All the time I am to live there, and that is what David says under the old covenant, David in Psalm 16, 8 and 9, you know, and that's a beautiful psalm, it says, who will ascend to the Lord, dwell with the Lord most high. He says in Psalm 16, verses 8 and 9, I have set the Lord continually before me, because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

I have set the Lord continually before me, and because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. David, without the Holy Spirit, under the old covenant, could say that. How about you and I, my brothers and sisters? Therefore, he says, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices, my flesh also will dwell securely.

And he says in Psalm 24, 27, verse 4, he says, one thing, listen to this, one thing I have asked from the Lord that I shall seek, one thing, what is that one thing that we ask God for? We want a better job, we want a good education, no harm praying and asking God for that, but what is the one thing I desire? What is the one thing that I ask from God that I will seek after? This is what David, under the old covenant, without the Holy Spirit, says, one thing I have asked from the Lord that I shall seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. Same thing that we read in Psalm 91, that I will live in that secret place all the days of my life. For what? To behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple, for in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle, in the secret place of His tent He will hide me.

He will lift me up on a rock and now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me. I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

That is the life that God calls you and me to live, my brothers and sisters. What is the one thing that I want? What is the one thing I'm asking God for? What is the one thing I'm seeking for? Is it to live always in His presence, Lord? I always want to be there. And that's what David's desire was, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life so that I behold the beauty of the Lord.

Just like Moses saw the glory of the Lord, that I can behold the beauty of the Lord and I will be full of praise. I will not be thinking of my problems, I will not be thinking of the trial that we go through or some difficulty, but I will say that God is compassionate and loving and good and kind. And I will sing, he says, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

And so we go back to Psalm 91, it says there in verse 3, you know, verse 2 we saw the one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High can say, my refuge, I will say to the Lord, my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust, for it is He, it is He, and I underline that, it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, from the snares of the enemy, the enemy of our soul, the snares of sin, the snares of temptation, it is He who delivers you. Not my wholeheartedness, not my coming to the meetings, not because I read the Bible and I pray every day, but it is He who delivers me from the snare of the trapper, and from the deadly pestilence, from the plague and all that is happening today in the world. People are so scared, there's so much of panic, and it says it is He who delivers you, not only from the snares of the enemy, from Satan, but from the deadly pestilence, He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek refuge, His faithfulness is a shield and buckler, and God is faithful, He will protect us, He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek refuge.

That is what He delights for, He wants to cover us, He wants us to come under His wings, to come under His protections, that's what Jesus longed for, when He wept over Jerusalem, and He said in Matthew 23, verse 37, very tender words there, when He wept over Jerusalem, Jerusalem that killed the prophets that God sent to them, He says, how often, how often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling, how often I wanted to gather you together, God says to us as a church, how often I wanted to gather you as a family together, there's so much of strife in your home, so much of conflict, how often I wanted to gather your children together, the children who have turned away from you, how often I wanted to turn their hearts to you, but you were not willing, and in Luke 19, verse 41, He says when He approached Jerusalem, the parallel passage, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, if you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace, but now they have been hidden from your eyes, and just think of it, my brothers and sisters, that picture that Jesus used there, that analogy, it's like a hen gathers her chicks together, I wanted to gather you together, that's what He prayed for in John 17, Lord, Father, that they may be one, even as we are one, He's gathering, are we gathering together with Him or are we scattering, are we separating from Him, are we seeking to live in that secret place, have we found it, or are we wanting to do our own thing, we come to the meetings, yes, read the Bible, yes, that's good, we pray, and do many other things, we break bread, but are we living in His presence, so I live there, I trust Him, I find refuge in Him, no matter what happens, I'm not, it's not going to deter me one bit, and just like that hen, when it senses danger, and it gives out a little cluck there, and all those chicks, I grew up in my young days, my dad kept poultry, he had a lot of poultry, I used to see this, it used to be so beautiful, this hen, and the moment a vulture comes, it senses it, and it makes a little noise, and all its little chicks come, and it lifts its wings, and they go under it, they are protected, if the vulture has to deal with the hen first, if it's going to do anything to the chicks, that is the picture, my brothers and sisters, that is what Jesus says, how often I wanted to gather you together, come under my wings, but you are unwilling, you want to do your own thing, you had your own plans, how often I wanted to gather your children, the children that you think are rebellious, turned away from the church, turned away from you, and we find so many excuses, how often I want to do that, but you are unwilling, He wants us to come under His wings, under His protections, and He said there, when He wept over Jerusalem, He said, if you had known, in this day, even you, the things which make for peace, that is the problem, my brothers and sisters, they were unwilling because they refused to know the things which

make for peace, and I want to say to us, the only reason we are unwilling, we refuse to choose the things that make for peace, that is why He is not able to gather us together, that is why we are not able to live in that secret place, what are the things that make for peace, what we have heard in this church, all through these 45 years, humility, humility, humble yourself, put aside your own thoughts and reason and understanding, and humble yourself, and brokenness, if I go that way, God will have to break me, in my strong places, my strong ability to reason and argue and show that I am right, I am right in feeling this way, I am right in treating you this way, how often, Jesus said, I want to gather your children, the you together, if you knew the things that make for peace, my brothers and sisters, let us choose the things that make for peace, then the Lord can do what He longs to do, gather us together, humble ourselves, allow Him to break us, be willing to yield, to give up, I am not going to fight, I am not going to be stubborn and think that I am right, I am right in feeling this way, to be willing to reconcile, God has given us a ministry of reconciliation, and we read in 2nd Corinthians 5, be reconciled to God, first be reconciled to God and then be reconciled to one another, these are the things that make for peace, then He can gather us together, like a hen gathers its chicks together, we can find protection that no matter what happens around us, like it says in Psalm 46, that God is my refuge and strength, I will not fear even if the world blows up, that is a life that God has called us to live, you go back to Psalm 91, it goes on in verse 5, it says, you will not be afraid of the terror by night, you will not be afraid, that's one thing that must go out of our lives if we live in the secret place of the Most High, we will not fear, fear and anxiety can have no place, others around us like we see in Psalm 91 may fear and fall, I am not going to be afraid, Jesus said in the last days men's hearts will fail them from fear, people have heart failure because of fear, and all that is happening around us, the coronavirus and people are so scared, go to Psalm 91 and put your faith and trust in the Most High God, find that secret place and live there, and we need not fear, it says, you will not be afraid of the terror by night, of the arrow that flies by day, of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, whatever it may be, whatever virus or the destruction that lays waste at noon, a thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you, I was thinking of all those thousands of people in China and that province, I am sure there must be a few of God's people there, there is a church in China, an underground church, and I am sure that their confidence is in God, even as they see the thousands fall on either side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you, you will only look on verse eight with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked, for you have made the Lord my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, there it is again, why will I not fear, because God is my refuge, He is my dwelling place, no evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your home. Do you believe that? I believe it with all my heart, and I have seen it through all the years I have followed the Lord, because God is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust, and He has put me in the cleft of the rock, I have found that place where I can hide, free from all fear and all alarm, whatever may happen, and it goes on in verse eleven, 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, you will tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down, He will give His angels charge concerning you, that's how much He cares for us. You know this is the verse that the devil quoted to Jesus, when he took Him up to the pinnacle of the temple, and told Him, throw yourself down, because it's written, He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you, no, he left that out, if you turn back there, you see the devil is very smart even when it comes to quoting scripture, and that's how we are deceived if we don't know God's word, we don't meditate and obey it.

In Luke chapter twenty-two, you can see, sorry, it's in Matthew five, Matthew chapter five, turn there just for a brief moment, I want you to see how, you know, even in listening to scripture, we can be deceived if we do not read like somebody says, a lot of deception among God's people, they do not read God's word

exactly and believe it, read God's word accurately and believe it exactly as it is written, that's the confusion today among God's people. And he came to Jesus and said it in verse six, when he took Him, verse five, up to the holy city and made Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple and said, if you are the son of God, throw yourself down, it is written, He will command His angels concerning you, on their hands they will bear you up so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You see the difference there? In what is written, actually written in Psalm ninety-one, He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways, that's what the devil cleverly left out.

Jesus walked in the Father's ways and God's ways, and Jesus detected it at the moment, He didn't get into an argument with the devil, He said to him, He says, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. He didn't get into an argument and say, you quoted something wrong, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. It's good to know scripture, my brothers and sisters, to read God's word accurately and believe it exactly as it's written.

Then when we come into temptation, we can overcome. And that is how Jesus overcame you, to keep you in all your ways. And God does that.

If I'm walking in His ways, He will give His angels charge over me, just like He did for Jesus. You know, when Jesus was agonizing in the garden of Gethsemane, when He prayed, when He turned there in Luke chapter twenty-two, Luke chapter twenty-two, you see that not only God gives us the Holy Spirit, He gives us angels to protect us, to help us, to strengthen and encourage us. Luke chapter twenty-two, and Jesus, verse thirty-nine, Jesus came out and proceeding as was His custom to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples also followed Him.

When He arrived at the place, He said to them, pray that you may not enter into temptation. And you know what happened. They just went to sleep.

They were overcome with sorrow. And in verse forty-two, Jesus said, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from Me, yet not My will, but yours be done. Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

And being in agony, He was praying very fervently, and His sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground. An angel came. God, the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him, to encourage Him.

When the disciples failed to pray with Him, they were the ones who should have stood with Him so that He could be strengthened, but they were too sleepy. They went to sleep. So even when others fail us, God will send an angel to strengthen us in some way.

Just like when Titus came and Paul despaired of life. Titus came and they were encouraged and the news that he brought them. So in various ways, God seeks to encourage us and strengthen us.

We read again, when Jesus was tempted, after the temptation in the wilderness, angels came and ministered to Him. And I would like to think that, you know, I don't have time to show it to you, but you can look it up, that after His time of trial in the wilderness, when the devil, when he was hungry, after forty days of fasting, and the devil came to him and tempted him to turn stones into bread and took him up to the pinnacle of the temple. When he had finished all the temptations, it says that when the devil left him, angels came and ministered to him.

And I would like to think, they brought him, like Melchizedek, they brought him some food and drink. Melchizedek, when he met Abraham, after Abraham had fought those battles against those five kings, and he came out and he won the victory, but he would have been tired and hungry and Melchizedek came to him with bread and wine and then disappeared. And I believe that that's how it is.

So I was so encouraged, that not only God gives us the Holy Spirit, that He gives us angels to protect and strengthen and encourage us at times. I've seen that many times. Many times we are saved from accidents, not because of, you know, I was careful to avoid that, but an angel stopped attacking.

I know very clearly, many times it's happened and I think of one incident in Mysore, many, many years ago when we had a Maruti van, and there was this big lorry, eight of us in the car, and this big lorry just backing, it would have crushed us. And I put my hand out, you know, Maruti van, you can put your hand out, and I thought, just imagine, thinking that my hand can stop that lorry from crushing, coming into our vehicle. But just there, it stopped.

I believe it was God's angel, God's hand that kept us from a fatal accident. Many, many times. And what happens to us on the road and what happens in the home, that God is there.

That's how much He cares for us. Why do I say these things? That's how much He loves us. How often I wanted to gather you together so that I can protect you.

He gives His angels charge concerning us. He commands His angels. You see, not just in physical accidents, but even temptation, that He can keep us from temptation, keep us from going to a place, keep us from particular company so that we don't sin against Him.

That's how much He loves us. And that is what we see in Psalm 91. He gives His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

If I am walking in God's ways, then He will take care of me and He will see that I am protected. It says, they will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra.

That's the enemy, our adversary, the enemy who comes like a roaring lion, seeking, it says in 1 Peter 5, seeking someone to devour, particularly when we go through a trial and we become fearful and anxious. And Peter says, cast all the anxiety upon Him because He cares for you. And then in the next verse He says, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, comes about seeking someone to devour.

And that's what the devil waits for. He waits for us to get fearful and anxious because then he has won over us. Then he can overcome, he can lead us into unbelief.

He can lead us into sin. But if I am living in the secret place of the Most High, if I am living in God's presence and everyday seek to walk in His ways, then I can tread upon the lion and the cobra. That's what Jesus says.

I've given you all authority over all the power of the enemy. Nothing shall injure you. Do we believe that, my brothers and sisters? This is the inheritance of the children of God.

This is our privilege that we can live there all the days of our life upon this earth. And we don't have to be, like it says there, we don't have to fear. We don't have to be anxious.

We can trust the Lord. God is our refuge and strength. And lastly, I want you to see the verse 14.

Because He has loved me, therefore I will deliver Him. I will set Him securely on high because He has known my name. He will call upon me and I will answer Him.

I will be with Him in trouble. I will rescue Him and honor Him. With a long life, I will satisfy Him and let Him see my salvation.

Because we love Him. We take refuge in Him. We walk in His ways because we love Him.

And I hope that's true of us. We take refuge in Him. We seek to walk in His ways because we love Him.

And He promises us seven things there. Seven full promises. I will deliver Him.

God says, I will deliver Him. I will deliver her. Put your name there.

I will set Him securely on high. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of a God and He will exalt you. I will set Him securely on high.

Number three, He will call upon me and I will answer Him. God says. Number four, I will be with Him in trouble.

Number five, I will rescue Him and honor Him. Number six, with a long life, I will satisfy Him. We'll live out all the days that God has planned for us to be on this earth.

And number seven, I'll let Him behold my salvation. That is what it means to find that secret place, my brothers and sisters. We have strong encouragement.

Strong encouragement. And that last word in Hebrews in chapter six. I'd like you to turn to that and close with that.

Hebrews chapter six. Two unchangeable things. The Holy Spirit says through the writer of Hebrews.

Hebrews chapter six verse 18. By two unchangeable things. What are those two unchangeable things? God and His promise.

God can never change and His promise, His vow will never change. By two unchangeable things. God's promise and God's oath.

Those are the two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie. We who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope that is set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul.

A hope both sure and steadfast. One which enters within the secret place. Within the veil.

That is the secret place in God's presence. That I can know Him. I can look on His face.

I can commune with Him like Moses. Not just as friend to friend but as my father. I know that He cares for me.

That He will protect me. That no harm, no evil can come near me or my home or my family or anything concerning me. He's put a hedge around about us.

That is Psalm 91, my brothers and sisters. I would encourage you to not just read it, meditate, maybe memorize it, but believe it. Because that is the life that God has called us.

That we can always have strong encouragement no matter what happens around us. We have an anchor like it says. An anchor that is reached within the veil.

That secret place. Not just now and again I go there when I have problems and troubles and trials, but I live there all the time. May we experience that particularly as we approach the end times.

Where is your anchor? I hope it's within the secret place. I hope it's there in the cleft of the rock that you've been put there. Not just that you've forgiven your sins, but you can live there all the days.

The life that God has called you and me to live on this earth. That we can be a blessing to others. That we can be a light and an encouragement to all those around us who are overcome with fear and panic and anxiety.

That is God's calling to us as a church. May God help us. Let's sing this song which is a very blessed song of mine which I like to sing and think of the words.

We have, will your anchor hold in the storms of life? When the clouds unfold their wings of strife. When the strong tides lift and the cables strain. Will your anchor drift or firm remain? We have an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows roll.

Fastened to the rock which cannot move. Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love. I hope that we will have an anchor that will keep us in these days till Jesus returns.

Amen.

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