

Scripture Lesson: - Psalm 91:1-12.

Text: - Expository.

Introduction: - This great Psalm gives us promises of divine protection. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty". There are here two words which attract our attention. In this verse "dwelleth" and "secret place". There are different places of living, ranging from the plane of the prodigal in a pen feeding swine, to the high plane of Peter, James and John in the presence of their Lord on the mount of Transfiguration.

On what plane are you? If it is on the plane of communion and fellowship with our infinite and loving heavenly Father, then you have discovered the golden secret of life. This secret is worth more than all the wealth of Croesus, more than all the riches of a Rockefeller. That soul whose life is centered in the secret place of the most High is blessed indeed. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of", said Jesus, once upon a time. Yes, in the secret place of the most High we find hidden sources of ~~divine~~ strength.

I have recently become interested in the Ozark mountains. They tell us that in the Ozarks we have some very large springs. People who see them are made to wonder at the inexhaustible supply of fresh, living water, ever gushing forth from hidden places in the earth. These springs have an inexhaustible source. The supply of these springs never varies, even in the midst of extreme drought.

There is a hidden source of supply, strength, and encouragement for men. That supply is not visible to the naked eye; it is not tangible; but it is even more real because it is not visible or tangible. This hidden source of strength which the psalmist refers to in the 91st Psalm is "the secret place of the most high".

I.

"I will say of the Lord he is my refuge and my fortress". In the pioneer days of this country, forts were built for the refuge of the people in times of uprisings on the part of the Indians. Into these forts the people fled for safety when danger was at hand. Whole neighborhoods would gather in a single fort for protection. But these forts protected only from the dangers which threatened their bodies. But there are greater dangers in life than those which threaten our bodies. There are dangers which imperil our soul and our eternal welfare. How imminent these dangers are. They confront us every day. But there is a fortress and a protection from all these dangers. "I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress".

Another statement in the third verse reads; "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler". The hunter that goes forth in quest of wildfowl may use a lure for the deception of the birds. The common lure is that of the decoy. The decoy lures the birds bringing them in reach of the hunter's gun. Satan has many traps and lures with which he deceives men. And from this snare of the Lord has promised to deliver his people.

II.

The 4th verse of the Psalm has this statement, "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust". These words remind us of the statement of Jesus when he said, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered you unto myself as a hen gathereth her brood, and ye would not". The hen with her brood is a simple and home demonstration, but it portrays the protecting care of our heavenly Father. The hen is ever on guard as her brood hovers about her. At the first sign of danger she is quick to sound a warning note, which her chicks understand, and flee to her for protection. She hovers over her young at night, and protects them from the cold with her warmth. From the dawning of the day to the settling of dusk, her industry is never abated in quest of food for her young, or protection in every movement of their need.

And so the heavenly Father offers his love and protection to his children in a much higher and larger sense. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wing shalt thou trust."

The closing statement of this same verse reads, ~~XX~~ "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." The truth of God as revealed in his word is a sufficient shield to turn away the fiercest darts and arrows. This present age and generation is deeply in need of the peace of God. This is the greatest of our needs, and yet we have not treated it as such. We are in a mad rush for almost every thing save the truth of God. God's truth is sobering. It knows no respecter of persons. It strikes at the root of sin wherever it may be found. It is a comfort to those who accept it, and it is a judgment upon those who reject it.

III.

The fifth verse contains the words, "Thou shalt not be afraid." Then the Psalmist enumerates the things of which the children of God shall not be afraid. These frightful things from which the sting of fear has been extracted are, "terror by night", and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day". Fear hangs like a cloud over many souls. A noted philosopher said, "Fear and I are twins". We may rejoice and thank God that the sting of life's fears may be removed. Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid." He exhorted his disciples again and again to have confidence instead of fear. He said, "Fear not little flock", and he has given this promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world". When I was a child I was afraid to go into a dark room alone, but I was not afraid when my father walked by my side and held my hand. Neither should I be afraid to walk down the highway of life, when my Father holds my hand. The troubles of life are over when we learn to trust him. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for-
ever."