

# The Lord My Protector

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## Key Scripture

Psalm 91:1-2 (ESV) 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.”

## Sermon in One Sentence

In a world increasingly marked by peril and uncertainty, God's unchanging nature as our divine Protector offers unwavering security and an unbreakable sanctuary for all who trust in Him.

## Introduction

Have you ever felt truly exposed, vulnerable, or utterly alone in the face of a looming threat? Perhaps it was a financial crisis that threatened to engulf your family, a health scare that stole your peace, or even just the daily anxieties that chip away at our sense of security. We live in a world that constantly reminds us of our fragility – global pandemics, economic instability, natural disasters, and personal tragedies underscore how easily our sense of safety can be shattered. The human heart yearns for protection, for a shield against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

This deep-seated human need for security is not a sign of weakness, but a recognition of our creaturely dependence. From the moment a child instinctively reaches for a parent's hand to the adult navigating life's complex challenges, the desire for protection is intrinsic. But where do we find true, lasting protection when earthly defenses so often prove inadequate? Where can we turn when the foundations beneath us seem to shift and crumble?

Our answer today comes from one of the most beloved and comforting passages in all of Scripture, Psalm 91. It addresses this very cry of the human heart, pointing us not to man-made fortifications or fleeting assurances, but to the living God Himself. In these verses, we discover not just *a* protector, but *the* Protector, the one who stands as our unshakeable refuge in every storm of life.

## Historical & Biblical Context

Psalm 91 stands as a powerful testament to God's providence and care, a song of trust and confidence in the face of danger. While its author is not explicitly stated, tradition often attributes it to Moses, further enhancing its ancient pedigree and connection to divine revelation. Regardless of human authorship, its divine inspiration is clear, resonating with a universal human plea for security. The psalm is a wisdom psalm, offering rich theological truths about God's character and promises. It paints vivid pictures of God's protection using metaphors of shelter, shadow, fortress, shield, and buckler, drawing on familiar imagery from ancient Near Eastern warfare and nomadic life where immediate threats from wild animals, human adversaries, and harsh elements were ever-present realities.

The original audience, likely Israelites navigating a world filled with both seen and unseen dangers, would have deeply understood the need for divine intervention. This psalm served as a balm for their anxieties, a declaration of faith in a God who actively intervenes to safeguard His people. For us today, centuries removed from its original context but facing our own unique set of modern pressures and existential threats, Psalm 91 remains profoundly relevant. It transcends cultural and chronological barriers, speaking to the timeless human condition and offering the same divine solace and assurance that it did to its first hearers. It beckons us to consider not just *what* God does, but *who* God is – our ultimate and unyielding Protector.

## **Main Point I — The Privilege of Proximity: Dwelling in God's Shelter**

**Scripture:** Psalm 91:1a (ESV) He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

The psalm opens with a profound truth: certain privileges are reserved for those who intentionally choose proximity to God. The words "dwell" and "abide" are key here. They aren't passive suggestions but active choices, implying a sustained, intentional relationship. To "dwell in the shelter of the Most High" means to live in intimate fellowship with God, making Him our permanent residence, our spiritual home. It's not a fleeting visit, but a settled lifestyle of dependence and devotion. When we make God our dwelling place, we automatically place ourselves under His divine covering.

This "shelter of the Most High" and "shadow of the Almighty" are not merely poetic metaphors; they represent the active, encompassing presence of God. Just as a bird finds refuge under the protective wing of its parent, or a traveler finds respite from the scorching sun in a deep shadow, those who dwell with God find protection from the dangers and trials of life. This proximity ensures that whatever comes our way, we are not alone; we are shielded by the very omnipotence of God. It's an invitation to a relationship so deep that His omnipotence becomes our immediate and ever-present sanctuary.

## **Main Point II — The Posture of Personal Declaration: Trusting in God's Character**

**Scripture:** Psalm 91:2 (ESV) I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

Following the general truth of who *dwells* with God, the psalmist shifts to a deeply personal declaration. This isn't just an abstract theological statement; it's a verbal affirmation of intimate faith. "I will say to the LORD" implies an active, conscious decision to voice one's trust. Here, God is called "my refuge" and "my fortress." A refuge is a safe haven for immediate escape, while a fortress is a strong, enduring structure built for long-term defense. Together, they convey both immediate and sustained protection, an assurance that God covers every aspect of our safety.

Crucially, the psalmist asserts, "my God, in whom I trust." This is the foundation of all protection. Trust isn't merely believing *that* God exists; it's believing *in* God – His character, His promises, His power, and His love. It's a surrender of our anxieties and fears into His capable hands. When we declare God as *our* God, it signifies a covenant relationship, an acknowledgment of His sovereignty over our lives. This act of personal

trust is the spiritual key that unlocks the overflowing blessings of His protection. It transforms abstract theological truths into a lived, dynamic experience of divine safeguarding.

### **Main Point III — The Promise of Preservation: Experience God's Protection**

**Scripture:** Psalm 91:3-4 (ESV) For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

Building on the previous points of dwelling and declaration, the psalm moves to vivid promises of God's active preservation. This is where the rubber meets the road, where the theoretical becomes tangible. God is not a passive observer but an active deliverer. The "snare of the fowler" evokes imagery of sudden, unseen dangers, traps laid by adversaries, or even the subtle enticements of sin. The "deadly pestilence" speaks to widespread, uncontrollable threats like disease or calamity. In both cases, God promises to deliver.

The imagery of being "covered with his pinions" and finding "refuge under his wings" is profoundly comforting, reminiscent of a mother bird protecting her young. It speaks of tenderness, personal involvement, and complete envelopment. This isn't cold, distant protection; it's intimate and caring. And underpinning all of this is His "faithfulness"—a shield and buckler. God's faithfulness is not merely an attribute; it is the very instrument of our defense, guaranteeing that His promises will never fail. It's His unwavering commitment to His covenant that ensures our preservation, shielding us from direct assault and providing a buckler, a smaller shield, for nimble defense against individual attacks. We are protected not because of our strength, but because of His unyielding character.

### **Illustration**

In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire raged, consuming vast sections of the city and leaving thousands homeless. Amidst the chaos and devastation, a young hymnist named Horatio Spafford – though his own family would soon face unimaginable tragedy at sea – penned these immortal words years later: "When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul.'" While Spafford's immediate context for writing was different, his testimony echoes the truth of Psalm 91. He didn't say, "It is well with my circumstances," or "It is well with my finances." He said, "It is well with my *soul*." His external world was a scene of ruin and grief, yet internally, he found an unshakeable peace and protection that came not from the absence of danger, but from the presence of his Protector. In the midst of the most destructive fires and deepest sorrows, dwelling in God's shelter meant his soul remained untouched by the chaos, safe under the shadow of the Almighty.

### **Practical Application**

- 1. Cultivate a Daily "Dwelling" Habit:** Don't treat God like an emergency contact; make Him your daily residence. Commit to spending intentional time in prayer and Scripture each day, not just when you're in crisis. This consistent fellowship is how you "dwell in the shelter of the Most High."
- 2. Practice Declarations of Trust:** Actively verbalize your reliance on God. When anxiety strikes or fear creeps in, audibly or inwardly declare, "You are my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." This

act of speaking faith reorients your heart and mind.

**3. Identify and Surrender Specific Fears:** Take time this week to identify one or two specific fears that are weighing on you. Consciously bring them before God in prayer, asking Him to be your protection in those particular areas, trusting His faithfulness as your shield.

**4. Remind Yourself of God's Past Protection:** Reflect on times in your life when God has clearly protected or provided for you. Keep a journal of these instances. Recalling His past faithfulness strengthens your trust for present and future challenges.

## Discussion Questions

1. What does it practically look like to "dwell in the shelter of the Most High" in our busy, modern lives?
2. How does intentionally declaring God as "my refuge" and "my fortress" impact your personal sense of security?
3. What specific "snares of the fowler" or "deadly pestilences" (literal or metaphorical) do you face in your life right now, and how does Psalm 91 speak to them?
4. How can we move from simply *believing* God is a protector to actually *experiencing* His protection in a deeper way?

## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the profound comfort and truth found in Your Word, especially in Psalm 91. We confess our fears and anxieties, the times we rely on our own strength rather than Yours. Forgive us for our wavering trust. We pray now that You would establish us firmly in Your shelter, teaching us to truly dwell in Your presence and abide beneath Your shadow. Be our constant refuge and our unshakeable fortress, guarding our hearts and minds by Your faithfulness. Amen.

## Benediction

Go now, and may the Lord Himself be your refuge and your fortress, continually covering you with His loving protection, now and forevermore.