

A Place to Hide

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the importance of finding refuge in God's unwavering love and protection through prayer and trust.

Duration: 19:34

Scripture: Psalm 36:7, Psalm 46:1, Psalm 62:8, Psalm 91:1-2, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 11:28, Luke 13:34, John 14:27, Acts 3:19, James 2:19

Topics: "Christian Life", "The Power of Prayer", "God's Protection"

Description

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the priceless nature of God's unfailing love and the refuge it provides, likening God to a protective bird under whose wings we can find safety. He explains that true trust in God is demonstrated through prayer and running to Him in times of need, highlighting that many people fail to experience this refuge due to a lack of genuine faith. Cymbala encourages believers to seek God's presence, especially during times of trouble, as it is there that they can find peace, direction, and healing. He reminds the congregation that God invites everyone to come and hide under His wings, offering protection from life's challenges and the enemy's accusations. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper reliance on God through prayer and a recognition of His constant love and care.

Transcript

Here's your verse for today. It's a beautiful verse that expresses more than you would think. Here's the verse, Psalm 36, verse seven.

Listen. How priceless is your unfailing love, both high and low among men, find refuge in the shadow of your wings. Listen.

How priceless is your unfailing love, your mercy, your long-suffering, that love that never quits. How many happy God has a love that never quits? How many would not be here if it wasn't for God's love that never quits? Both high and low among men, find refuge in the shadow of your wings. The psalmist first establishes this fact.

How priceless is your unfailing love? And then he says, men of high and low degree run and find refuge in the shadow of your wings. Now, many times in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, God is likened to a bird, a mother hen who has wings. And under stress, the little ones run and find safety and protection under the wings of that eagle or that hen or some bird.

It's many times mentioned in the Psalms and in the prophets that we find refuge under your wings or all the delight of just resting under your wings. Some people think it's also a reference to the presence of God that was manifest in the temple and first in the tabernacle because in the Holy of Holies, there was an arc about from here to here and about this wide and inside of it was a replica or copy of the Ten Commandments, possibly something from Aaron's life, also the high priest, and then covering it was the mercy seat made of gold, pure gold. But on either side of this box and on top of it on the mercy seat were two angelic carvings of gold angelic, I should say, yeah, angelic beings with wings hovering over that carved, not live, carved of gold hovering over the mercy seat that way and then covering over this way.

So some of the commentators believe that when the psalmist or people like that talked about we run to the protection and we hide in under your wings, it meant not only that God is like a great bird who protects his little ones under the shadow of his wings, but that it reminded them of in the Holy of Holies, there were these angelic beings with their wings and there was total protection in that wonderful presence of God. Now what's also interesting about this verse, which I just learned in the last 12 months studying the Psalms myself, was that the word that's most used in the Old Testament for trust, New Testament we had the word faith most often used, but in the Old Testament you'll find the word translated usually trust and the Hebrew word for trust is someone who runs and hides under the protection of something or someone else. So when the Bible says I will put my trust in you, it meant that word trust, I will run to where you are and I will get underneath your protection, I will hide under your wings and under there I will be safe.

Now the Bible says faith without works is what? Dead. And trust or faith without prayer is probably very questionable that it's really trust and prayer, really trust or faith. In other words, when you trust in God, you pray to God.

When you don't pray to God, you don't trust in God because trust expresses itself in running to God with your needs, your petitions, your trouble, amen? A lot of people have mental faith or mental trust in God or mental faith, they believe that God is, but that's very dangerous because James tells us the half brother of our Lord, even the demons have that kind of faith, they believe that Jesus existed, are you kidding? They were there when he was born. So that kind of faith without that heart dependence on God that runs to God and says God hide me, hold me, help me, God hide me. Haven't you found in your life that God is a hiding place? Haven't you found in your life yet that when you run to God and pray, he can actually hold you? I've been at times in my life where I didn't think I could preach a sermon or get through a day and it was only God holding me to help me get through it.

He hides us, he holds us, he helps us. So this beautiful picture of a bird, a little bird, running to the nest where the mother is and hiding under the mother and under those wings totally safe because when you're under the wings of God, the only way somebody can get to you is to get past God. And how many know nobody's getting past God? The dangerous spot is to be out there flying around on your own.

In fact, they've studied certain kinds of birds that when the chicks just learn to fly and they're out there flying around, predator birds are just waiting them to come out of the nest. And as they're starting to fly and flopping their wings for the first time and they're fluttering around, the predator birds are watching and boom, they zoom in like jet planes and they're coming at those birds and the birds realize, uh-oh, I'm in trouble. And where do they head? They run to that nest.

And they're squeaking and caulking and making all those weird noises and they run right under that mother and the mother spreads out its wings and those other birds have to disappear because the mother

will go out there and wipe them all out. Praise God, isn't that a beautiful picture? That we're safe under the wings of God. Now, a lot of people don't like that.

They just feel that Christianity is a mental configuration of doctrines and if you just believe right, everything will be fine. But it's more than that. You need sound doctrine, but Jesus said men ought always to pray.

Men ought always to run to God and he will protect you. And that's really what prayer is to me. When I came here and knelt this morning, I was running to God and asking God to help me, protect me, guide me.

You know, it's just so safe to be in God's presence, isn't it? How many know the feeling I'm talking about? To find your place, it's all over the Psalms. Oh, but wait a minute. I just thought of another verse.

Remember what Jesus said right around this time 2,000 years ago? He looked at Jerusalem and he wept over the city and he said, Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem, how many times I would have gathered you like a mother hen would gather her chicks and I would have protected you. Jesus was likening himself there to a bird, which sounds almost disrespectful, but it's a figure in the scriptures that God uses over and over again. How many times I would have gathered you, but you would not.

People who believe that you're either predestined to hell or you're predestined to heaven, that you have no choice and all of that. That's a very powerful verse against that position because it makes Jesus look ludicrous. If we can't choose to come to him and choose not to come to him, why is he crying over that city? It would be like I'm crying over you even though I programmed you that you couldn't come to me, but oh Jerusalem, if you would have only come even though I know you can't come because I made it so you can't come.

No, that's ridiculous. Whosoever will may come. We don't understand everything about God's foreknowledge and his sovereignty, but we know one thing.

He invites everybody, stretches out his hands, and he says, come, come to me and hide. Probably the most sanctified life, the most godly life is the person who lives under those wings all the time. That's probably what it means to walk in the spirit.

That's probably what it means That's probably what it means to walk in the spirit. The only safe place, the overcoming Christian life, is to know that, you know what, the only safe place I have is under his wings. Even if I'm gonna preach, I better be under his wings.

Even if I'm gonna go to job tomorrow, I'm gonna ride the A train, but I'm gonna be under his wings. Especially be under his wings on the A train. I rode on the A train the other day.

You need to be under his wings. Just safe there. Safe from what? Let me just give you a couple that came to my heart today.

Number one, when the devil is accusing you because of your sins and your failures, the only place you can hide from that, both high and low, will find refuge in the shadow of your wings, is to run to God and to the blood of the new covenant which cleanses us from all our sins. And if the devil is here accusing you of what you did 20 years ago, 20 days ago, 20 hours ago, whatever it might be, by reasoning it and trying to excuse it, you will not help yourself. Just run to God.

He's that big mother beautiful bird that says, come and hide under my wings. I'll give you peace. I'll give you that calm tranquility that you need.

I don't want you to live all condemned and nervous and all of that. I want you to have peace. If you're assaulted by temptations, if the enemy comes in like a flood, the only place you can find hiding from all of that is under the wings of God.

That's why the Bible says in another psalm, it is good to draw near to God. My soul, draw near to God. Come near to God and stay there.

A lot of us are fighting battles God never intended us to fight. The devil's too strong for all of us. How many say amen? But we can run to God and let him fight our battles.

He says, Jesus said, I give you my peace. Not you'll have peace. I give you my peace.

I'm gonna do it. God will protect you from the enemy and all the tricks that he has and from heartbreak. One of the most dangerous times of temptation in your life is when your heart's been broken.

When someone's let you down, someone close to you, someone that you love, somebody who you're vulnerable to, a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, a sibling. I just was counseling somebody on Sunday who's just had a knife put in their back by their own sister. Very ugly stuff.

From your own sibling, who would do that? It happens, doesn't it? I won't look, but how many have ever been hurt by a family member? Just lift up one little finger like this, okay? Right. We all know that. Where are you gonna go when your heart is broken? Both high and low, we'll find refuge in the shadow of your wings.

You can run to God with your heartache. I don't know how he does it. All I know is you can run to God and he will cover you.

And when he covers you, you can just relax. He will heal the pain, that bleeding that's going on in your heart that's been broken. He'll protect you from the enemy and all those little arrows that he's shooting at you.

All the condemnation that the enemy in your conscience tries to bring you under, only close to God in the shadow of his wings. Look at it up in the Psalms. It's over and over again.

The righteous will run and hide in the shadow of your wings. In the shadow of your presence, we find rest and safety, oh God. Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem, how many times I would have gathered you, I would have protected you.

It could have been so different if you just would have come to me and let me cover you. You know, Pastor Todd was speaking about his big night coming up on April 5th. We're gonna have the whole church behind that.

But Pastor Todd's an interesting case because Pastor Todd came from upstate New York to this church with basically a testimony of God wants me to be here. We didn't know him, I didn't know him from Adam. No, God wants me to be here.

What can I do? Well, we have no job. Well, what can I volunteer for? So he ended up working over labeling books or something over at the then Learning Center that we had across the street. I didn't know him very well.

I just heard there's this great young guy who loves the Lord and feels God's call on his life and he's just here and he travels all the way from West Point. Wasn't it West Point you were coming down from? West Point, you know where West Point is? That's where the Military Academy is. That's a hall.

How long one way? Two hours one way. And he's coming here making not even peanuts. We just gave him the shells, not even the peanuts to eat.

But I started to notice that like tonight, prayer meeting, we would end and this guy would be in the corner on the ground kneeling. Sometimes I notice he'd be sitting one time. I remember sitting in the corner, sitting right where the altar is, the steps I should say, and that, and everybody would get done praying and waiting and there he would be.

I remember it so many times. Never talked to him, didn't know him. So I said to one of the pastors, what's the deal with Tom? They said he just, he wants God's direction.

See, that's another thing you find when you're under the shadow of his wings. If you're thinking just with your brain and you're trying to figure out what to do, you can really make a big mistake. But if you draw near to God and you just rest under the shadow of his wings and you just relax, oh, that's my father.

He's gonna protect me. Father, talk to me. Tell me what you want me to do.

Oh, it's so good to draw near to God. Brothers and sisters, right as I close, the best days of our life is when we're near to God, right? What are the worst days of our life? When we're so busy and we're running and we're hyper and we're type A and we're doing everything. This is why services that don't have prayer, I have trouble with.

I don't wanna argue with anyone visiting here today. I really have a trouble understanding how you could have a Christian service and not have a time to pray when God said my house shall be called a house of prayer. Why? Because it's not preaching only and it's not singing only.

It's running to those wings and getting under them. Like we had this beautiful hour from 12 to one of just running there. Haven't you ever been in trouble and run to God? Come on, am I the only one who's ever been in trouble? Haven't you ever been in trouble and run to him and he's helped you, right? With a broken heart or just being assaulted in your mind.

You know, you run to God. But you also find direction because God spoke to Pastor Todd. Not only direction, but that's where God shapes you very often.

Just in his presence. Don't have to be talking. Don't have to be saying things.

Talk to God. That's part of prayer. But waiting, resting.

Thank you, God, that you love me, that you care for me. The mess that I am, you still love me. Like a mother hen spreads her wings over those babies and those babies just know, mm, it's so good here.

Let's close our eyes. If you need to come under the shadow of his wings right now, for one of the reasons I've already mentioned, some attack, some assault, condemnation, direction needed, broken heart, bleeding heart, I'm telling you, there are seasons of refreshing that come from the presence of the Lord. That's Acts chapter three.

Turn to God so that you can enjoy seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. If you're here today, we're all gonna sit and just pray for a short season here. But if you're here today and say, I'd love someone to just agree with me that God will let me come under his wings.

I wanna come under his wings. Pastor, it's so hot and I'm so harried. I'm so discombobulated.

I'm so worn out. Ah, that's why God said my house should be called a house of prayer because it's under those wings that we find so many good blessings from the Lord. If you're here, you're in one of those situations, just come out of your seat right now and stand in the front.

We'll pray with you gently. We don't know what your problem is, so we're not gonna pray real loud. We pray that starting right now tonight until Friday and then till Sunday that you will keep us alert.

And ready to speak a word for you, to invite, to pray over, to love, to show mercy, to help somebody, someone that you died for. Help us to have the same heart over New York City that you had over Jerusalem. Not to be angry with sinners, but to love them and to talk to them.

And when we're rebuffed or insulted, to turn the other cheek and move on, Lord. But use us this week to bring light and life into someone's existence, especially to bring them to the house of the Lord. Bless the Friday night, bless Easter Sunday, all the services.

And now, Lord, we lift up this compel night on April 5th. It's about 10 days away, but Lord, we are praying you're gonna so anoint Pastor Todd, so bless that gathering of 20-somethings that eye has not seen, ear has not heard what you're gonna do, Lord, among the people of that age group and across the street that you will so bless and lead and anoint Pastor J.C. Mejia that the youth will gather by the hundreds, not just to gather, not just to have fun, but to love Jesus, to find Jesus, to trust Jesus, and to give you all the praise. Thank you for the body of Christ.

Thank you for my brothers and sisters who I love, Lord. Bless us now as we dismiss. Get us all home safely, I pray in Jesus' name.

And everyone said.

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