



PEGGY JOYCE RUTH

Psalm 91
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Printed in the United States of America by

ISBN 0-89228-178-2/1-942757-00-9
Library of Congress Control Number: 2002110752

Ninth Printing, 2015

Cover by Marcus Stallworth
Edit by Roberta Wescott

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Psalm 91

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!"
For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper
And from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with His pinions,
And under His wings you may seek refuge;
His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

You will not be afraid of the terror by night,
Or of the arrow that flies by day;
Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.
A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not approach you.
You will only look on with your eyes,
And see the recompense of the wicked.
For you have made the Lord, my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

No evil will befall you,
Nor will any plague come near your tent.
For He will give His angels charge concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways.
They will bear you up in their hands,
Lest you strike your foot against a stone.
You will tread upon the lion and cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him securely on high,
Because he has known My name.
He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him, and honor him.
With a long life I will satisfy him,
And let him behold My salvation.

Chapter 1



He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

–Psalm 91:1

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN inside a cabin with a big roaring fire in the fireplace, enjoying this wonderful feeling of safety and security as you watched an enormous electrical storm going on outside? It was a warm, wonderful sensation, knowing you were being sheltered and protected from the storm. **That is what Psalm 91 is all about—shelter!**

Did you know there is a place in God—a secret place—for those who want to seek refuge? **It is a literal place of physical safety and security that God is referring to.**

Dwelling in the shelter of the Most High is the Old Testament’s way of teaching faith. This gives us the most intense illustration of the very essence of personal relationship. Man has no innate built-in shelter. Alone, he stands shelterless against the elements and must run to **THE SHELTER**, which is God Himself. In verse one, God is offering us more than protection; it is as if He rolls out the hospitality mat and personally invites us in.

I am sure every one of you can think of something that represents *security* to you. When I think of security, shelter and protection, I have a childhood memory that automatically comes to mind. My parents

would take me and my younger brother and sister out to a lake to fish for an afternoon of fun.

Dad had a secluded place on this lake near Brownwood where he would take us to fish for perch. That was the second greatest highlight of the outing. I loved seeing the cork begin to bobble, and then, suddenly, it would go completely out of sight. There were only a few things that could thrill me more than jerking back on that old cane pole and landing a huge perch right in the boat. I think I was grown before I realized Dad had an ulterior motive in taking us for an afternoon of perch fishing. Those perch were his bait for the trotline he had stretched out across one of the secret coves at the lake.

Dad would drive the boat over to the place where his trotline was located, then he would cut off the boat motor and inch the boat across the cove as he “*ran the trot line.*” That’s what he called it when he would hold onto the trotline with his hands and pull the boat alongside all the strategically placed, baited hooks to see if any of them had caught a large catfish.

I said that catching the perch was the *second* greatest highlight of the outing. By far, the greatest thrill was the times when Dad would get to a place where the trotline rope would begin to jerk almost out of his hand. It was then that we three siblings would watch—wide eyed—as Dad would wrestle with the line until finally, in victory, he would flip that huge catfish over the side of the boat, right on the floor board at our feet. Money couldn’t buy that kind of excitement! The circus and carnival, all rolled up into one, couldn’t compete with that kind of a thrill.

One of these outings proved more eventful than most—turning out to be an experience I will never forget. It had been a beautiful day when we started out, but by the time we had finished our perch fishing and were headed toward the cove, everything changed. A storm came up on the lake so suddenly that there was no time to get back to the boat dock. The sky turned black, lightning flashed, and drops of rain fell with such force they actually stung when they hit.

Then, moments later we began to be pelted by large, marble-sized hailstones.

I saw the fear in my mother's eyes, and I knew we were in danger. But, before I had time to wonder what we were going to do, Dad had driven the boat to the rugged shoreline of the only island on the lake. Boat docks surround that island now, but back then it just looked like an abandoned island with absolutely no place to take cover.

Within moments Dad had us all out of the boat and ordered the three of us to lie down beside our mother on the ground. He quickly pulled a canvas tarp out of the bottom of the boat, knelt down on the ground beside us and thrust the tarp up over all five of us. That storm raged outside the makeshift tent he had fashioned over us; the rain beat down, the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, yet I could think of nothing else but how it felt to have my dad's arms around us. There was a certain calm under the protection of the shield my father provided that is hard to explain now.

In fact, I had never felt as safe and secure in my entire life. I can remember thinking I wished the storm would last forever. I didn't want anything to spoil the wonderful security I felt that day *in our secret hiding place*. Feeling my father's protective arms around me, I never wanted the moment to end.

Although, I have never forgotten that experience, today it has taken on new meaning. Just as Dad had put a tarp over us that day to shield us from the storm, our Heavenly Father has a *Secret Place* in His arms that protects us from the storms raging in the world around us.

That *Secret Place* is literal, but it is also conditional! In verse one of Psalm 91, God lists our part of the condition before He even mentions the promises included in His part. That's because *our part* has to come first. In order to abide in the *shadow* of the Almighty, we must *choose to dwell* in the shelter of the Most High.

The question is—“*How do we dwell in the security and shelter of the Most High?*” It is more than an intellectual experience. It is a dwelling

place where we can be physically protected if we run to Him. You may utterly believe that God is your refuge, you may give mental assent to it in your prayer time, you may teach Sunday school lessons on this concept of refuge, and you may even get a warm feeling every time you think of it, but unless you do something about it—*unless you actually get up and run to the shelter*—you will never experience it.

Corrie Ten Boom tells a story of a man who certainly acted on the protection of the Most High! An Englishman, in WWII, who was held in a German prison camp for a long period of time, came to know the Lord. One day he read Psalm 91. “Father in heaven,” he prayed, “I see all these men dying around me, one after the other. Will I also have to die here? I am still young and I very much want to work in Your kingdom here on earth.”

He received this answer: “Rely on what you have just read and go home!” Trusting in the Lord, he got up and walked into the corridor toward the gate. A guard called out, “Prisoner, where are you going?”

“I am under the protection of the Most High,” he replied. The guard came to attention and let him pass, for Adolf Hitler was known as “the Most High.” He came to the gate, where a group of guards stood. They commanded him to stop and asked where he was going. “I am under the protection of the Most High.” All the guards stood at attention as he walked out the gate.

The English officer made his way through the German countryside and eventually reached England, where he told how he had made his escape. He was the *only one* to come out of that prison alive.¹

You also might call that place of refuge—a *Love Walk!* In fact, the secret place is, in reality, the intimacy and familiarity of the presence of God Himself. When our grandchildren, Cullen and Meritt, ages ten and seven, stay the night with us, the moment they finish breakfast, each runs to his own secret place to spend some time talking with God. Cullen finds a place behind the couch in the family room, and Meritt heads behind the lamp table in the corner of our

¹ Corrie Ten Boom’s book: *Clippings from My Notebook* pages 41-42

bedroom. Those places have become very special to them.

Where is your secret place? You, too, need the security and shelter of a secret place with the Most High. This place of refuge is actually a relationship with the Father you have cultivated and developed by investing enough time into it to make it very personal and intimate.

Visit www.peggyjoyceruth.org for the book.