

A close-up photograph of a dark red granite surface with a speckled texture of lighter-colored minerals. The text is overlaid on this image.

Red Granite

**16 Daily
Devotions**

PSALM 91

**brought to you by
Marshall Jones**

**Published by
Red Thread Poets**

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ENDORSEMENTS

From : Jessica Reavis-Christensen,

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=forged%20by%20fire%3B%20iron%20sharpening%20iron>

I'm a former Recreational Leader of the New Lisbon Correctional Institution and I have to say that I am SO thankful for the 9 months I got to spend in prison. I would have never understood the need for prison reform if it wasn't for my experience.

When I was hired at N.L.C.I., I came in with the understanding that my position was to help rehabilitate the men to become successful citizens of society. I encouraged them to put the work in during their time, so they would have the tools to thrive in their freedom. Well, administration did not like that. The administration was threatened by the joy and empowerment that I brought to Recreation. They didn't like that the men were choosing healthy outlets, they didn't like that the countenance of the general population was lifting, they didn't like that the men were excited to be treated with humanity rather than unimportant scum. My time in prison was cut short because of the administration feeling threatened by the atmosphere I brought to the dark institution. Light is not wanted within those walls and that is something I believe needs to change.

After 40 days of unpaid administrative leave, I was terminated on Friday, December 13th 2019 for "not passing probationary standards". It didn't matter that all the programming I had added and built upon was changing the atmosphere in the institution for the better. They needed a scapegoat to get rid of me, and "not passing probationary standards" was it. Friday, December 13th was a day of sadness but also a day of resolution. As I drove away from N.L.C.I., no longer employed by the DOC, I made a pivotal decision to write Marshall Jones.

Marshall Jones was one of four inmate workers that assisted me in my Rec Leader position. He lead fitness classes, reffed all competitive events, assisted setting up Rec events, helped encourage men that came to Recreation, and counseled the men to prepare for their release. Marshall's conduct spoke for itself and I could see he was a man of his word by the actions displayed. He worked hard in Rec and Marshall worked even harder doing his time by becoming a published author of his first book, "A Raven's Meal". While working with Marshall, I learned he was serving a double life sentence, and I was shocked he would be there for the rest of his life. The reason I was shocked was because Marshall lived more free within the walls of that prison than any other person I've met in my life. How is that possible? It was possible because of the faith he so boldly lives. Marshall was incarcerated at 21 years old and has served 17 years of his sentence. When I drove away from N.L.C.I. I decided I wanted Marshall to know that he was remembered by someone. I wanted him to know he made an impact on my life by living the way he did within the walls of prison. I wanted him to know that despite the circumstances, I wanted to extend the olive branch of becoming his friend. Writing Marshall Jones was one of the best choices I have ever made in my life.

I believe so many men like Marshall are deserving of a second chance. This is something I wouldn't have ever understood if I didn't have my time in prison, working closely with the general population. There is a deep need for prison reform and Marshall is the perfect story of a cast away finding redemption. I know how many second chances I have had. I believe it's time for those who have proven rehabilitation exists, get their second chance. To make evident their efforts aren't for nothing.

From: Kelli

Comment from Kelli, who read the Climb, a poem by Marshall on Red Thread Poets Website
www.redthreadpoets.com/the-climb/

Re: The Climb, by Marshall Jones

This poem personally speaks to my heart because I know the struggle of many who are fighting for their freedom from incarceration. Prisons are full of people who have been given unmerciful harsh sentencing who are just wanting to be given a chance to redeem themselves in society to help others. God wants to use those who have surrendered their hearts to His Son Jesus Christ who's incarcerated to become the mentors for our youths in today's culture. God has a plan for every individual's life. Keeping people confined to incarceration who God need to be Ambassadors for His Kingdom is certainly not the answer. Treating all people how one would want to be treated should be the defining moment when passing a judgment onto others. Love and mercy covers a multitude of sins. God and the Lord Jesus are expressing love and mercy everyday towards all people and humanity must practice in doing the same. God Bless all who read this comment and take it to heart.

From: Peter W Stevens,

Friend to the Founder of Red Thread Poets (Our Triune God). www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/peter-will/

I met Marshall through Jessica. We have become very close brothers in just a few short months emailing everyday. I live north of Toronto in Canada and was building a website to glorify God and honour poets. Red Thread Poets. Marshall sent me his poems, i have his book a Raven's Meal and he is one of our honoured poets on the site. HOWEVER it is his daily devotionals under the 'banner 'RED GRANITE' that show his anointing - they are high impact for me every day. We post them in Facebook under Red Thread Poets, and recap them on the website. <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions/>. Marshall is DEARLY LOVED, peter

INTRODUCTION

From Psalm 91:8

Abiding in the Lord is mandatory in any successful believer's lives. We have to be in the presence of the Lord and allow His presence to dwell within us. Without this, we are vulnerable, easy targets for the enemy to sneak in and attack. Sometimes, the attack is physically felt, but sometimes, it is emotionally and mentally felt, which is a lot harder to overcome a lot of the time than physical. When we look at Psalm 91, it is easy to look at the plagues and pestilences, the terrors and the arrows, and believe that this is what Psalm 91 is about. We look at this world and how crazy it has gotten, and we tend to wonder is this all the world is about now; division, war, disease, dissensions, and hatred? Sadly, people fail to see this world as the place God created so that we could fellowship with Him, and also the place where He ordained us to have dominion. How does so much powerlessness exist in a world that we are supposed to exercise dominion in? The answer is simple. We are failing to dwell in the presence of the Lord continuously, to receive His Lordship and direction, to fellowship with the Lord under His terms.

WHY KJV (King James Version)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

This is one of my favorite Bible verses, a constant source of encouragement for me to dig deeper and deeper into the Word of God to receive truth in its deepest form. I believe it is our job as believers to study as deep as we can, and then build our way up. The King James Version of the Bible is one of most popular early translations of the Bible to English, so that is where my study begins. I have come to learn that by putting the King James Version side by side with other translations that may be easier to read, that easier doesn't always keep the deeper meaning intact. The "thee", "thy", and "ye" can be a little overwhelming at first, but as with anything else we study continuously, it will become easier to decipher.

The Bible I use, the KJV AMG Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible, gives me an enormous tool to not only study the Word of God from an earlier English translation, but gives me access to study the keywords in the Scripture to find the deeper meaning of the verses I study. The more I studied the Word of God, the deeper I wanted to go. When I first started my incarceration over 17 years ago, I read the NIV version of the Bible. As I matured as a reader, I went back to the King James Version in 2007, wanting to learn the most difficult English translation. I went to the Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible in 2014 and have been using it since. I recently was given a MacArthur Study Bible, NASB, which I use for scriptural cross-references and commentary purposes. I am in no way saying it is wrong for anyone to study any translation other than the King James Version, but I do suggest that everyone possesses one, so we can break down the Word of Truth side by side. It is important to go to the earliest possible translation, to see the modernized translations accurately convey the Word of God.

Studying the Word of God pleases Him, and I desire to break down the Scriptures rightly, understanding that by studying the Word of God, I am breaking down truth so I can position myself for the Holy Spirit's teaching. Whatever I learn, I then share, and by sheer repetition, I am able to retain what I learn better.

May the study of God's Word release amazing truths and powerful revelations in your lives.

God Bless!
Marshall Jones

PSALM 91 from The King James Version

- 1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
- 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
- 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
- 6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
- 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.
- 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.
- 9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;
- 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.
- 12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
- 14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
- 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

PSALM 91 PRAYER

Lord God I thank you that he that dwells in the secret place of the Most High will abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, you are my refuge and my fortress, my God in you I will trust. Surely you will deliver me from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. I will trust You will hide me under your feathers and under your wings. Your truth will be my shield and my buckler. I will not be afraid of the terror by night, neither of the arrow that flies by day, neither of the pestilence that walks in darkness, and neither of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. For though a thousand would fall at my side and ten-thousand at my right hand it will not come near me. Only with my eyes will I behold and see the reward of the wicked because I have made the Lord, even the Most High, my refuge and my habitation. And there shall no evil befall me neither shall any plague come near my dwelling. For you will give your angels charge over me to keep me in all my ways, and they will bear me up in their hands lest I dash my foot upon a stone. And I will tread upon the lion and the adder the young lion and the dragon I will trample underfoot. You will deliver me because I have set my love upon you. You will set me on high because I have known your name. I will call upon you, and you will answer me: You will be with me in trouble, and deliver me, and honor me. With long life will you satisfy me and show me your salvation., in Jesus Name. Amen

Psalm 91:1 - He that dwelleth in the secret place

This is a brand new year, a year where most of the world is under the shadow of Covid 19,, under the oppression of sin, and fear is more prevalent than faith. Rebellion is at an all-time high, and there is a blatant disregard for the well being of others. We are hurting as a people and when we search for solutions we are bombarded with more problems. Amid so many problems, what is the common thread? The world is becoming more and more Godless, and lawlessness is at levels unfathomable. There are over 2 billion Christians, but only a small number of those have a viable, personal relationship with God. I used to be a "church goer", a ritualistic, religious practice, where I felt good to be in the house of God, but had no victory in my life in the other 6 and a half days of the week. I didn't have a strong relationship with God, and it really showed. In order for us as believers to have victory in this day and age, a close, personal relationship with God and the infilling of the Holy Spirit is mandatory. Today, we are going to look at Psalms 91:1 and draw closer to the secret place of God.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The word "dwelleth" means "to settle or remain". The phrase "secret place" means "covering". Okay, so to settle means that make ourselves a permanent residence in any set location. So we are to make ourselves at home under the covering of our God. This is an intimate place of divine protection. In Psalms 27:4-5, the Bible says, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock." Our secret place is in the Spirit, in prayer, a place the enemy can't inhabit. We have to have a desire as believers to fellowship with God in His secret place, to make ourselves a home under His covering, because it is the only place of true safety. In Psalms 15:1-2, the Bible says, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." Dwelling in the secret place of the Most High has conditions as well, and we have to live the change God places in our hearts. We can't be people who go to church but people can't see the church in us. In Exodus 33:14, the Bible says, "And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Why is that? Simple. Because in Exodus 33:11, the Bible says, "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle." The Lord spake face to face with Moses, showing an intimate relationship between them. How many of us speak face to face with the Lord? Prayer, open communication with God, studying God's Word, and giving Him reign to lead us is how we make residence in the secret place.

"Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"

The word "abide" means "to live, with the implication that it will be forever". This isn't some fleeting experience. God wants this to be a permanent experience for His children. In John 15:4, the Bible says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can

ye, except ye abide in me." Us trying to bear fruit without the Lord is like being a 2x6 board trying to grow leaves. We aren't attached to the root, so we are not receiving our sustenance from God, the Source of our provision. This verse is conditional, because we can't abide under the shadow of the Almighty unless we dwell in the secret place of the Most High. The word "shadow" means "shade or defense". Defense usually implies protection, which means that God backs us when we dwell with Him. In Psalms 17:8, the Bible says, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings". If a person is the "apple of the eye" the person is special to the person who beholds them. We are truly special to our God and we become even more special to God when we dwell under His shadow. In Jeremiah 17:7, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." We are blessed when we dwell in that secret place of the Most High and abide under His shadow. Blessed people can't be cursed, blessed people are protected, and blessed people are cared for under God's watchful eye.

Are we dwelling in the secret place or are we residing in fear? Are we engaging in prayer or are we afflicted by worry? Are we seeking God's face or are we turning our face towards the cares of the world? May we recommit ourselves to fellowshiping with God in a way we haven't before.

Psalm 91:2 - my God; in Him will I trust

Is God really our refuge? Let's take an inventory of whether or not God is truly our refuge. Simple question. When a storm comes, where do we turn for answers? Refuge isn't just a habitation, but it is a place people turn to for safety and protection from whatever storms come their way. When we are lost in a world of sin, our refuge becomes some of the most harmful things conceivable, far worse than what we were running from in the first place. But here's the thing. Even as believers, we can take refuge in the wrong people and places! I will be the first to admit that God was not my first option for refuge in a lot of situations I found myself in. But He let me get stuck in them so much that now the first name I want to call is God's! Until God becomes our refuge, our first option and our only source for protection and rest we will constantly find ourselves absent of the peace we desire. Today we are going to look at Psalms 91:2, for a look on God's refuge.

"I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

The word "say" here isn't just lip service. It is intended for actions to follow His word! The verse says, "I will say of the Lord". The word "will" is a term of certainty. How many people hear us speak of our Lord? In Mark 11:23, Jesus says, "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." What we say activates our faith, and what we receive of the Lord sometimes is the result of what comes out of our mouths. In Proverbs 18:21, the Bible says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." Whoa! Death and Life? The tongue has power? In Matthew 12:34, Jesus says, "O generation of vipers, how can ye,

being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks?" What is inside of our hearts will come out by the words we speak, and the words we speak are evidence of where our refuge is. We can say "Lord, Lord" all we want, but until our actions show we seek the Lord for refuge, we will be all talk, and no power.

"He is my refuge and my fortress"

He is. Our God still IS! He is not the God of our past, the God of Acts that no longer works the works He did then. In Hebrews 13:8, the Bible says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever". I remember feeling disconnected to God, like He was my Auntie's God, but He wasn't my God. Remember, death and life are in the power of the tongue! When is God going to be OUR God, OUR refuge, OUR fortress? If God is someone else's refuge and fortress, then we don't have access to the provision, but if God is OUR refuge and fortress, then we have access to His safety, protection and provision. In Proverbs 18:10, the Bible says, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Whoa! So the NAME of the Lord IS a strong tower? Not was. IS! When we begin to understand that we can place complete trust in the NAME of the Lord and be safe, then when will we place complete trust in the Lord? The word "refuge" means "shelter from harm". The word "fortress" means "net or castle". God needs to be our refuge and our fortress for Him to reign in our lives.

"My God; in him will I trust"

The word "trust" here means, "hie for refuge". The word "hie" means "to run towards by instinct". That means that the first thing we do when a storm comes, or a battle surfaces, or even when we just want to fellowship with God. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Seek the kingdom of God first. The first person we seek is the person we place the greatest value in, the person we expect to get the job done. Do we really trust in OUR God? If so, our instincts should lead us to God first for refuge, and we then should seek Him fully expecting Him to give us the refuge we desire. In Hebrews 4:16, the Bible says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Boldly! Bold people seek with the intention of not leaving until they receive what they seek. That is trusting our Lord too. Our actions have to follow our professions to trust in the Lord. God is not seeking lip service from His children, but He is seeking a people that would put Him first in all things.

May we claim God to be our perfect refuge and fortress, and may our instincts reflect the trust we place in the Lord.

Psalm 91:3 - Surely He shall deliver thee

As believers, we will come upon some hard moments. It is inevitable, but one thing we can do is rest assured that when these times come, that not only will God be right there, but He will deliver us with either grace or removal. God won't remove everything from our path, nor will He remove us from everything that comes our way, because sometimes God equips us with his grace to endure. That is deliverance as well, because knowing we can endure something removes the agony of the ordeal itself. In 2 Corinthians 12:8-10, the Bible says, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." See, the recognition of God's grace in the midst of struggle became deliverance, because there was a changing of the mind, and that change allowed Paul to receive God's strength with pleasure. God's deliverance should always produce joy, because freedom should make anyone happy. Today, we are going to look at Psalm 91:3, a word on deliverance.

"Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence."

"Surely he shall". This phrase is filled with certainty about what God will do. When we are afflicted, do we, as believers, have an unwavering trust in the Lord to deliver us, or our minds, out of a bad situation? Our instincts should be to run to the Lord for refuge, but are our instincts to trust in the Lord to deliver us? In Hebrews 11:6, the Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We have to believe that God IS, meaning "God exists", and He rewards us that diligently seek Him. When a person is diligent, they are determined to seek the fruit of their search, and they carry the resiliency to not stop until they find it. When we are afflicted, are we diligently seeking God the same way we are seeking to be delivered. The word "deliver" means "to snatch away", and it is the power of one force overcoming the power of another. When a person snatches someone away, then that usually implies an undeniable intention to free someone from the grasp of bondage. God is that person who has snatched us away from bondage and placed us into healing, snatched us away from death and placed us into eternal life, snatched us away from strongholds placing us on fertile ground full of seed. In Jeremiah 39:17-18, the Bible says, "But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD." God doesn't debate about delivering His children. When God decides to do it, He sets it into motion and it happens. Nothing can stand against the deliverance of our Lord, and the reason is because "thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord". If we don't trust in the Lord for deliverance, then we shouldn't expect it.

The word "snare" is "a spring loaded net" or "a bird trap". A snare is laid out in advance designed to catch a bird in a hungry and vulnerable moment, when they don't expect a trap. That is how the enemy works, by baiting a trap and getting us to follow after the bait until we are "ensnared" by the trap. Yep, the enemy lays

out bait, and the bait is very attractive. In Proverbs 27:7, the Bible says, "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." The enemy relies on our hunger because he knows hunger produces vulnerability. The enemy came to tempt Jesus after He fasted for 40 days and tried to use His hunger against Him. As badly as we want to blame everything on Satan, we have to hold ourselves accountable. In James 1:14, the Bible says, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." So our own lusts draw us away, and cause us to become enticed into sin. Our own failure to trust God for deliverance is the reason why we find ourselves still ensnared. We are looking for everyone else to free us but God. The verse says, "Surely he shall deliver thee", so when are we going to start believing?

"and from the noisome pestilence"

The word "noisome" means "rushing upon to ruin, destructive". When something is noisome, it is not designed to leave anything standing. The word "pestilence" means "plague". God's deliverance is from sin, from destruction, and from the traps of the enemy, all threatening to ruin us.

May we trust in the Lord's deliverance.

Psalm 91:4 – He shall cover thee with His feathers

We all need God's covering in our lives. There is no greater protection we have other than God's, but a lot of times, we will slide out from under His protection, and try to go at it alone. Do we fully grasp that there is a war waiting for us, that the enemy is hard at work trying to pluck us from the hand of God? He doesn't sleep, and he always is plotting to influence us into our demise. He won't play fair either, so we have to secure ourselves in the presence of God, to make sure that we won't fall prey to the enemy's attacks. Our loving God thoroughly protects His children, and when we fully rely on this truth, He will be the one we turn to for safety at all times. Today, we are going to look at Psalm 91:4 and develop a picture of how our God protects us.

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

"He shall" is a definite phrase letting us know that it is going to happen. God gives us His Word first, then His action following our faith in the Word gives us the assurance that God makes good on His Word at all times. When a person has proven themselves to be trustworthy, it becomes way easier to trust in them. In Psalm 124:6, the Bible says, "Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth." A Word of faith is a Word where there is a belief based on both Word and action. When God's protection is experienced, this verse makes a world of sense. The word "cover" means "to entwine, fence in, defend, and protect". That means there is some real intention behind protecting and hiding us from the enemy. Look at how a fence is

designed. There is tons of reinforcement involved, aimed at keeping things in and things out, and it has stakes that are dug deep into the ground to keep the fence standing securely. That's what God does for us. Do we trust our God for this level of protection? With being fenced in, there is a security that will produce rest. In Psalm 20:7, the Bible says, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." The Lord's name alone is real protection, so imagine what His presence does! In Deuteronomy 32:11-12, the Bible says, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." This is a perfect picture of the Lord covering us with His feathers. When we are covered by God's feathers, we are not visible to the enemy, because we are so camouflaged by the presence of our Lord. The enemy sees our Lord and flees because he doesn't stand a chance!

"And under his wings shalt thou trust"

The word "trust" means "flee to for protection", but it also means "to confide in". Think about 1 Peter 5:7, which says, "Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you". When we confide in the Lord, we bring Him our petitions and entrust our lives and direction to His care. When we try to trust in our own power, the minute we begin to say "I can handle this on my own", we make the decision to step out from under God's covering, making us vulnerable to attack. A baby bird has everything they need right in the nest, so we have to embrace the truth that we have everything we need with God. If we are believers but don't confide in God, nor flee to Him for protection, then we have effectively crippled God's impact in our lives. In Proverbs 3:5, the Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding". Trust is pivotal to any relationship, and it is no different with our relationship with God. If we don't trust in God, then we will deny Him access to certain parts of our lives. That's why the Bible says, "Casting ALL your care" and "Trust in the Lord with ALL thine heart", because God wants it ALL. Protection is only effective when we trust our Protector, when we stay close to our Protector, where we make ourselves available to be protected.

"His truth shall be thy shield and buckler"

The word "truth" means "faithfulness". So it is HIS faithfulness that will protect us, because God always makes good on His Word. In Ephesians 6:16, the Bible says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." The shield is what soldiers use to protect themselves against the attacks of the wicked, but we have to have faith to clothe ourselves with the shield. If we don't trust God at His word, and trust Him to protect us, then we are without protection and the enemy will have a field day with us! God doesn't want us to rely on our faithfulness, but He desires us to rely on HIS faithfulness. If we protect ourselves with His word and His faithfulness, then nothing can stand against it.

Will we trust God enough to remain in the secret place, secure under His feathers, where the enemy can't get to us?

Psalms 91:5 - Thou shalt not be afraid

No one is exempt from fear. Being afraid is a normal human emotion, and being afraid is the mind's warning system to seek protection. Fight, flight, or freeze are the decisions that we make when we are afraid, and our response can be as natural as the fear that tries to overtake us. When we become more Christ centered, more spiritually driven, then we allow God to change our response to fear. Those who once froze in fear learn how to fight, those who ran learned how to fight, and those who fight have learned how to fight with the right weaponry. When Satan changes our response to fear, it now becomes an enemy we have to fight and overcome, but when we realize that we are under God's protection, there is nothing to fear. There is nothing to fear because we are in the presence of God, which is why when angels appeared to people, one of the first things they say is "fear not". When we remain in the presence of God, a war can be raging around us, but there is nothing to be afraid of. The presence of our Lord keeps us safe. Today, we are going to look at Psalms 91:5, fearlessness in war.

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;"

The word "afraid" means "frightened". We are sheep, in need of our Shepherd to keep us fed and safe, but a wolf's job is to rush at the flock, to incite fear, causing sheep to scatter and flee. A vulnerable sheep is one who is separated from the flock, from the protection of the Shepherd, and is the one that is most subject to attack. In 1 Peter 5:8, the Bible says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Lions scatter flocks too, and the enemy is traveling, looking for easy targets. The word "terror" means "alarm or dread" and the word "night" has a deeper meaning I want us to consider. The word "night" means "adversity, signifying the gloom or despair that sometimes overtakes the heart from the lack of God's presence". So the word of God says that we won't be frightened by the dread of gloom from being absent from God's presence! In Micah 3:6, they had a real reason to be afraid, because it says, "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them." Darkness signifies the absence of God's presence, the lack of His word, and there would be no warnings, and therefore, no protection from the enemy. In 2 Peter 1:19, the Bible says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." The Word of God is a light in a dark place, so we can see clearly the path we have to take, and see the enemy when he tries to advance.

"Nor the arrow that flieth by day"

Just because we walk in Light, living by the Word, and abiding in the presence of God, it does not mean the enemy won't hurl some arrows in our direction. It doesn't mean that the arrows won't get close! In Ephesians 6:16, the Bible says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Wait a minute, so the enemy will try to attack someone who has on the full armor of God? With not just arrows, but FIERY darts! In Psalm 64:1-4, the Bible says, "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from

the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not." Our enemy is not going to make his agenda known, and desires to catch us by surprise. David asked God to preserve his life "from FEAR of the enemy", not from the enemy. He understood that fear had to be put in check, and David was a valiant warrior, but is unafraid to express to God that he is afraid. So being a warrior isn't about being fearless. It's about addressing our fears, giving them over to God and allowing Him to replace our fear with courage. The enemy isn't afraid to attack us, and he won't be. God has given us a secret place to dwell in, where there is nothing to fear, where we can get the strength and the courage we need to get victory over the enemy. Only by remaining in the presence of our Lord will we have the protection to be unafraid.

May we all develop the courage in the Lord to stand rooted in Him even when we are afraid. We will find that there is no reason to be afraid!

Psalm 91:6 - Nor for the pestilence

Being under the covering and protection of our Lord affords us a security that we wouldn't have otherwise. There is real safety in the presence of the Lord, but sadly, knowing this isn't enough for us, and sometimes, we find ourselves straying further away from the secret place of God. We talked about what the secret place is, how it protects us, how our God hides us in His feathers so we not as visible to predators, and how there is nothing to fear by the absence of God's presence because we haven't removed ourselves from His care. As believers, we can't become blind to what is going on around us, because what is happening in the world is the evidence that we definitely need more and more of God's presence in this world. Covid isn't going away, and as vaccines roll out, we have record number of positive cases, and whole countries on lockdown, again. We are amid "silent killers" that don't have a face, and sometimes, don't bear any symptoms. Day and night we are taking losses, but no one really wants to admit that just maybe, a world becoming more and more Godless may just be contributing to it. Today, we are going to look at Psalm 91:6 and see some more things that the Most High God protects us from by our remaining in His secret place.

"Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

The word "pestilence" means "a destroying plague". Yesterday's verse 5 and today's verse 6 are connected, because the Bible is telling believers what we don't have to fear. Let us not be naive and think that bad things aren't happening, and won't happen in our world. God is trying to show us that by us remaining in the secret place, putting our trust in the Lord's presence, we will be safe from all of the stuff. If God is telling us that we shall not be afraid, then He obviously has shown us that we are secure in Him. The word "walketh" means "travels or spreads". Pestilence won't stay stationary and it will keep spreading until it reaches immunity, similar to a broken chain. In Exodus 12:29, the Bible says, "And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne

unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." The plague of death spread until every firstborn who was not covered under God's protection in Egypt died. Look at this. There were limitations God placed upon the plague, and boundaries for how far it spreads. God gave Israel instructions to spread the blood across their door posts. In Exodus 12:13, the Bible says, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." There was nothing for Israel to be afraid of because they obeyed the Word of the Lord and the blood was a testimony of their obedience. So while Egypt was screaming in agony over all the death, Israel was completely safe in the secret place. "Darkness" here is physical darkness, also metaphorical, means it comes without being seen. In Exodus 12:12, the Bible says, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this NIGHT and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD." God wasn't playing with this plague. God even afflicted false gods!!

"Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday"

The word "destruction" means "to be cut off from salvation; to experience ruin". The word "wasteth" means "to devastate". God has us covered from this too, and it is all because we remain in His presence, under His feathers, receiving His protection. In Job 5:22, the Bible says, "At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth." So not only will we be safe when plagues and destruction come, but we will be able to laugh? That means we will be so far removed from what's going on that we will have joy in our hearts still, and it will be as if nothing is happening at all. In Lamentations 3:22-24 the Bible says, "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." Our Lord loves us and He desires for us all to receive His covering and protection. His mercy, or divine compassion, is never ending, so He is always trying to protect His children.

Do we trust in the Lord enough to stay put and place ourselves under His protection, His direction, and His leading? We have nothing to fear when we remain in his presence.

Psalm 91:7 - but it shall not come nigh thee

Being under God's protection will allow us to avoid experiencing terrible things that will happen to people around us. Look at how Covid has ripped through our world, how one person dies from it, and the next person goes unscathed. Society likes to place their own standard on who deserves bad things happen to them, without realizing that there has to be a loss of humanity in order for someone to make a statement like that. I have had a close family member despise the favor God was showing me at a time when my sister was dying, and another close family member despise me for God blessing me with a prison job that paid 19

cents an hour because they were struggling financially. People despise me for being at peace in prison with 2 life sentences without parole, because they can't seem to find peace when they can walk out of here whenever they choose. It doesn't mean I don't go through things, because I do every day, but I won't suffer as the world suffers because I try my best to remain under the feathers of my Lord Jesus Christ, abiding in the secret place with my God. From "the nest" I will see the terror by night, the arrow by day, the pestilence that spreads in darkness, and the destruction that happens in broad daylight, but I won't be the victim. Today, we will look at Psalm 91:7, and come to thank the Lord that we can see suffering, but we ourselves are protected from it.

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

The word "fall" has a ton of meanings, but let me share a few with you that are contextual to the Scripture. Fall means, "to be cast down, to die, to fall away, to perish, to rot away, to slay, to throw down". Ouch! I don't care what meaning we take in, it doesn't mean it is good news for us if we are the victims of this. God assured us in His Word that He would deliver us from the snare of the fowler, from the noisome pestilence, and He assured us that under His protection, we have a trust that none of these terrors would happen to us. In Genesis 7:23, the Bible says, "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark." Noah and his family were in the ark with all the animals God ordained to be there, and while they were safe and protected from the rain, the whole world died! Why Noah out of everyone? Why was Noah's family spared and the world was put to death? In Genesis 6:8-9, the Bible says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Noah was in the secret place of the Most High God and he remained in the presence of God. In Genesis 6:22, the Bible says, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." So Noah obeyed God, doing ALL God commanded him to do, and he was saved when a whole world drowned.

If I saw a thousand people fall at my side, that in itself would invoke terror. Imagine being in a stadium and a thousand people keel over and die right in front of us. Ouch, right? Then it says "ten thousand at thy right hand". The right hand normally symbolizes strength, and it also symbolizes the people closest to us! Ouch again, right? Noah probably lost a bunch of people he loved and called friends. Our salvation separates us from the people who are perishing, and sadly, we will be taken, while some of those we love the absolute most will be left behind to experience eternal damnation. We are safely in the secret place while those we care for are wandering as sheep without a Shepherd. In Genesis 18:19-21, the Bible says, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." God was planning to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, but He remembered Abraham who rested in the secret place of the Most High God, in the presence of our Lord. Abraham tried to intercede for Sodom, for Lot's sake, because He knew Lot rested in the secret place of the Most-High God as well, and so received favor to rescue Lot and his family. Imagine this. Abraham begged God to not destroy the city if He could find 10 righteous people there! 10 righteous people out of a whole city? Sadly, Lot's wife looked back when she was

told not to; and she turned into a pillar of salt! Abraham's family was saved while thousands fell all around them.

When we dwell in the presence of our Lord, resting in the secret place, we will be spectators to this, not the victims. May God give us the fortitude to choose His protection over punishment!

Psalm 91:8 – Only with thine eyes

In the last couple of months, I have seen more instances of civil disobedience, more instances of hatred, and more instances of lawlessness. Sadly, a lot of these people partaking in these overt acts of protest are professed Christians. This world has become less Godly and therefore, less loving, and wickedness abounds in our society. Amid a major pandemic that is taking more lives than anything we have seen in history, people aren't making the connection with what is happening in the world of sin to what is happening with Covid. Does this mean that only bad people are suffering and dying? Absolutely not! The question we have to ask is are we dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty? The Bible promises safeguards against stuff like this and the Bible is absolute truth, so if the Word is true and cannot lie, then we may have to take a spiritual inventory of our faith walks to make sure we are located securely in the presence of God. According to Psalm 91, we may not be exempt from catching Covid, but it shouldn't destroy us. Being in this presence won't exempt us from seeing what happens and will happen to people who are not under this covering. Today, we are going to look at Psalm 91:8, being an observer to the lack of covering on a person's life. The grass definitely isn't greener.

"Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked."

The word "wicked" means "morally wrong, enemies of God, people that refuse to learn righteousness". Wickedness has a reward, even though the wicked seem sometimes to go untouched. The word "reward" means "retribution, punishment". So the reward of the wicked is to allow the snare of the fowler to keep them confined, be victimized by the noisome pestilence, allow the terror by night to reach their doorstep, the arrow by day to impale them, and allow destruction from the pestilence to overcome them. Ouch right! I know we as believers can relax and say, "Well, I am a Christian, I'm safe", but that is not completely true. In 2 Samuel 24, David took a census of all of the fighting men of Judah and Israel. Joab tried to convince David not to do it, but he was undeterred. It took 9 months and 20 days to complete the count, and when it was done, David was convicted by his wrong, and confessed his wrong to the Lord. It took him 9 months to realize he sinned! His seer, Gad, called by the Lord, had to deliver a word to David. In 2 Samuel 24:12-13, the Bible says, "Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me." The Lord gave David a choice on what his punishment would be, and one of the

punishments was three days of pestilence in the land. David chose the three days, probably thinking "It won't be that bad". In 2 Samuel 24:15, "So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men." 70,000 men died due to David's sin! God made David watch his kingdom suffer by his hand. Ouch! The secret place doesn't exempt a person from the consequences of sin and wickedness, and if David is identified as a man after God's own heart and this happened to him, then we should really repent of the sin that pulls us in bad directions.

Now, let's look at a different observation point. In Genesis 19:27, the Bible says, "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: 19:28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Obedience kept Abraham in the secret place, where he observed the punishment of the people that are morally wrong, the enemies of God, and the people who refused to learn righteousness. Disobedience caused David to lose 70,000 men in one day. In James 4:4, the Bible says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Adultery is a married person committing infidelity with another person outside of their marriage. As believers, we are the bride of Christ and if we are a friend of the world, we have made the world the bridegroom, and not Christ.

Abiding in the secret place of the Most High has its safeguards, and sadly, we are going to see suffering in the world while we go virtually untouched. This should make us desire to see more people saved and secure in the secret place.

Psalm 91:9 - Because thou hast made the LORD ... thy habitation

Abiding in the Lord is mandatory in any successful believer's lives. We have to be in the presence of the Lord and allow His presence to dwell within us. Without this, we are vulnerable, easy targets for the enemy to sneak in and attack. Sometimes, the attack is physically felt, but sometimes, it is emotionally and mentally felt, which is a lot harder to overcome a lot of the time than physical. When we look at Psalm 91, it is easy to look at the plagues and pestilences, the terrors and the arrows, and believe that this is what Psalm 91 is about. We look at this world and how crazy it has gotten, and we tend to wonder is this all the world is about now; division, war, disease, dissensions, and hatred? Sadly, people fail to see this world as the place God created so that we could fellowship with Him, and also the place where He ordained us to have dominion. How does so much powerlessness exist in a world that we are supposed to exercise dominion in? The answer is simple. We are failing to dwell in the presence of the Lord continuously, to receive His Lordship and direction, to fellowship with the Lord under His terms. Today, we are going to press on through Psalm 91, now on verse 9, and gain further understanding about dwelling in the presence of God.

"Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;"

We have to look at this Psalm as the Word of God, but we have to also look at it as encouragement from one believer to the next. The Psalmist here has obviously experienced some of this stuff listed, either as a spectator or as a victim. The phrase "hast made" means "to determine, to set in place, to convey". These are all definitions that express intentionality. So there is no lip service here. We are to set in our minds that we belong in the secret place of the Most High, that the Lord has us protected under His feathers, and we have to invite the Lord to come dwell in us. God is not going to kick the door to our heart in and force us to let Him in. In Revelations 3:20, the Bible says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The biggest word in the verse is "if". There are conditions to every promise the Bible has, so do we ever stop to think that our victory in Jesus Christ depends on us too? God knocks on our doors and invites us to come dwell in the secret place of Most High God with Him. The choice is ours. Have we determined that the Lord is our refuge? Have we determined that our salvation is our refuge from condemnation? Have we determined that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, the only Way to the Father? Who have we determined the Lord to be in our lives?

"which is my refuge, the most High, thy habitation"

The word "refuge" means "shelter from harm". The psalmist expresses ownership by saying "My refuge". Is the Lord A shelter or is He OUR shelter? In Psalm 71:3, the Bible says, "Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress." Is the Lord just our refuge, or is He our STRONG refuge? If we don't think the Lord's refuge can protect and sustain us, then we will find ourselves venturing out to seek refuge elsewhere. We have to believe that what God provides is exactly what we need to keep us safe. This verse says the psalmist "continually resorts" to the Lord, meaning we can't be 'one and done' in our faith. We have to continuously turn to the Lord for shelter and allow His word to dwell richly in us. In Psalm 31:2-3, the Bible says, "Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me." A house of defense. A strong rock. A fortress. David communed with the Lord continually about everything, and he had no problem with calling out to God, asking for His deliverance. He even told God to deliver him "speedily". Relationship gives us access to the provision of the person we are in a relationship with, and David seems to have had an "all-access pass" to God. We do too!!! The word "habitation" means "abode". We have to make ourselves at home with the Lord and reach after Him with everything we have in us. God has always been our dwelling place, and in Psalm 90:1 the Bible says, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." God has been providing the same secret place since the beginning, and it is still available to us. God has never stopped trying to fellowship with His people! The question is, will we dwell in the house of Lord, or seek shelter elsewhere?

May we come to know our Lord Jesus Christ as our habitation, as our refuge, and as our God.

Psalm 9:10 – There shall no evil befall thee

I love repetition in the Bible, because if something is said more than once, it is extremely important to God. It is also God reassuring us when we become unsteady in our mind and unsure about where we have planted our feet. All throughout Psalm 91, God is reassuring His children of the safety that we will have if they remain in His presence. God is really using His word to convince us, so that is telling us that He is truly concerned about our well-being. In 2 Peter 3:9, the Bible says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Not only is our God a great promise keeper, but He is very patient as well, giving us time to make the choice to dwell in the secret place of the Most High. He won't bully us into this choice. True love isn't forced upon someone. It just is, and it is our jobs to receive the Word and remain under His protection. Today, we are going to look into Psalms 91:10, and hopefully find ourselves more secure in the presence of God.

"There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling"

Please note that verses 9 and 10 are attached, completing one point. Verse 9 was the foundation for verse 10, which is the building. It is confirming what Psalms 91 has been teaching so far, that there is complete safety in the presence of God. The word "evil" in verse 10 means "bad, in a moral or ethical sense, also meaning pain and misery, leading to ultimate disaster". The word "befall" means "approach with anguish in tow". In Proverbs 12:21, the Bible says, "There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief." God doesn't not design for pain, misery, and ultimate disaster to be the final, perpetual verdict for His children. It doesn't mean we won't experience hard times, or have some pain, but in 2 Corinthians 4:17, the Bible says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" So when we are afflicted, the word says it won't last long and it has a way to bring glory to God. People read this passage and think that nothing bad will happen to them. It means that we won't be destroyed by what happens to us. In Genesis 50, when Joseph's brothers thought he was going to get even, Joseph said in verse 19 and 20, "And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." God's intent behind what happens to us determines whether it is evil or good. Evil leads to our destruction, but "good" is in line with the purpose God has for our lives. Even Job understood his affliction in Job 23:10, when he said, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Sometimes, "bad things" happen to believers who are in the secret place, but only so God can get the glory from our victory in Him, so God can show people what deliverance looks like in a believer's life, so God can get the glory, which can draw more people into the secret place.

"Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling"

The word "plague" means "a blow, infliction, usually given to people who are disobedient to God." There is always a condition or a reason something happens. When we are in the secret place, we are obedient, our minds are trained on the Lord and we are being fed and cared for by our God. David was a man after God's

own heart and he had bad things happen to him as a result of his disobedience. In Psalms 27:4, the Bible says, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple." This should be our aim, and as long as it remains that way, our stories will remain a testimony of God's protection. Even when things happen to us, it won't last. We won't be the face of suffering, and while the world wastes away, we will grow stronger, more faithful and more resolved to reside in the Lord's presence. To obey is better than sacrifice correct?

May we all reach after obedience of God's word and rest in the dwelling place of His truth. The secret place of God is our best line of defense against the enemy.

Psalm 91:11 - For he shall give his angels charge over thee

A good banking practice is to protect our investments. Time is also an investment tool, and another good banking practice is ensuring we get a return on our investments. God is even more than a good banker, but He definitely protects His investments, and He ensures a return on His investments as well. When Jesus ascended to the Father, He told the disciples that He would always be there for them, and the same rules apply for us. Today's study is a continuation to verses 9 and 10, but this time, God is giving us a picture of how we are going to be protected, so no evil befalls us, and no plague come nigh our dwelling. Sometimes, God gives us the Word and we just have to trust in it happening; but other times He gives us a window into what He is doing, and how He will bring it to pass. Today, we will be looking in Psalm 91:11, how God protects His children.

"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

When a Scripture begins with the word "for", it is continuing or establishing a point previously made. Our God backs His word up and I am so thankful that God reveals Himself to us. In Matthew 13:11, the Bible says of Jesus, "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." The people that are blessed to dwell in the secret place of the Most High God, have access to the mysteries of God, to the revelations that come by the Holy Spirit, and to an understanding of His Word without seminary training. The phrase "shall give" means "to give an order or command to direct someone". So our loving God gives his angels orders to direct us in the way we should go. In Proverbs 16:9, the Bible says, "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." The Lord's direction will always triumph over what we think our way may be. It doesn't matter if we are in power or a pauper, we as believers are under the direction of God. In Proverbs 21:1, the Bible says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." God is even in charge of our hearts. The word "angels" means "messengers of God responsible for aiding, protecting, and fighting for those who trusted in the Lord". Who trusted in the Lord, who made the Lord their dwelling. So God gives the angels directions to guard over us, and of course they obey. So when God tells us we are covered in His

protection, He sends His angels to make sure His word comes to pass. Key words here are "His angels". The angels job is to carry out the word of the Lord.

"For He shall give his angels charge over thee".

The word "charge" means "command". So God gives His messengers orders to take command over us, to ensure His word remains true. In Isaiah 55:11, the Bible says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." God's word will do the very thing He orders it to do. His angels are responsible for our lives so if something happens to us outside of God's will, then that means the angels didn't follow their orders. That won't happen. In Psalms 34:7, doesn't the Bible say, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them"? God has us covered!

"To keep thee in all thy ways"

The word "keep" means "to hedge about, to guard". The word "ways" means "course of life". So our course of life, by dwelling in the secret place of the Most High God, should be to always serve God in all we do. His angels are there to ensure that we remain in the pathway of God. In Isaiah 29:16, the Bible says, "Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?" Imagine us controlling our ways as we flipping our lives upside down. God framed us in His purpose, and His angels will make sure we don't find ourselves outside the direction of God. There had to be legions or angels commanded by God to watch over me, all to get me to this point, where I can fearlessly share the Word of God, and use my life as a testimony and a crime deterrent. Imagine the angels that had to yank me back on track, or clear people out of my midst, or deflect the bullets that could've been fatal when I was gunned down in 2001! I often wonder why I was protected when I was clearly doing a bunch of wrong, but there was a word of prophecy given to me on my 17th birthday that I would ultimately preach the Word of God. That word has to happen, so God had His angels protecting His investment, ME, ensuring I fulfilled my purpose. They are still protecting me!

May we understand how deep God's love for us is, that angels are ordered to guard us!

Psalm 91:12 – They shall bear thee up in their hands

Being under the covering of God gives us confidence and assurances that the world doesn't have. We have seen that being under God's protection will cause us to be the spectators to a lot of people suffering destruction while we won't be harmed or consumed. This level of protection should produce a gratefulness and maintain a believer's desire to remain in the presence of God, but sadly, sometimes, this confidence can turn into arrogance. Arrogance will cause a person to purposely step into harm's way, which is not wise.

If I know a neighborhood is extremely dangerous, and I am not led by the Lord to go there, why would I risk my life and potentially the lives of the people I'm with to go some place that can do me and them immense harm? There is a fine line between confidence and stupidity, and God doesn't want us to use His covering as a means to display reckless behavior. Today, we are going to look at Psalm 91:12, for another role the angels of the Lord have.

"They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The phrase "shall bear thee up" means "lift or carry". A famous representation of this would be the "Footprints in the Sand", where the man asked God, why, when times got rough, he looked down and only saw one set of footprints. God told him that during those rough times, He carried him. Of course, I am paraphrasing here, but the truth remains the same. In Isaiah 40:11, the Bible says, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." God will carry us through everything that comes our way, and even through some things we mess up, but it doesn't mean we constantly place God in situations to carry us away from the sin and destruction we place upon ourselves. Satan used Psalms 91:11-12 when he tempted Jesus to throw himself off of the pinnacle of the temple in Matthew 4:6. Christ response was Scripture too, which says in Matthew 4:7, "Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Christ quoted a part of Deuteronomy 6:16, to combat the test of the enemy. Do we as believers continue to test the parameters of God's protection? Do we ask God for traveling mercies when we drive, and then not wear a seat belt? Do we pray for the same traveling mercies, put on our own seat belt, and then drink and drive, or text and drive? Do we ask God to keep us safe and then we abuse prescription medication, or meander through dangerous neighborhoods with no reason whatever to be there? How far do we use God's protection as a license to make our own rules? In Romans 6:15, the Bible says, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Now we're talking about sin. Why? Because Christ said "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God", and if we put our amazing God to the test by putting ourselves in compromising positions trusting His angels to lift us up, then we are disobeying God's word. Isn't that sin? People count on "grace" the same way they count on the angels to lift them up in their hands. In Romans 6:1, the Bible says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" We should never take God's protection or His provision lightly, nor should we ever abuse or mismanage it either.

"Let thou dash thy foot against a stone"

The word "dash" means "to strike or smite, causing one to stumble". The angels of the Lord lift us up and carry us in their hands, so we don't catch a blow that causes us to stumble. Look at a picture of how the wicked live. In Proverbs 4:19, the Bible says, "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble." God doesn't want His children to be blind wanderers stumbling at everything that comes into our path. Let's look at another picture. In Isaiah 28:7, the Bible says, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." This is the type of thing God is trying to prevent His children from experiencing. Even the supposed "shepherds" were out of line because they were too busy being full of strong drink instead of

being full of the presence of the Most High God. Things will transpire in a believer's life, causing us to be carried away from something harmful, but where can we be carried away to when the danger is ourselves?

May we come to a level of appreciation for the God we serve, who doesn't have a desire to see any of us stumble in our sins. May we show our appreciation by never putting our God to the test.

Psalm 91:13 – Thou shalt tread ... shalt thou trample under feet

God promises us victories over predatory forces designed to defeat and destroy us. God always proves His Word to be true, and if He says that we are covered, then we are safe from what would mean peril for someone not under God's covering. It doesn't mean we won't feel some heat, or experience some hardships, but God's presence in our lives ensures that we will be able to thrive in any environment we may find ourselves in. As I mentioned before, this doesn't give us a license to do whatever we want, and it definitely doesn't mean we place ourselves in compromising situations to put God to the test, or to show people that we are covered. Years ago, I sadly watched a video clip of a church who set a bunch of poisonous snakes loose on the stage area, and people tread upon these poisonous snakes at the behest of their pastor who assured them they wouldn't be bitten if they trusted in the Lord for deliverance. More than one person was bitten and seriously injured as a result. Someone, in their warped thinking, might say that those people who were bitten didn't have faith, but why put God to the test, especially when His word tells us not to put the Lord our God to the test? How can a church that openly practices disobedience, expect themselves covered? Today, we are looking at Psalm 91:13, to experience the difference between deliverance from unexpected harm, and putting God to the test, expecting His deliverance.

"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."

The word "tread" means to walk. Now look at this closely. The verse says, "thou shalt tread UPON". It doesn't say, "put the lion or the snake in your path, then walk amongst them". In Acts 28:3, the Bible says, "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand." Here, Paul was being hospitable towards a barbarous people, helping to gather firewood. He wasn't looking for trouble, nor was He looking to prove to anyone how powerful his faith and his God is. He was doing the right thing and might have been bitten in the process. God doesn't promise that we won't get bitten sometimes. In Acts 28, the barbarous people thought the worst of Paul because he got bitten, and called him a murderer, the victim of deserved vengeance. In Acts 28:5, the Bible says, "And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm." So Paul triumphed over the beast, nor the other way around, and experienced no ill effects from the snake. The barbarous people changed their tune when they didn't see him destroyed or die from the snake, and called him "a god". What we overcome gives us a testimony about Our Amazing God, and gives people who don't know God a report of God's power. Paul didn't go looking for trouble. There will always be an opportunity for God to show His power through us, so there is no real reason for us to force the issue. In Genesis 3:15, God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity

between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This means there is going to be a constant struggle between Satan and mankind, so we will have enough tests that will come our way. God promises victory for us, but if the enemy can bruise the heel, then he can affect our walks.

In Daniel 6, the presidents, governors, princes, counsellors, and captains came together and conspired against Daniel. They asked King Darius to issue a royal decree (one that cannot be broken) stating that anyone who petitions any God or man except Darius for 30 days shall be cast into the den of lions. Darius signed the decree, without considering Daniel, who unapologetically prays to God three times a day. Darius only realized, after, that his administration tricked him into signing the decree to target Daniel. In Daniel 6:16, the Bible says, "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." Darius knew Daniel's God was a deliverer, but he still had to cast Daniel into the lion's den. The next day, when Darius came to check in on Daniel, Daniel says in verse 22 of Chapter 6, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." Daniel gave God the glory for this victory, BUT he wasn't looking for trouble either. He was just praising the Lord as he was supposed to when trouble came. God delivered Daniel.

Things in life happen that are out of our control, and may we take comfort in knowing that there is always victory in Him. Predatory forces have nothing against our God!

Psalm 91:14 – Because he hath set his love upon Me

Do we set our love upon the Lord? The Bible said in John 14:23, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." To "keep" means "to observe or put into practice". The Word doesn't begin to mean anything in believer's lives until we put the Word to practice. It is only then that we will experience the depths of God's faithfulness, because we will hear the Word of God and experience it come to pass. Christ said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me." Why then, do people try to find another way, another truth to soothe their itching ears, and another life besides the abundant life Christ promised? Have we ever equated our obedience to Christ as expressing our love for Him, or have we grown content with just being affectionate? Today, we will look at Psalm 91:14, obedience being the pathway to love and deliverance.

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name."

The phrase "hath set his love" means "to join to". In Genesis 2:24, the Bible says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Why am I talking

about marriage here? The word "cleave" means "to join" as well, and this joining forms a union between two people, making them one. In Isaiah 54:5, "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." We are definitely the bride, and Christ is the Bridegroom, and that marriage of salvation makes us one. In Revelation 21:2, the Bible says, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Marriage is a very powerful institution, and that is why the Bible says in Mark 10:9, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Once God put it together he wanted it to remain that way. This is the type of relationship God desires to have with His children, one that is forever and unbreakable. We have to be believers joined to our Father, setting our love upon Him by putting His word into practice.

"Therefore will I deliver him"

This is conditional on us joining ourselves to the Lord, observing His Word, having a desire to always fellowship with our Lord. One of the strongest aspects of any relationship is communication, and God desires a people that will talk to Him and open our hearts so He can talk to us. The word "deliver" means "carry away safely". In Psalm 145:18-20, the Bible says, "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy." The Lord hears us when we call and is always near when we call upon Him in truth. That means according to His Word, so we can't break from that secret place and remove ourselves from the presence of the Lord and expect Him to hear us. He wants to hear us and see us drawing closer to Him. He'll hear our cry and save us from anything that threatens to ruin us. We have to join ourselves to the Lord in order to expect His deliverance in times of trouble.

"I will set him on high, because he hath known my name"

The phrase "set him on high" means "to place in a location that is inaccessible". God will relocate us in a place where the enemy can't reach us, where his offensives can't hurt us, and where we are safe from destruction. In Psalm 59:1, the Bible says, "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me." Even David experienced enemies mounting up against him, but God kept him safe, causing him to triumph instead. God will place us somewhere where the only person that can reach us is Him, and that is in the secret place of the Most-High God, under the shadow of the Almighty. This is why it is so vital for us to dwell in the presence of the Lord, because we have a real security we wouldn't have otherwise. The word "known" also is a marriage term, much deeper than retaining knowledge, but actually joining ourselves so we become one in it. In Psalm 9:10, the Bible says, "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." We have to join ourselves to the Word of God, and place our trust in Him. The word "name" means "authority or position". We have to know our God and also know what He is able to do with His power, in order for us to trust Him. The answer to everything of our God is will be found in His Word.

May we set out love upon God and find our deliverance in the process.

Psalm 91:15 – He shall call upon me, and I will answer him

When we find ourselves in pressing situations, we can count on our God to see us through them. All through Psalm 91, God makes the same promise in different forms, but the message remains the same; dwell in the presence of God, and be reassured that He will protect us from destruction and ruin. That is just by dwelling in the presence of God, because He won't let us be consumed by the attacks of the enemy. What happens when we cry out to Him? Does He hear us? When we are afraid, does He give us peace? How does God respond when we call out to Him? Remember, this study we're doing in Psalm 91 is about dwelling in the secret place of the Most-High God, about being in the presence of our Lord and King, the promises in this Psalm are designed for people who abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Today, we are going to look at Psalm 91:15, our call to God and His response.

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him."

The phrase "shall call" means "to accost, to address by name, to summon". All of these are good definitions for this because it really paints a clear picture of what we are supposed to be doing when we call out to God. The word "accost" means in the Webster's New World College Dictionary "to approach and speak to; greet first, before being greeted especially in an intrusive way". This means we don't wait on God to talk to us. We approach Him. Where? In that secret place! In Hebrews 4:16, the Bible says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Boldly!! Bold people approach God knowing we have every right to be there in His presence. Bold people approach God, trusting they are going to get the answers they seek. Bold people trust God at His word! We have to address our God by name too. The name of the Lord is of extreme importance, and addressing Him by name is vital to our being heard. Think not? What if your name was "Marshall" but someone was walking behind you screaming "Peter"!!! You would ignore them because they can't be calling you if they are calling out the wrong name. In Acts 4:12, the Bible says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." That name is Jesus! The word "summon" means "to call upon to do something, to call upon to appear". In Romans 10:13, the Bible says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." We have to call upon our Lord with purpose and with expectation that He will respond. The word "answer" means "to pay attention in order to respond". That's what our God does when we accost Him, address Him by name, and summon Him. He answers.

"I will be with him in trouble"

The word "trouble" means "tightness or adversity". Ever been on a tight spot? Ever faced some adversity? God promises to be with us in trouble, but do we believe in that? In Psalms 50:15, the Bible says, "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." God wants to deliver us because it brings glory to His name. How does it bring glory? Because we share our testimony with other people, how God came in a tight spot and rescued us from destruction. What does sharing our testimonies do? In Mark 5:20, the Bible says, "And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." When we share our testimonies, men marvel and they may just seek out

Christ for themselves. We don't have to be preachers or have extensive knowledge of the Bible to be effective for the kingdom. This demon possessed man went from spiritual bondage to a huge spokesman for Christ. All he had was his testimony.

"I will deliver him, and honour him".

The word "deliver" here means "to strengthen, to fortify, to equip for war". God is not going to always remove us from adversity, but sometimes, He will equip us to overcome it. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, the Bible says, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Paul asked God three times to remove the thorn in his side, but God gave him grace and His strength, and he in return gave God the glory. The word "honour" means "to make heavy". This means that God will make us credible and powerful. If our words carry weight, then that means we can be trusted to deliver on what we promise. If God can make us heavy, then that means that He is the heaviest! Remember, we are to use what God gives us to bring glory upon Him, so WHEN he delivers us, we are to broadcast God's goodness to everyone.

May we call out to God, so He can equip us to overcome and spread our testimony of deliverance.

Psalm 91:16 - With long life will I satisfy him

I am even further convinced that, in the presence of our Lord, we have amazing protections from the destruction that is prevalent all around us. Literally, thousands and tens of thousands are suffering destruction while we are the sadder spectators of it. I am not just talking about Covid, but I am talking about drug overdoses, murder, and drunken driving accidents causing death. Our world is crumbling under Godlessness, under Godless leadership, under the lack of faith in schools, under the weight of broken homes. I have gone through fire after fire; from my parents' abandonment, to abuse, to bullying, to homelessness as a teen, making a slew of horrible decisions in the process. I know what it feels like to be so separated from the love of God that death becomes a very welcomed guest, and I also know how it feels to experience the presence of God so richly that I fell in love with God all over again, and nothing else mattered. I have come to realize that while God is a protector, a deliverer, a healer, a Savior, and a liberator to all who remain in His presence, none of that really matters without experiencing His love, His presence, His affection towards His children. God makes an abode that makes us feel safe, loved and a part of a family. Today, we will look at the last verse of Psalm 91:16, a long life of salvation.

"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

The phrase "long life" is something God gives to His children, especially those who walk in obedience to Him and remain in His presence. In Proverbs 3:1-2, the Bible says, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee." By keeping

God's commandments in our hearts, and allowing God's law to remain in our minds, He will ADD length of days, long life, and peace to us. In Psalm 1:2, the Bible says, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Day and night. That means we continue to commune with the Word of God so what will come out of us will be Word. The word "trust" means "hie for refuge", and the word "hie" is an instinct reaction causing us to run to someone or something for safety. So we study our Word daily, meditate on it day and night, so we build the instinct to run to God first for safety. Remembering God's law and planting His commands in our heart is a daily action that also keeps us in the presence of God. In Deuteronomy 30:15-16, the Bible says, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it." God is a gentleman, and He gives us the choice to choose life and good by walking in His ways, and putting his commandments into practice. Long life is an assurance a believer has that does these things, that follows the Word of the Lord.

Think wickedness won't shorten a person's life span? In Ecclesiastes 7:17, the Bible says, "Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?" God doesn't say this if it can't be a possibility for someone who walks in wickedness. In Exodus 20:12, the Bible says, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." It is implied by God that long life isn't promised to those who don't honour their father and mother. In Joshua 24:20, the Bible says, "Ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." There is no safety to those who forsake the Lord, but the Lord will consume those who serve strange gods. In John 5:24, Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Only through hearing the word of God, believing on God, who sent Christ to die for our sins, and accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior can pass us from death to life. We still have a choice to make everyday, to dwell in the presence of the Lord, to abide in Him and allow Him to make his abode in us. We have to make the choice to remain in the secret place of the Most High God, resting safety under the feathers of our loving God. That ensures our deliverance, our protection and our provision.

"And shew him my salvation"

The word "salvation" here means "deliverance or protection". God's salvation, not our own, not our friend's, families, or spouse's. His salvation gives us the testimony that we can share with the world around us, and our testimonies bring glory to God. May the "secret place" be, to each one of you, the place of great comfort, and love!

God Bless!
Marshall

Marshall's Bio, Poems, and History

Marshall's Bio

Marshall Jones is a 38 year old man on a lifelong journey of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. The author of "A Raven's Meal" (RoseDog Books), a poetry collection, he aspires to target the grey areas, and the people who are terribly misunderstood by society. Believing that everyone deserves a voice, he not only shares his testimony, but he also tries to use his gifting to share other people's experiences as well. He writes from the prison system that has housed his body for 17 years, but also from the place that has been the catalyst to his freedom.



Marshall's Poems

You can view Marshall's poems at <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/marshall-jones/>

History

Red Granite Daily Devotions commenced on Red Thread Poets Facebook page on November 1, 2020. Psalm 91:1 was published on January 2, 2021, and after a gap of few days Verses 2 to 16 followed from January 13th to January 27th. The Daily Devotions are recapped by date at www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions/

Marshall uses these resources in his Bible Study: AMG Hebrew Greek Keyword Study Bible (KJV), Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, The MacArthur Study Bible (NASB), Webster's New World College Dictionary.