THE SECRET PLACE (PSALM 91:1)

Psa 91:1 *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

1. I think this psalm is one of the most expressive portions in all of the Word of God.
   a. And certainly, no poem or song that flows from the mind of man could ever reach the beauty of this psalm.
   b. It begins in a very high and lofty tone and continues on this lofty tone to the very end of the psalm.

2. We don't really know who wrote the psalm but the early Jewish and Christian authors believed that Moses wrote it.
   a. The Jews believed that when an author’s name was not mentioned, that we should assume that the last mentioned author should be ascribed to it.
   b. In this case, Psalm 90 is ascribed to Moses and therefore, this psalm should be considered as a writing of Moses.
      i. That seems to fit the tone of the psalm and I think it is very likely that Moses wrote it.
      ii. By the end of this message, you will see why I say that!
   c. But it doesn’t really matter to me because it is actually from the Mind of God himself!
   d. So the human author is not so important because we are reading the words of God, not the words of man!

3. I have preached on this passage before and the application that I made was the need for the believer to get alone with God – to have a good prayer time in the morning before we start our day.
   a. To enter before God's presence, to seek God’s face, to seek God’s blessings upon our lives.
   b. And I know that we can certainly make that application but There is a deeper meaning of this passage and I want to share that with you.

4. I would have to say that there are very few truths that have more impacted my thinking and my life than the truth that this verse teaches.

5. You see, the verse does not say we are to enter into the presence of God for a time and then go out to meet our day.
   a. No, this is much deeper than simply having a prayer time with God in the morning.
   b. It is far deeper than simply reading our Bibles or seeking God’s guidance for the day.
   c. To put it plainly, this verse teaches the necessity of living in the reality of God's presence every moment of every day. Not to merely visit the LORD, but to dwell with him!
   d. You see, our God is not in a box, or a temple, or a shrine. Our God is not limited to a church building or a Sunday School class room.
   e. Our God is ever present with us and we need to learn how to live in the reality of his presence.

6. I want to examine this verse in full. I want to take some time and dwell upon four thoughts:
   a. the **persons** mentioned in the verse;
   b. the **place** where we find the LORD;
   c. the **promise** associated with being in that place;
   d. and the **prerequisite** (condition) in order to receive the promise.
1. There are two persons mentioned in this verse – God and, as the psalm begins in verse 1, “He”. So let’s first consider what is said about God.
   
a. He is called **the Most High**.
   
i. God is the greatest being in all the universe. The one who is above all. All of creation will bow before him!
   
ii. He is not limited to dwell within time or space. Heaven is his throne and the earth is his footstool!
   
iii. God is the highest of all beings. He is the most high.
   
   b. God is called **the Almighty**.
   
i. This speaks of his great power. “Almighty” does not mean he has power. No, it means he has all power.
   
ii. Any power that man would ever gain comes from the hand of God who allowed us to have it.
   
iii. As the Almighty, he is not subject to the laws of his creation because he is the creator and abides above all of his creation.
   
iv. He is the Almighty. The most high, that dwells in the heavens above all!
   
2. The second person is simply “he”
   
a. It is a very simply way of saying “anyone”
   
b. God has not reserved his secret place for any particular person or group.
   
c. The secret place of God is not for a special class of the privileged few. No, anyone may claim the promise of this passage.
   
d. In contrast to the greatness of God, the most high, the Almighty, man is a weak and lowly creature.
   
e. In fact the Scriptures say on several occasions, “What is man that thou art mindful of him?”

_Psa 8:4-5_ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (5) For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

f. I do not know why, but for some reason, God loves us! His rebellious and sinful creatures!

g. And he has set in his heart to save us and to raise us up together in Christ to dwell with him!

_Psa 144:3-4_ LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! (4) Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.

h. Man, who is weak and full of vanity. Man, whose days are fleeting, and like a vapor which vanishes away!

i. Yet God takes account of us and has given us the blessed privilege to dwell with him!

_Job 7:17-18_ What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? (18) And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

j. Really! What is man? What is in man that causes God to reach out to him?

k. Why should God care about us at all? He does not need us. We do not even want him.
I. He dwells in holiness but man dwells in sin. He sits upon a throne of glory and man wallows in the miry pit of sin.

m. Yet God loved us from the foundation of the world and has set his heart upon us to redeem us to himself!

n. Wow! What a thought! What great love! And yet man, in his pride would reject God’s grace and plunge himself into condemnation!

o. But it doesn't have to be that way. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide in the shadow our the almighty.

3. We have considered the persons and now let's consider . . . .

THE PLACE

1. This place is described as a secret place
   a. It is not a public place but a secret place. It is a place which has not been revealed to very many.
   b. It is an unknown place - a place that is not found unless the way to that place has been made plain to us!
   c. It is a place where we may be alone, secure, and protected.
   d. It is a place of intimacy and quietness with God apart from the prying eyes of others.

2. This place is described as God’s secret place
   a. It is not a place of man’s choosing. God chose this place.
   b. It is not a place of man’s design. God has set the boundaries of this place!

3. This place is described as a place where God’s shadow falls.
   a. In the song of Solomon, the bride, a picture of the believer, spoke of the shadow of the bridegroom:

Son 2:3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

   b. She sat down. She had no desire to leave that place of closeness to her lover!
   c. Oh that we would have such a delight to be in the presence of our LORD.
   d. In the same way, he that dwells in the secret place also abides in the LORD’s shadow.
   e. And just as the Shulamite woman in the Song of Solomon, those who have known the sweetness of his shadow find it to be a place of great delight!

4. Under the shadow of the Almighty is obviously a place of great nearness to the LORD.
   a. We must walk very near to Christ if we want the blessings of the shadow!
   b. To be near the one we love brings us great joy! There doesn’t need to be any activity. There doesn’t need to be any conversation! It is simply enough to be together!
   c. Is that how you feel about your LORD? It ought to be.

THE PROMISE
1. Simply put, the promise is that those who dwell in this secret place are afforded the protection of God’s shadow.

2. God’s shadow is that special place of communion – a place of fellowship and a place of protection.

*Psalm 91:10* There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

   a. The place of protection and safety is the place of God’s dwelling!
   
   b. To be where he is! To live in the reality of HIS presence!

3. It may be that the psalmist had in mind the holy of holies where the high priest entered once a year.

   a. And there in the holy of holies, the high priest was overshadowed by the cloud of God’s shekinah glory!
   
   b. In the Old Testament, this was the privilege of the high priest alone, but now, through Christ, it is the privilege of every believer as God’s children!
   
   b. We may enter through the blood of Jesus and dwell in safety from all harm!

**THE PREREQUISITE – TO DWELL**

1. The great desire of God’s heart is to “dwell” with his creatures. This was the reason for the gospel. Notice how this unfolds for us in the Scriptures:

   a. In the **Old Testament**, God wanted his people to build a sanctuary so that he could dwell among man:

   *Exodus 25:8* And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

   b. In the **earthly ministry of Christ** we see God dwelling with man:

   *Matthew 1:23* Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

   c. And **now**, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

   *Romans 8:9* But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

2. Have you ever compared Psalm 113:5 with Eph 2:6? Notice what these say:

   *Psalm 113:5* Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,

   *Ephesians 2:6* And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

   a. God dwells in a high and lofty place. A place of holiness and supremacy.
   
   b. Yet through the blood of Christ, he has lifted us up from the miry clay of sin and made us to sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ!

3. Yet God cannot dwell with man unless man desires it.

   a. God is like the father in the parable of the prodigal son that waits and watches for the son to come. And the moment he sees the son returning, he runs to meet him!
   
   b. And like the prodigal son, we cannot dwell among the pigs; we cannot dwell in a foreign land. We must dwell where God is!

*Psalm 23:6* 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.
Psa 65:4  *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*

4. Yet the greatest truth concerning this incredible “dwelling” is not that we must be in a certain place. But to be “IN HIM!”

Psa 90:1  *A Prayer of Moses the man of God. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.*

5. The place of God’s dwelling is a high and lofty place. It is a place of holiness.
   a. And that is the reason why many of us do not dwell in God’s secret place. Because we do not live in holiness.
   b. Oh sure, we visit a place of holiness from time to time. We have our periods of holiness when we read our Bibles, have our prayer times, or go to church.
   c. But the secret to God’s power and victory is not found in visiting the place of refuge. But to dwell there!
   d. The key is not simply running to his fortress in a time of need. But to dwell there!

Psa 101:6-7  *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. (7) He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*

Psa 140:13  *Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

Isa 57:15  *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

6. God’s prerequisite to claim the promise of his presence, his provision, and his protection is to “dwell” We cannot merely “visit”. We must dwell.
   a. Only those who dwell in the secret place may claim the promise of God's abiding shadow!
   b. The blessings here mentioned are not for the casual believer who merely visits the LORD on Sundays or for a few moments in prayer during a time of need.
      i. It is for those who “live in the reality of God’s presence”!
      ii. God’s children should not consider themselves guests in a strange place but as sons who have the honor of living before his throne.
      iii. The presence of the LORD is not a place of temporary visitation but a habitation of our own dwelling by right as sons of God!
   c. It is true that we may be saved by the wonderful grace of God; we may run to Christ in time of need; but we must dwell in that secret place!
   d. True success in the life of faith can only come when we live in God’s presence!
   e. Those who depart from the place of God’s strength will fall into temptation and danger! But those who dwell are safe from all harm!
   f. This is the confidence of the saint! Notice Heb 13:5, 6:

*Heb 13:5-6*  *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*
7. The psalmist knew the confidence of dwelling in God's secret place and therefore he went on to say in Psalm 91:2:

Psa 91:2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

a. He knew that God was his refuge.
   i. In other words, the LORD kept him safe from the storms of life.
   ii. That secret place provided for him a sanctuary of protection when the storms of trials and tribulation raged around him!

b. But he also called God his fortress.
   i. He was not repeating himself. There is a difference between a refuge and a fortress.
   ii. When you think of a refuge, you think of a place of safety from any danger.
   iii. But a fortress is a place of protection against direct attack from the enemy. And the psalmist knew that God was his protection!

CONCLUSION

1. But not anyone can dwell. We must be spiritually able to dwell.
   a. We must first of all, enter by faith in Christ!
      i. This wonderful place which provides for us the fellowship and protection of God cannot be entered except by faith in Christ.
      ii. Christ is the door. He said so himself! (John 10:9)

Joh 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

   iii. You cannot enter into the presence of God without first going by way of the door, Jesus Christ!
   iv. Christ has gone before us and opened the way so that we may dwell in the very presence of God!

Heb 6:19-20 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; (20) Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

1. Remember what happened on the day that Christ was crucified? The veil of the temple was rent in two.
2. That veil, which separated the holy of holies from man, was torn in half! God was telling us that now we can come into his presence any time we want!
3. And that is all because of Christ!

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

2. Do you have a desire to dwell with Christ? Do you remember the words of the disciples when they first met Jesus?

Joh 1:38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

   a. Oh that God’s people would have such a desire!