

Trust in the LORD with
all your heart.
Never rely on what you think
you know.

Remember the LORD in
everything you do, and
HE will show you
the right way.

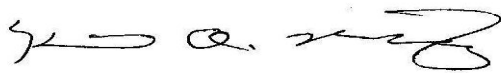
PROVERBS 3:5-6

What is
GOD? He Is Trustworthy!

Author's Note:
What is God? He is Trustworthy!

The short study in this booklet is actually part of a series that was taught from the book of Psalms in the summer of 2013. As you can tell from the title, it is going to be about trusting our loving Heavenly Father. I am putting this message from Psalms 91 and 57 in written form not because it is a new concept or unique to the book of Psalms; but rather because these Psalms develop the topic of trusting God in such a powerful and rich way that I simply thought you might find it to be a blessing.

In His grace,



Kevin Redig, Pastor
Vistoso Community Church



Introduction

What Is God? He Is Trustworthy! That's my short title for this particular study from the book of Psalms. I would like to give you the long version of the title as well:

God is infinitely trustworthy, unfailingly dependable, unchangingly reliable, immovably steadfast; He is the Rock which will never be moved and the only sure anchor for the soul! His are the wings under which we can take permanent and unassailable shelter.

This concept is perhaps one of the most important lessons we can take from the Book of Psalms. It is the main message of a grouping of the psalms which are called the *confidence-psalms*, of which Psalm 91 is one of the most compelling. Aside from the handful of confidence-psalms, the trustworthiness of God is at least a part of the message of a majority of the Psalms, and therefore indicates to me it is a truth that we need to hear over and over again until He becomes the first place we turn in adversity. Because of both its great import and continual repetition within the Psalms, I am going to cover the trustworthiness of God in two parts.

Part 1 will start with the basic principle of God's Trustworthiness. Part 2 will move on to application, including what I believe to be the Christian's most challenging area in which to trust God as protector and refuge. By necessity, I am going to leave much for you to consider, explore, and ponder on your own. As you start to read the book of Psalms with specific topics in mind, like God's dependability, I think you will find that the book of Psalms becomes one of the most marked-up books in your Bible. For the Psalms so readily illustrate many facets of the inexhaustible riches contained within God's Word!

Part 1: God is Trustworthy--in Principle

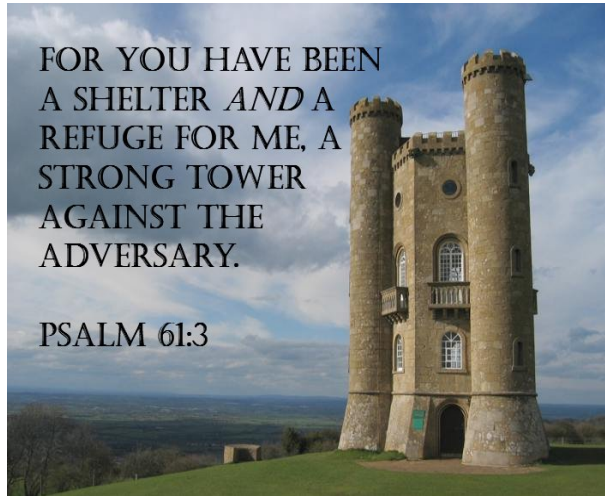
Let's begin by looking at the text of Psalm 91. This is one of the orphan psalms, which simply means we don't know who wrote it. Some scholars believe David may have written it; others tend to favor Moses because of its connection to Psalm 90 which he authored. At any rate, please spend a few moments reading through the psalm (several times would be ideal). After you have had a chance to make your observations, I would like to walk you through some of the truths I find in this Psalm.

Psalm 91

- 1 He who dwells 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 I will trust."
- 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.
- 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not come near you.
- 8 Only with your eyes shall you look,
And see the reward of the wicked.
- 9 Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
10 No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
11 For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
- 12 In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
- 14 Because he has set his love upon Me,
therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has 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 honor him.
- 16 With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."

First, you may have noticed that there are three *voices* in the psalm. It starts with the leader in Verse 1 (and then in Verses 3-13). This leader may have been a priest or a choir. Then, there is the response of the worshipper in Verse 2. Finally, toward the end of the Psalm, God speaks in Verses 14-16.

Second, did you see the concept that “in the Lord” we are to find safety and security? Did you note the terms descriptive of God’s protection of those who are His own? They include: refuge, fortress, safe under His wings, a buckler and shield, one the Lord gives angels charge to guard, shadow of the Almighty. The word translated *shadow* actually means shade. Although not as poetic a term, those of us from Tucson know just how important shade is to surviving the intense heat of the desert summer. And so I will consider it a blessing that the Lord will provide “shade” for me from the “heat” of this life!



If we wanted to look further in the Psalms, we would also find the Lord described as a *tower* and a *rock*. The language of the Psalms, as is often the case in the Old Testament, is meant to provide us powerful imagery.

Perhaps you are thinking—but all of these things have failed! The mighty fortress of Megiddo, famous in the ancient world and reconstructed in this graphic did fall--several times! The towers of Tyre were taken by Alexander the Great, the mother sheltering her young under her wings can be killed by the powerful carnivore.

Although this is true in human examples, we must connect with what we have recently learned from the Psalms; specifically, God is transcendent. He is both above and beyond all else when it comes to power, knowledge, sovereignty.

We are reminded of that transcendence in the first two verses of Psalm 91, for we have four distinct divine titles: Most High (El Yon), Almighty (Shaddai), LORD (Yahweh), and God (Elohim). All of these should remind us that the word-pictures used in Scripture to illustrate God’s trustworthiness must be adapted to take into account who He is!

First Point of Application

When God says He is a fortress--He wants us to connect it with what we already know—that He is transcendent. Therefore, He is a fortress whose wall no enemy will ever breach, a tower which no foe will ever pull down, the rock which no floodwaters of adversity will ever move. When you are under the shelter of the wings of the Almighty—not even Satan as a roaring lion has the slightest chance to find a weakness in your protection. We should respond with a humility similar to Mark 9:24: “I believe, help my unbelief.”

Next the Psalm addresses the question: “Why do we need such safety? Why do we need such security?” If I use the language of the Psalms, the answer is simple: because we are going to come under attack; the floods of life will assail; the winds of adversity and trial will blow! Did you catch the specific language in Psalm 91? We have the snare of the fowler, pestilence, terror by night, arrow by day, destruction, evil, plague, and so on. We could study each term individually, but let’s consider them corporately:

- First, do you see how comprehensive these terms are—they cover almost any kind of problem.
- Second, do you see how most of them arrive unexpectedly? They come without warning.
- Third, they cover the physical body, the emotions, and our mental balance.

There is no difficulty at all fitting into this list any of the kinds of problems that we face in our time and place—anything from automobile accidents to medical conditions! This list, and the principles taught by Psalm 91, are not meant to be limited either culturally or historically.

Second Point of Application

God can see us through any of the various calamities that might come our way in this life: health, evil intent of man, spiritual, natural.

Maybe at this point you are thinking, “I am going to just plan my life such that I am going to avoid all of these terrible things.” After all, you live in America, and in a good neighborhood. Furthermore, you eat right and exercise regularly. Or maybe you think the solution is to buy a hand-gun and learn how to use it, or have an alarm installed in your home—the list can go on and on. However, no matter how much foresight we might have, there is a spiritual principle at work.

Consider these Scriptures:

In this world you will have tribulation. . . (John 16:33)

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials. . . (James 1:2)

“. . . we also glory in tribulations. . .” (Romans 5:3)

Third Point of Application

God wants you to learn the lesson that He is trustworthy. This is higher on His list of priorities for us than a trouble-free life. There is no way to learn this lesson apart from the kinds of things that require you to run into a fortress, find a strong tower, put down an anchor, find high ground. The question is not whether or not you are going to need a refuge, but in what or whom you will choose to take that refuge!

As an example, consider for a moment the Exodus generation as they



marched out of Egypt. If God could blow open a path through the Red Sea, in water deep enough that it was piled up in high walls on either side, why didn't He just provide a smooth track in the desert all the way straight to the Promised Land?

God has already demonstrated He is more than capable! The answer lies in the truth that this is not His way for His people, for it would not accomplish the development that He has in mind. The Israelites were going to face *no*

water situations, *no food* situations, armed marauders—and a host of other problems. Why? After showing the people He was trustworthy, God expected His people to begin to trust Him in the little things, and then trust Him in the big things, and finally to depend completely upon Him for any and every challenge they might face.

Isn't this really what Paul is expressing with respect to himself after years of ministry?

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus. . . Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. (2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 16-17)

Hard pressed, but not crushed. . . yet inwardly being renewed day by day! Many can give testimony to the truth of this passage. However, at the back of your mind there may be a nagging thought—let's call it a "seed of doubt." For you can think of a time when someone you know was crushed by the calamity that came their way. That's exactly the subject I want to discuss in Part 2 of this study "God is Trustworthy in Application".

For now, we are focusing on principle. So in principle, does God ever let us down? No, never! How about when there is apparent failure to come through the trial--No never! I believe the Word is clear on this and I will lay it out for you in Part 2 of this study.

Let's go back to the text of Psalm 91. Did you notice that tucked away in verses 1 and 2 that our volition is involved? In other words, we have a choice to make. First there is the issue of "whoever" dwells, which is followed up by "I will say. . ." and "I will trust. . ." It all boils down to, "Will we **choose** to take refuge in the Lord? Will we depend upon Him?"

In my experience, like many other disciplines of the Christian Life, a few will and many will not! Now I am not pointing this out to discourage you. On the contrary, I want you to realize several things so that you actually might be encouraged.

First, as we have mentioned, a fundamental part of the Christian life is learning to depend upon God—through thick and thin! Second, this is an issue of growth, and it takes time to learn. And even when we work at it and begin to develop, we soon learn that we might be good at trusting in one area and really struggle in another. When this occurs He has us in the place He wants us—ready to receive mercy from His hand and grace to help in time of need! And here is the really important part, it is never too late to learn to trust God!

Consider Jacob: his faithfulness is listed in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, called the “Hall of Faith”, for something that He did when he was 147 years old! God wants us to choose to come to Him and find “rest” (Hebrews Chapter 4); to trust (Hebrews Chapter 11); to stand firm (1Corinthians 16); take refuge, enter the fortress, take shelter under His wings. In fact, this is the perfect place to regularly apply something we learned from Psalm 139.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

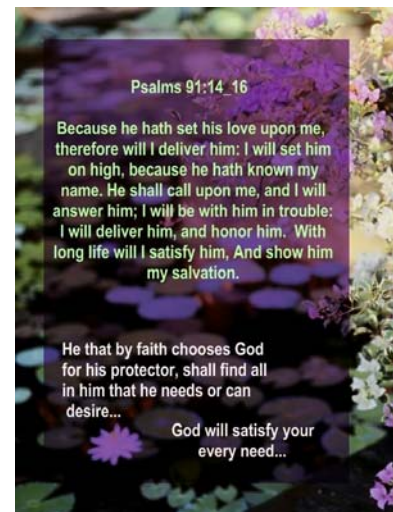
Now can you see what’s wrong with anxious thoughts? They are the first step in acting as if you have no refuge, no tower, no rock, no fortress, and no protective wings. In other words, stop worrying about what God said He would handle; rather, depend upon Him!

Fourth Point of Application

To *dwell* in the secure place the Lord provides is a reference to ongoing dependence upon Him through every challenge of life. (This is a function of the soul!) Failure is a *tool* our loving Father uses for the purpose of further developing our dependence upon Him.

In verses 14-16 of Psalm 91, we have the Lord’s response to the ones who place their trust in Him. Take another look at these three verses as there are several very important things to learn and the key to drawing the psalm into a complete message for us. First, God recognizes and commends three aspects of personal trust:

- **To set one’s love upon the Lord.** The idea behind the Hebrew term to “set one’s love” is to *cleave to*. In other words the one who trusts in God has reached the point that in trying circumstances, their reflexive response is to cleave to the Lord.
- **To know His name.** To “know His name” is to recognize the substance of who He is—the one sure refuge in times of crises.
- **To call upon Him.** To “call upon the Lord” is simply placing our difficulties in His hands rather than trying to solve them by our own ingenuity.



Now before we look at the way that God honors the one who trusts in Him, let me give you one more point of application.

Fifth Point of Application

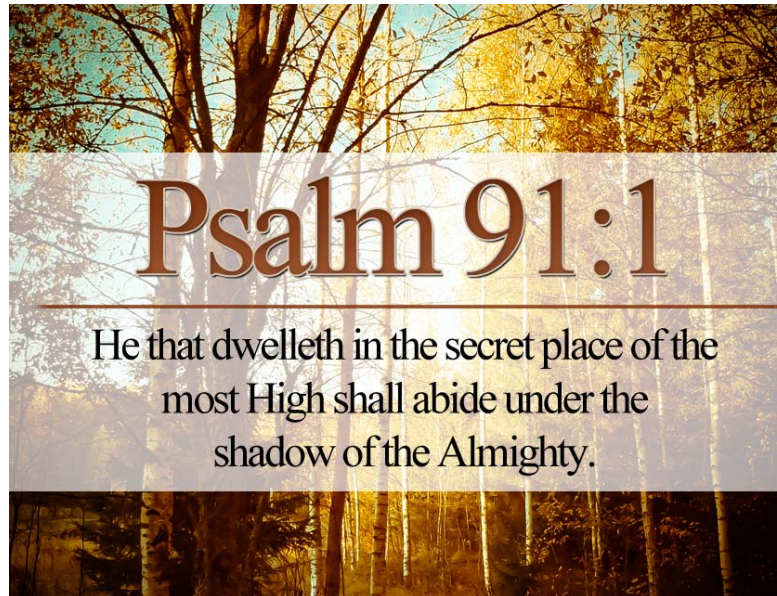
Blessing from God is often conditioned upon some kind of faith response by man. Is this contrary to grace—not at all! God still does the work and we receive the blessing. Ours is to walk and receive by faith; and thus, it is non-meritorious blessing!

But how does God respond to those who cleave to Him in every difficulty; to those who call upon His name? Do you see the marvelous language in the text: God will deliver the dependent believer; He will set him on high; honor him; satisfy him with long life and show him His salvation. This kind of overt blessing was the typical way in which God showed His favor in the Old Testament. But even in the church-age,—for those servants of the Lord who died at a young age like McCheyne, Jim Elliott, and Henry Martin—they most certainly lived an abundant life and did indeed see the salvation of the Lord.

To close this first section, let me take you back to verse 1 of Psalm 91--do you see the reference to the “secret place”? God dwelt in the “secret place”

in the Tabernacle, i.e. the Holy of Holies to which access was very limited. In fact, the Hebrew word here carries the idea of the “hidden place”—for the place where the child of God finds peace and rest through trusting in God is indeed hidden from the lost of this world, as well as many believers who instead have tried to find safety and security in the things of this world.

Psalm 91 is a message for every child of God to come home to the one sure refuge, the Rock of our Salvation, i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ! (Ps 62:2) For He is the only one who is able to save our soul for all eternity--and this is the first step in beginning a life of depending upon Him in every circumstance.



Part 2: God is Trustworthy—in Application

In part 1 of this study, we made the case that in every situation, we can say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress.” (Psalm 91:2) Now as we turn to another Psalm that encourages us to live in dependence upon our great God, I want to raise the hardest question I can think of! Psalm 57:1 says:

...For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.

Clearly, Psalm 57 continues the theme developed in Psalm 91—that of the ability of God to keep and preserve those who are His own! However, as you think through this truth, and watch it applied in real life, it won't be long until you start to question whether this is always true. It won't be long until you come across a case where God, as a refuge, seems to have failed. Let me raise the issue this way. Psalm 57:1 says that we can “take shelter in the refuge of His wings until the calamities have passed by.” But, what if they don't pass? What if the calamities win? The answer to these questions are what I mean by the title of this section: God is Trustworthy—in Application!

To approach this topic, I want to break it down into three cases where we address these issues head-on:

- Is God really a refuge in every case?
- Can we really take shelter under the wings of the Almighty?
- Can we really be sheltered in any and every situation?

It is essential that we be able to answer these questions, not only for our own confidence, but also in order to give an answer to others for the “hope that is within us.”

The First Case

We begin with the case that is the easiest to approach—consider the man who places his faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ! He has been transferred from Satan's kingdom into that of the Son of God (Colossians 1:13). He has chosen to trust God's provision of His Son as a refuge from eternal judgment—a very wise choice. But then as the demands of life build up, this individual is deceived into trusting in his own capabilities—perhaps because of business acumen, financial success, mental capabilities, good health—or any combination of factors! The bottom line is that this individual begins to rely on himself more than the Lord.

Psalm 57

- ¹ Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
For my soul trusts in You;
And in the shadow of Your wings
I will make my refuge,
Until these calamities have passed by.
- ² I will cry out to God Most High,
To God who performs all things for me.
- ³ He shall send from heaven and save me;
He reproaches the one who would
swallow me up. Selah
God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.
- ⁴ My soul is among lions;
I lie among the sons of men Who are set on fire,
Whose teeth are spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.
- ⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory be above all the earth.
- ⁶ They have prepared a net for my steps;
My soul is bowed down;
They have dug a pit before me;
Into the midst of it they themselves have fallen. Selah
- ⁷ My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and give praise.
- ⁸ Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.
- ⁹ I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing to You among the nations.
- ¹⁰ For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens,
And Your truth unto the clouds.
- ¹¹ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory be above all the earth.

Jeremiah 9:14 describes this kind of individual as one who has chosen to “walk after the dictates of their own hearts. . .” What do you suppose happens next? Not surprisingly, some tribulation comes his way, likely from an unexpected direction! His life comes crashing down! What then—has God failed? Not at all! God does not fail us; but rather, when we choose to trust for refuge in any substitute for the real thing—we fail God. We must realize that God doesn’t promise there will be no tribulation in our lives; and He doesn’t promise a trouble-free life. What He does promise is that He will be a shelter when the trials do come for those who are trusting in Him.



Scripture is very clear on the relative merits of who (or what) we choose to trust. For “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in princes (or financial advisors, doctors, psychologists, and so on).”

In fact, when we find ourselves incapable of dealing with the range of trouble that comes our way (family stuff seems to be particularly good at showing just how powerless we really are), God has just proven His Word to be true.

He is simply calling, as He always does, for His children to trust in Him.

Let me ask you a question that applies to this first case: “Do you think God has the ability to orchestrate events in such a way as to show us that trusting in ourselves is a vain thing to do?” Of course He does—and my advice is: “Don’t even think about putting Him to the test.” What’s the solution if we find we have strayed, if we find we have put undo confidence in ourselves? Repent! The solution is to repent, but repent from what? We must repent that we have been trusting in ourselves. We need to change our mind about who really is a strong tower, an unmovable rock. It is not ourselves, but the eternal and all-powerful One. You ask, “Will He really take me back?” Oh yes! For He is just tapping His foot waiting for us to come back to Him for He longs to be gracious to us! (Isaiah 30:18)

The Second Case

The second case is more challenging. Let's think about when some terrible misfortune befalls us or a loved one, a case where an event occurs that changes the course of life for the "worse" forever. For example, my brother-in-law Karl broke his neck in a freak diving accident at the age of 17, and he has been a quadriplegic for the past 35 years. Now he could easily have died at the time, and you could say that God preserved him through the accident. But does that really count as *preservation*? For he has had to have someone get him up and put him to bed every day of his life since that accident. He has suffered all the indignities of being trapped in a body that only responds from the neck up. Has God really been his "strong tower," his refuge, the One in whom He can take shelter?

This is a real example, and it brings us back to the question we raised at the start of this section, "What if the calamity doesn't pass?" Consider this principle:

To restrict God's dependability to the restoration of the status quo, is to have a worldly viewpoint and to limit the scope of His plan of salvation!

Let me show you what I mean by the application of three Scripture passages.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

This passage, of course, does not say that all things are good—but rather that God can use them for good. In the case of my brother-in-law, Karl, his accident "worked together" to cause him to put his faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Without question, good—eternal good—came out of his otherwise tragic accident.



And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Let me tell you, Karl has an unbelievable testimony regarding the Lord's work in His life. He has shared the Gospel with so many and planted countless seeds—literally thousands over the years.

Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Corinthians 4:16-17)

So by now you can see the full answer to one real example—a young man who became a quadriplegic and has had to deal with the ramifications every day since he was 17 years old.

Has God failed to be a refuge—to provide shelter? On the contrary, the calamity has been turned into something that brings glory to God and is achieving an eternal weight of glory for Karl. It has caused him to set aside a temporal mindset, which is so hard to do, and develop an eternal perspective. The Lord has not failed him; but rather, has blessed him and been his strong tower through countless trials! So although you could say the calamity has not passed, he is nonetheless right in the middle of God's plan and purposes for his life, and enroute to glory. I dare say he knows more about the daily taking of refuge in the shadow of the wings of the Almighty than most of us ever will.

The Third Case

The third is the most challenging case. It is the one that was on my mind when I first began to study this topic, and the one most important for us to be able to answer. Psalm 57:1 says, “. . .in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge. . .until the calamities have passed.” If I asked for a show



of hands for how many have had a calamity of some kind—how many have taken shelter under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty—the hand of virtually every believer would go up. In the church where this message was first taught, we could have spent the rest of the month with people giving testimonies to the faithfulness and dependability of the Lord on this topic. But then. . . you would eventually bring to mind a time when the expected or the hoped for outcome did

not occur. Let me be specific: Do you know of a time when the hoped for recovery of a loved-one did not occur?

Do you recall a time when people prayed, gave thanks for every promising piece of news, had a strong sense of God's preservation. . . and then it didn't happen? Stated another way in keeping with Psalm 57: what if the calamity doesn't pass--what if it swallows us? This is a very important, and a very hard question.

Could it simply be that the Lord is not a strong enough tower, the wings of the Almighty are not an adequate refuge? We say “no”, but loved ones do die of cancer, grandchildren are inexplicably cut down in their youth and so many other calamities. We must be able to answer this question for ourselves as believers; and we must be able to articulate it to a watching, but lost, world! For the question always arises, “How could a loving God allow this to happen?” I realize this might be somewhat of an uncomfortable question, but I want you to think about how practical it is, and how much it is a part of our witness—to say nothing of how important it is to our own confidence in the Word and promises of God.

So let's take a look at what the Word of God has to say on this matter—we will call it Divine Viewpoint. You see we get into trouble when we try to address issues like this from man's viewpoint and not God's! Let's walk through this step by step.

It is right to see God as a refuge for the *calamity* of a financial pressure, a health challenge, a family problem, and so on. However, let me remind you of a principle stated earlier in this booklet:

To restrict God's dependability to the restoration of the status quo is to have a worldly view and to limit the scope of His plan of salvation!

It is easy to see some illness, like cancer, as the calamity. And if it rears its head in our life or the life of a loved one, we are naturally going to interpret the phrase "calamity has passed" as the Lord seeing us through to the point of restored health.

But what happens if He doesn't. What happens when a Christian succumbs to cancer? Has God failed us? We need to extend our thinking about the concept of taking shelter under the wings of the Almighty until the "calamity has passed". It might be the case that the calamity that we are facing is not the cancer, but the passing from this life to the next. In other words, there will come a time when physical death is the calamity!

Now wait a minute—is physical death a calamity for the Christian? It most certainly is! Physical death was introduced to God's creation as the result of man's sin.

The day you eat of this fruit--in dying you shall die. (Genesis 2:17)
The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)

Death, and its associated processes, separates loved ones, makes frail the body, and ravages the mind. It is mankind's enemy—in fact it is the last enemy to be destroyed. (1Corinthians 15:26) Now you may have thought differently about the issue of: death as man's enemy because you are jumping ahead in your own mind to what is on the other side of physical death for the Christian. You are right—but first, death is a calamity, even for the Christian. However, that is not the end of the story. That is why we are not to grieve like the rest of men who "have no hope.". (1 Thessalonians 4:13) Let's consider other Scriptures:

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21)

*"...to be absent from the body...to be present with the Lord."
(2 Corinthians 5:8)*

"...the body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable... " (1 Corinthians 15:42)

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, more sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

*“. . .who (God) will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body. . . ”
(Philippians 3:21)*

Now do you see what Psalm 57 is saying? On the one hand, there is the level of our Wednesday evening prayer meeting. By this I mean we pray for those who are suffering from some kind of physical problem, and we pray for them to be restored. We pray that God would see them through this calamity as He has so faithfully done in the past. On the other hand, there is a much more challenging level for us to deal with from the standpoint of faith. And that is to trust God to preserve those who are His until even death has passed. Consider the Words of Job, for he understood this: *“though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” (Job 13:15)*



This was not an act of stubbornness on Job's part, for just a few chapters later Job strongly states: *“And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.” (Job 19:26)* Job believed in a bodily resurrection at some point after his physical death—that is why he trusted in God. Is God dependable to see us home through death—He absolutely is and that is part of the message of Psalm 57.

You will have to decide for yourself, but I want to let the Word have a chance to speak to you about this. Consider the very well known 23rd Psalm:

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. . . For you are with me. . . thy rod and they staff they comfort me.

Why does the psalmist “fear no evil”? Because he has taken refuge under the wings of the Almighty, that's why! How do I know this—because “Thou (God) art with me”. The “rod and staff” are another aspect of God's being able to preserve and protect from each and every danger.

One last powerful concept for you to grasp. In the 23rd Psalm, David refers to the valley of the shadow of death. There are many times in our lives when we walk into the valley and then back out of the valley of the shadow of death. And when we do—we are often inspired to give God the glory for preserving us. But there will come a time when we are going to walk into the Valley of the Shadow of death and not come back out; but rather, walk through it coming out on the other side. For the Christian, that will be in the presence of the Lord! And when this day comes, you can count on the fact that God will keep you under the proactive shadow of His wings all the way until you are home with Him.

I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)

You see there is a world of difference between believing that God is a mighty refuge most of the time, and believing that He is a refuge from any and every calamity we will ever face including physical death.

There is also a world of difference between believing that we can take shelter until the calamity is just too big for God to handle, and believing there is no calamity too big and no calamity which God has not graciously accounted for in His plan of salvation for mankind!

And so in closing, I commend the Lord to you, upon the authority of the Word of God, as a shelter for every storm that life brings your way. I believe that Psalm 57, among other passages of Scripture, teaches us that we can take shelter under His wings until each and every calamity has passed--right up to and including our passing from this life to the next. In that case, does the calamity, death, win? Absolutely not!

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

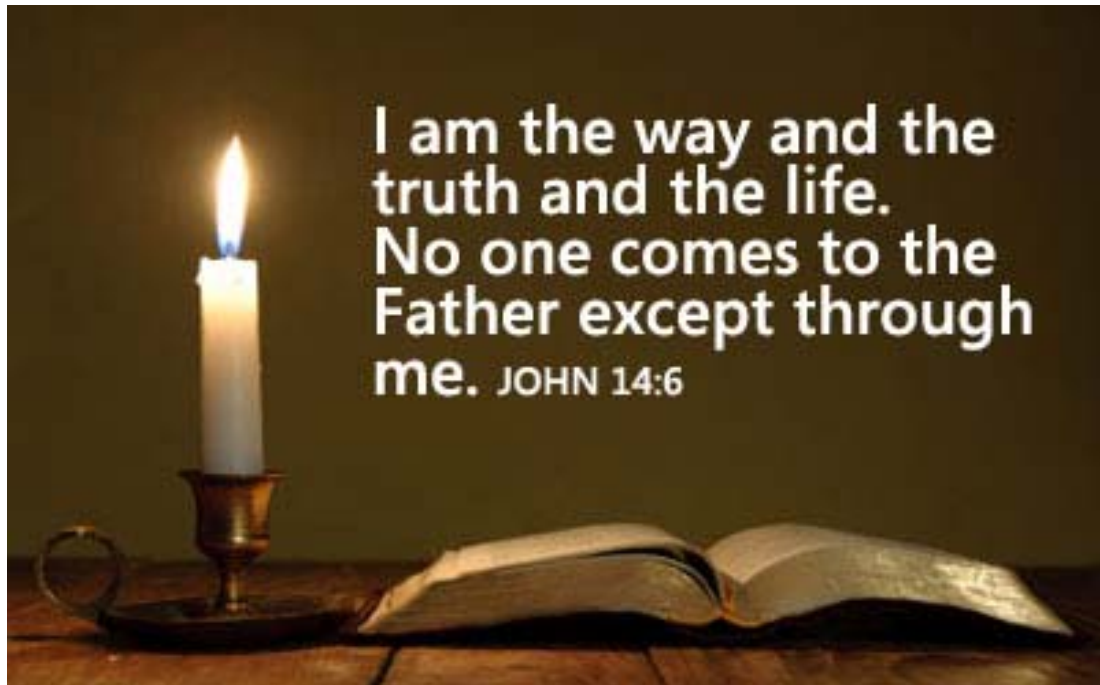
Where O death is your sting, where O death is your victory? Death is swallowed up in victory—thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

This is a matter of faith, “. . .and without faith it is impossible to please God...” (Hebrews 11:6)

One final thought. Apart from knowing Jesus Christ, there is no unassailable refuge, no sheltering under the wings of the Almighty as we pass from this life to the next but only a fearful expectation of judgment. (Hebrews 10:27)

So once again, as an ambassador of Jesus Christ—I implore you, be reconciled to God through His Son. You can do so right now in the quietness of your own soul by placing your faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ: His person, in that He is the Son of God come to save lost mankind; His work, in that He went to the cross for the specific purpose of receiving upon Himself the judgment of God that was our due. And having satisfied the judgment of God once and for all, He is now the source of eternal life for all who will place their faith in Him and Him alone.

To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.



Vistoso Community Church

OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of Vistoso Community Church is to bring glory to God by completing the work He has given us to do.

John 17:4

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to be used by God to help the lost receive eternal life, and those with eternal life to grow in grace and knowledge.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Christ is the only Lord and Savior. Acts 2:36
- The Bible is the inspired word of God. II Timothy 3:16-17
- We honor God through traditional worship: Psalm 19:14
- Our loving fellowship strengthens us. Hebrews 10:24-25
- Seeking the lost is our commission. Matthew 28:19-20
- The principles of divine establishment are God given.
Nehemiah. 4:14



VISTOSO COMMUNITY CHURCH

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