

# Living in the Shadows

March 22, 2020 ~ DCC remote from Vista ~ Psalm 91.1-7

## Psalm 91

- ❖ **Q:** Spurgeon's Treasury of David ~ "In the whole collection there is not a more cheering Psalm, its tone is elevated and sustained throughout, faith is at its best, and speaks nobly. A German physician was wont to speak of it as the best preservative in times of cholera, and in truth, it is a heavenly medicine against plague and pest. He who can live in its spirit will be fearless, even if once again London should become a lazar-house, and the grave be gorged with carcasses."
- ✧ **Def:** "lazar-house" ~ place of quarantining people with infectious disease
- ❖ "heavenly medicine against plague and pest"
  - ✧ Spurgeon lived in London (Europe) where the plague had rampaged
  - ✧ Plague ~ "Corona Virus"
  - ✧ Pest ~ "pestilence" – originating with bats in Wuhan, China
    - This disease is difficult to fight because of this and mutated quickly
  - ✧ Pests ~ How those less concerned about virus regard those obsessing over it
    - Pests can not only be bothersome, but very destructive
      - III: Mice and rats lived with impunity in the home we're now living in
- ❖ What's playing out across the world today is, at the very least, disconcerting
  - ✧ III: Nicholas Nickleby play in LA – car – "Sir, your actions are very disconcerting"
    - What's happening today is not just disconcerting – it's very scary
    - III: Roller coaster ~ slow, suspenseful ride up the first hill
    - III: Blob (1958) ~ Seeping slowly through vents into movie theater
  - ✧ Many are very concerned about potentially losing millions of lives
  - ✧ Others are very concerned about the loss of civil liberties (*temp or permanent*)

## Four Different References to God

- ❖ "Most High" ~ "Elyon" – supreme monarch      God is AUTHORITATIVE
- ❖ "Almighty" ~ "Shaddai"      God is POWERFUL
- ❖ "LORD" ~ "Yahweh" – personal name revealed      God is APPROACHABLE
- ❖ "God" ~ "Elohim" – Creator, Author      God is PREEMINENT
- ❖ God reveals Himself, but more, He affirms why we're safe with Him
- ❖ "secret place", "abide under shadow", "refuge and fortress", "trust Him"
  - ✧ God wants us to know we're safe when we're with Him

Xition: We experience this security only when we dwell with Him

## To “Dwell” in the “Secret Place”

- ❖ Read v1a ~ “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High”
  - ✧ “dwell” ~ our home, our residence, “He who lives in the ...”
- ❖ III: Tabitha and I plan to be here in CA all year – but we don’t “dwell” here
  - ✧ Though we have two children in each state (*NE and CA*) our hearts are in NE
  - ✧ III: Always quick to look up Nebraska stats for COVID-19 (*second CA*)
- ❖ Q: “Home is where your heart is” / Husbands -> “Home is wherever my wife is”
- ❖ “The comfort and security of God’s home is reserved for those whose hearts reside there.”

## Title of message today is “Living in the Shadows”

- ❖ Read v1 ~ “.. shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”
- ❖ “Shadow” appears in NKJ 65 times (3 primary meanings)
  - ✧ 11 ~ real shadows (not figurative)
  - ✧ 14 ~ transitory, passing, like a vapor
  - ✧ 40 ~ protection, authority, influence, responsibility
    - 10 pertain to Person (1), Nation (4), Thing (5)
    - Final 30 have one of two meanings – God (10) or death (20)
      - “shadow of His wings .. hand” versus “shadow of death”

## “Shadow of death” versus “Shadow of the Almighty”

- ❖ Clearest reference to God’s shadow is here in v1
- ❖ Clearest of death is Ps 23.4 ~ “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.”
  - ✧ III: The Book of Eli ~ Denzel Washington quotes it from memory
- ❖ We fallen humans are always walking “through the valley of the shadow of death”
  - ✧ But that shadow waxes and wanes / But sometimes it’s dark and oppressive
    - This usually happens in small groups with the death of a loved one
    - III: Fellow marine at swap meet when small plane crashed into it
  - ✧ But sometimes, we experience the “shadow of death” collectively
    - For the USA 911 was the last such time – came and went in 102 minutes
      - III: “102 Minutes” ~ Minutes from first strike to collapse of both towers
  - ✧ Our experience today, however, is more personal (*and more far reaching*)
- ❖ Both events led to loss of personal liberty / “Is the present loss temporary?”

Xition: We live under the “shadow of death” but do we live “under the shadow of the Almighty?”

### v3 ~ “Surely He shall deliver you”

- ❖ “from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence”
- ❖ “perilous pestilence” / This can apply to the COVID-19 of today
- ❖ “snare of the fowler”
  - ✧ Pfishing schemes increased quickly in wake of COVID-19 scare
  - ✧ Some governments may pursue “emergency” gun control legislation
  - ✧ Politicians are spending \$ like drunken sailors to protect stock market
  - ✧ Civil liberties, personal freedoms, are being voluntarily sacrificed or taken
- ❖ “But do these issues directly relate to the promise of our text?”
  - ✧ The promise in the text is to a person, to one bird about to be caught in trap
  - ✧ **Read Psalm 33.13-15** ~ “The Lord looks .. all their works”
    - Note from last June’s Bible reading ~ “Though humans are numerous they are each uniquely crafted by God. God also takes note of the works of every individual. God deals in specifics – not aggregates and averages.”
    - **III: Terminator 2** ~ “How much do you know about this?” “I have detailed files”
- ❖ God has His broad plans that affect everyone
  - ✧ Yet amidst those plans He watches over those that seek Him for refuge
  - ✧ God loves rescuing people / He is the ultimate Super Hero
    - God often answers “foxhole prayers”
    - God answered Ahab’s prayer because he’d humbled himself (*sackcloth*)
  - ✧ **III: “Spitfire: The Plane that Saved the World”** – Netflix (59<sup>th</sup> minute)
    - Spitfire pilot “Tom Neil” (age 20) leading flight across Mediterranean
    - He lost sight of the lead plane – radio silence
    - “I didn’t know what to do. And I flew around in circles with the 10 following planes doing the same. Them looking at me as a leader and me not knowing what to do. And I can tell you, I prayed, I prayed. I didn’t know what to do, what to do. .. And God answered. He doesn’t answer you with a flash of lightning. He puts something in your head that you never thought of before. And I thought what I’d better do now is fly all the way back to Gibraltar. So I set off and by the grace of God I came across the wake of our navy.”
  - ✧ **Read v7** ~ “A thousand may fall .. not come near you.”
  - ✧ God’s promises are to individuals
    - It’s individuals that come to Him / that dwell with Him in the secret place

Xition: Let’s go on to verse 4 . . .

#### v4a ~ “He shall cover you .. you shall take refuge”

- ❖ III: Rahab and spies ~ She hid them under flax on her roof
  - ✧ Imagine the tension those men endured as she spoke with guards
- ❖ By contrast, we snuggle up to God’s like baby chicks to their mother
  - ✧ A baby chick has no fear – no concern – they’re snuggling
  - ✧ Jesus referenced this image when looking over Jerusalem
    - **Mt 23.37** ~ “How often I wanted to gather .. you were not willing”

#### V4b ~ “His truth shall be your shield and buckler”

- ❖ God alone knows the future
  - ✧ It’s why we can be so divided over what to do today
  - ✧ We act now based on projections / expectations
  - ✧ Some people are wired for this / But others aren’t
- ❖ We all have facts and we extrapolate from those facts
  - ✧ III: NYT article ~ Calculator based on infection and mortality rates
    - 20% infection and 0.5% mortality rates mean 325k die
    - 30% infection and 3% mortality rates in US mean 3 million die
    - 56% infection and 4% mortality rates in US mean 7.4 million die
  - ✧ Folks concerned about losing liberties have facts too
    - Governments ordered citizens non-essential to supporting life to stay home
    - CA Governor Newsom spoke of having National Guard maintain order
    - My employer sent me a letter certifying we’re critical to US – “free to travel”
- ❖ We all should be concerned about erosion of our rights c/this
  - ✧ I’m very appreciative of those that are concerned
  - ✧ Yet concerns can lead us down destructive paths instead of constructive paths

#### God has a Plan / God is Executing that Plan

- ❖ Those that dwell with Him can take confidence in these words:
  - ✧ **Read vss 5-7** ~ “You shall not be afraid .. not come near you”

Xition: Let’s go to the end of the Psalm to hear what God says to us . . .

## God Now Speaks to Those Who Love Him

❖ Read vss 14-16 ~ “Because He has set His love .. show him my salvation”

✧ God makes eight “I will” statements:

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. “Deliver him”           | From terror, arrow, pestilence, destruction |
| 2. “Set him on high”       | Where the enemy cannot get him              |
| 3. “Answer him”            | Answer His requests                         |
| 4. “Be with him”           | Comfort Him with His presence (mother hen)  |
| 5. “Deliver him”           | From enemy snares, evil, and plague         |
| 6. “Honor him”             | Reward him for his loyalty and fealty       |
| 7. “Satisfy him”           | With a long rewarding life                  |
| 8. “Show him My salvation” | Show us what it means to be God’s child     |

❑ Robert Kennedy gave a speech in 1966 and said, “There is a Chinese curse that says ‘May he live in interesting times.’ Like it or not, we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also more open to the creative energy of men than at any other time in history.”

- Jl Packer said in “Knowing God”, “If the proper study of mankind is man, the proper study of Christian man, is God.”

- We do live in interesting times like RFK said
- But the future doesn’t belong to the “creative energy of men” like he said

❑ The future is God’s

- The pen that writes our future rests in God’s hand, not man’s hand

❑ We are His servants / His children

- We are to look to Him for guidance
- We are to run to Him in distress
- We are to dwell with Him in safety in the secret place prepared for us

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen \*pause\* Go in peace . . .

# Living in the Shadows

March 22, 2020 ~ Sermon Handout ~ Psalm 91.1-7

1. Who was it that described Psalm 91 as heavenly medicine against plague and pest?  
\_\_\_\_\_. When did he live? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What four names for God (*with meanings*) are used in Psalm 91.1-2?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
3. What must we do to enjoy the security God promises? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. 40 of the 65 occurrences of the word “shadow” in the Bible are used to illustrate  
p\_\_\_\_\_, a\_\_\_\_\_, i\_\_\_\_\_, or r\_\_\_\_\_.
5. 30 of the 40 pertain to either G\_\_\_\_\_ or d\_\_\_\_\_.
6. What is likely the most famous Bible verse mentioning the “shadow of death”?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Write it out here if time permits: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Though we always reside under the “shadow of death” write down a time, when for you,  
the “shadow of death” was darkest: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
8. What movies or shows did Pastor Swab mention? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
9. What are God’s 8 “I will” statements at the end of Psalm 91? \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.