

SHELTER

Week 2 — Protected by His Faithfulness

Psalm 91:3–6

³ Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.
⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. (NIV)

SERIES RECAP

- Week 1: MAKE HIM YOUR DWELLING PLACE — Psalm 91:1–2. The question was not merely whether God is a refuge, but whether I have made Him MY refuge.
- Week 2: WHAT IS LIFE LIKE UNDER THAT SHELTER? The psalm moves from the identity of our refuge to the dangers that confront us.
- Notice the repeated subject: HE will save; HE will cover; HIS faithfulness will defend. The center of this text is God, not our ability to control outcomes.

**The security of our shelter rests in the faithfulness of our God.
 Is your God faithful?**

Illustration

- Haarlem, Netherlands. February 28, 1944. The Gestapo raided the home of the ten Boom family.
- Behind a concealed wall in Corrie ten Boom's bedroom, six people hid while German officers searched the house.
- Corrie, her father Casper, and her sister Betsie were arrested. The six concealed people were not discovered and were moved to safety by the resistance several days later.
- But the family paid an enormous price: Casper died shortly after his arrest; Betsie died in Ravensbrück. Corrie survived imprisonment and later told the story of their faith.
- This is NOT a story in which everyone who trusted God escaped suffering.
- It is a story of costly courage, real refuge, and faith that endured when safety failed.

Vanessa – see if you can find several pictures of this.
 I think they have recreated it in the holocaust museum.

TRANSITION

- What do you do when danger is closer than you realized?

- What if the greatest threat is not something you can see coming?
- Psalm 91 does not say the world is free of danger.
- Psalm 91 says there is a faithful God in whom we may take refuge.

**The God who invites us to dwell with him
is the God who stays faithful when danger comes.**

The invisible trap

- A hunter does not announce the trap.
- He hides it along a path where the animal expects to walk.
- The danger is not merely its strength; it is its concealment.
- Transition: We cannot prepare for everything we cannot see.

I. God sees the dangers I cannot see.

Psalm 91:3

**Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.
(NIV)**

- A. The fowler's snare: hidden, deliberate, deceptive danger.
1. Hebrew: paḥ (פַּח) — trap or snare; yāqûš — one who catches birds, a fowler.
 2. A bird may be drawn toward food and never recognize the trap until it closes.
 3. The danger is not always an obvious enemy.
 4. Sometimes it is a convincing invitation.
 - a. A trap is effective precisely because it is disguised.
 - b. Not every open door is a door God opened.
 - c. Do not reduce this to spiritual warfare alone;
the poetry also speaks of real-world danger.

B. Two fold protection

1. Spiritual
2. Physical

What is hidden from us is never hidden from God.

- C. The deadly pestilence: threats we cannot control.
1. Hebrew deber (דֵּבֶר) — pestilence, often an epidemic or devastating disease.

2. In the ancient world disease could advance without warning or understanding.
3. The pair “snare / pestilence” encompasses intentional and impersonal danger.
 - a. Some trouble is caused by human evil
other trouble comes through a fallen world.
 - b. We need discernment
... but discernment cannot make us omniscient.

Straw Man — what this verse does NOT say

- “If I have enough faith, I will never become sick, suffer loss, or face danger.”
- Psalm 91 - is not a guarantee of immunity.
- The Lord later promises, “**I will be with him in trouble**” (Psalm 91:15).
- God truly delivers, sometimes remarkably and physically
- He also sustains His people through suffering.
- Both truths belong in our preaching.

The question is not - Will trouble come?

The question is – Who will be with you when trouble comes?

Illustration

A concealed snare

- Describe the mechanics of a bird trap: food or a familiar path disguises the mechanism.
No invented historical detail required.
- What looks safe to us may still require God-given discernment.

Joseph and his brothers — Genesis 37; 50:20

- Joseph’s brothers planned harm; years later Joseph recognized that God was able to bring good through evil. Do not say Joseph avoided suffering.
- Connection: God’s sovereignty is greater than the evil people intend.

Corrie ten Boom’s rescue network

- The family had to discern who needed help, whom to trust, and how to act under constant surveillance.
- Godly courage does not eliminate the need for wisdom and vigilance.

Ephesians 6:10-11

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

- **Calculated Strategy:** It does not refer to clumsy or random temptations, but to an organized, systematic, and calculated campaign. Just as a hunter or a wild animal carefully stalks its prey with a calculated method, Satan uses targeted tactics rather than guesswork.
- **Deception and Illusion:** The word highlights stealth, masquerading, and trickery (such as appearing like an “angel of light” or distorting truth).

Key Takeaway for Spiritual Warfare

1. The devil's attacks are **methodical and strategic**.
2. Believers cannot resist these engineered lies or divisions through human willpower or casual effort
3. They require the systematic, spiritual defense symbolized by the **full armor of God**

Application

1. **Ask the Holy Spirit...**
Where have I mistaken an attractive opportunity for a safe opportunity?
2. **Guard the vulnerable...**
children, marriages, finances, private habits, online life, ministry relationships.
3. **Use ordinary wisdom...**
Medical care, wise counsel
honest accountability—without treating these as replacements for trust in God.

God sees the dangers I cannot see.

II. God's protection is both tender and powerful.

Psalm 91:4

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. (NIV)

- A. The image of wings: the tenderness of a protecting parent.
 1. The Hebrew pictures sheltering feathers / pinions and refuge beneath wings.
 2. In Ruth 2:12, Boaz blesses Ruth for seeking refuge beneath the LORD's wings.
 3. In Matthew 23:37, Jesus longs to gather Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks.
 - a. A bird does not protect its young by explaining the weather. It covers them.

- b. The young do not create the strength of the wings; they receive the shelter.

**God is powerful enough to defend you
and tender enough to hold you close.**

- B. The image of a shield: the strength of a faithful defender.
1. Hebrew 'emet (אֱמֶת) — truth, firmness, reliability, faithfulness.
 2. His faithfulness is the protection
not my perfect performance, but His dependable character.
 3. Hebrew šinnâ — a large shield; soḥērāh
a defensive term translated “rampart”
 - a. The point is comprehensive defense
 - b. The image changes from nursery to battlefield without changing the subject:
the SAME GOD.

God is near enough to cover us and strong enough to defend us.

Psalm 46:1-3

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- ³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Illustration

The mother bird

- A nesting bird spreads its wings over vulnerable young when weather or a predator approaches. Use as biblical imagery, not a promise of guaranteed survival.
- The One who shields is personally attentive.

A child in a parent's arms

- The child cannot stop the thunder, but the embrace changes the experience of the storm.
- God's presence is not always the removal of noise or fear.

A soldier's shield

- The soldier's safety rests not in denying that arrows exist but in trusting the defensive protection provided.
- Faith does not pretend danger is imaginary

Application

- Do I relate to God only as a distant ruler, or also as a Father whose character is compassionate and faithful?
- Pray for the vulnerable—children, the sick, the grieving, the isolated—with tenderness and expectation.
- Refuse to make fear the loudest voice in your home. Speak the truth of God's character.

God sees the dangers I cannot see.

God's protection is both tender and powerful.

III. I will have courage because God is faithful in every season.

Psalm 91:5–6

⁵You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. (NIV)

A. Notice the comprehensive movement through time.

1. Terror of NIGHT — fear magnified by uncertainty.
2. Arrow by DAY — a visible attack in the open.
3. Pestilence in DARKNESS — danger developing unseen.
4. Destruction at MIDDAY — danger even when everything seems clear.

- This is poetic totality: day and night - seen and unseen - every hour.

There is no minute of your life in which God ceases to be faithful.

- B. The text addresses our fear, not merely our circumstances.
1. “You will not fear” does not require pretending that danger does not exist.
 2. Biblical courage is not the absence of an emotional response
it is trust that refuses to surrender obedience to fear.

Fearful thought – “What if everything goes wrong?”

Faith-filled thought - “Who will be with me if it does?”

Fear measures the danger

Faith remembers the defender.

3. We can pray for deliverance and still refuse to make our obedience conditional on rescue.

Psalm 91:15

He will call on me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honor him. (NIV)

Daniel 3:16–18

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” (NIV)

- C. Jesus Himself shows us how to trust the promises.
1. Satan quotes Psalm 91:11–12 to tempt Jesus to throw Himself from the temple.
 2. Jesus refuses to turn divine protection into a demand that God prove Himself.
 3. A promise can be quoted accurately and applied wrongly.
 4. Christ did not avoid the cross. The Father vindicated Him through resurrection.

Matthew 4:5–7 (NIV)

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”
(NIV)

D. A theological guardrail worth saying out loud

1. A tragedy does **NOT** prove a lack of faith.
2. Inoculations, shots, treatments, sheltering from storms, or wise precautions compete with faith.
3. The promises of Psalm 91 are powerful
 - They are not magic words to manipulate outcomes.

These two realities can exist at the same time.

- The form and timing of deliverance that is not ours to dictate.
- God’s faithful presence and protection.

Illustration

- **Daniel’s three friends — Daniel 3**
 - They stand before a furnace and say God is able to deliver; their worship is not for sale even if He does not.
 - Faith is courageous because it trusts God, not because it controls the outcome.
- **Corrie and Betsie in Ravensbrück**
 - The hidden guests survived the raid, yet Betsie died in the camp and Corrie endured suffering. Their story resists shallow formulas.
 - God’s faithfulness does not mean believers never suffer.
- **The nighttime phone call**
 - A parent hears the phone ring at 2 a.m. and immediately fears bad news
The unknown can make your imagination run wild.
 - Psalm 91 speaks directly to fear in the night.

Application — three practical responses this week

1. Name the fear.

Where has fear been making decisions for me

- Health, family, finances, calling, ministry, the future?

2. Answer with truth.

- Confess God's character, pray the Word, and ask the Spirit for wisdom and peace.

3. Take the next obedient step.

- Do the good thing God has called you to do even when outcomes remain uncertain.

The presence of danger does not mean the absence of God.

CONCLUSION — RETURN TO WEEK 1

- Week 1 asked: WHERE ARE YOU DWELLING?
- Week 2 asks: WHOM DO YOU TRUST WHEN THE SNARE IS HIDDEN, THE NIGHT IS LONG, AND THE ARROW IS FLYING?
- Our answer is not "I am strong enough." Our answer is "HE is faithful."
- We do not live without caution. We live without surrendering our hearts to fear.

**Our shelter is not a formula
Our shelter is God's faithfulness**

- God sees the dangers I cannot see.
- God's protection is both tender and powerful.
- I will have courage because God is faithful in every season.

Response

- Invitation to those living under fear: come to the Lord with your actual concern
 - Ask for peace, courage, wisdom, and His protecting hand.
- Invitation to believers under suffering
 - You are not disqualified from the promises because you are hurting.
 - Ask the Spirit to sustain you.
- Invitation to those without Christ
 - Do not merely seek a safer life; come to the Savior who reconciles us to God.

Revelation / Praise

- You see every danger, including what we cannot see.
- You are compassionate enough to shelter us and powerful enough to defend us.
- Your faithfulness does not diminish at night or in seasons of suffering.
- In Jesus Christ we have a refuge that death itself cannot destroy.

Request / Petition

- Give us discernment to recognize hidden traps and the courage to turn from them.
- Protect our families, our church, the vulnerable, and those who serve in dangerous places.
- Heal the sick and comfort those who have suffered; teach us to pray with faith and humility.
- Holy Spirit, replace fear-driven decisions with Spirit-empowered obedience.
- Give us wisdom and strength to be a sheltering presence to others.