

War is one of the ugliest manifestations of the fallen nature of man. It is the direct opposite of peace....

Saddest of all, after all of the devastation and destruction that war brings about....most wars **do not end** in actual peace.

Most wars (especially in our modern era) end with mere agreements to stop fighting....

It is only when one faction agrees to SURRENDER to the terms of the victorious party.... that an actual Peace Treaty can be signed....

A Peace **Treaty** is an agreement (or a covenant of peace).....

Like any other covenant...(formal agreement) it has terms, conditions, **obligations** and **promises**....for both sides.

As we look at Psalm 91 this morning..... I want to ask you to hear it as an articulation of God's Peace Treaty with you.....

To set it in context.... you are going to have to understand and agree that each of us are in NEED of a Peace Treaty with God.....

For when Adam & Eve chose to disobey God..... when (as the head of the human race) Adam chose to effectively tell God that he preferred to live life his own way **WITHOUT** God ruling over him..... we ALL (as a race) became God's enemies.

We were not only alienated from him.... but we became hostile toward him.... doing deeds which are acts of WAR against His holiness and goodness...

So... the ultimate covenant of peace is God bringing us to Himself by putting His own Son to death on the cross.... in order that the price for our rebellion could be paid....and we could be **RECONCILED** to God....

So that YOU might personally enter into this Peace Treaty with God....

Romans 5:10

"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

This new covenant.... (treaty) in Christ Jesus is why we are gathered here today....

We are here as the glad recipients of His Peace....and we gladly want to enter into the RELATIONSHIP with God that this treaty affords us....

Psalm 91.... is a beautiful articulation of this reality.... on a **PERSONAL** level...

God's Peace Treaty

1. Come under His Protection

On **this** day...6 years ago.....the great majority of the population of New Orleans were happily abiding in their homes...(most of which were below sea level). They were protected **only** by a man made levee from impending destruction....

Most were **somewhat** aware that destruction was possible... but it was not an **urgent** matter...

However, by August 29, 2005 well over a MILLION people were FLEEING this city of destruction.... in search of shelter from Hurricane Katrina.

Another 10,000 stayed in the city.....ultimately fleeing to the Superdome and other temporary shelters while they struggled to survive the horrendous ordeal...

That is an illustration of what **our** lives are like..... for many of us stubbornly try to ignore the impending destruction coming upon those who refuse to obey the gospel... being satisfied to sit on the rooftops of our half submerged homes...

SIN always brings destruction.....sometimes sooner.... sometimes later...

But both at the personal level and it to us as an entire race of people.....

The reason you need God's Peace Treaty.... is that God wants to become your **Shelter**... He wants you to COME under His protection.... before it is too late.

Listen to the description of His Protection for those in covenant relationship with Him...

Psalm 91:1

" He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will **abide** in the shadow of the Almighty."

When people say where do you live? You don't answer... well I go to the grocery store a lot.....

You tell them where (on a daily basis) you find **REST**..... You tell them where you try to find protection from the elements and from the world..... THAT is your shelter...

You tell them where you get refreshed for each new day..... shower.... where you get your nourishment.....where your people are...

That is your dwelling place..... your **ABODE**..... at least physically speaking...

If we are not careful.... (especially in our culture of affluence and ease)...

We will be tempted to let our HEARTS find security in those earthy dwellings as well....

But to **dwell** and abide in the shelter of the Most High..... involves a decision to **MOVE**. You **choose** to make your home under God's Protection....instead of continuing to **rely on yourself**.... or someone else to be your Shelter.....

You do this by faith... based on the REALITY of Who God has revealed Himself to be....

Throughout Scripture God reveals Who He is through His Names...

He first revealed himself as "God **MOST HIGH**" – way back in Gen. 14 as He delivered Abram from his enemies in the sight of all the kings who were watching...

the MOST High....is the One who rules over every other principality and power... especially those who pretend to be god themselves....

He is **SUPREME** in every regard...and exercises providence over EVERYTHING.

Derek Kidner – "Most High is a title which cuts every threat down to size."

Not sure what is **threatening you** this morning.... could be a person... could be a financial situation.... rest assured... you can run under God MOST HIGH's protection and you will find SAFETY from it...

God Almighty (El Shaddai) is the Name God revealed to Abraham (Gen. 17) as He called Him to come under a covenant of Protection.....

If you read that chapter... you will see the stipulations of the agreement....

Abraham – God said - "Walk Before Me and be blameless"...

As for Me – I will greatly MULTIPLY you and make you the Father of many nations...

- No big deal... right? Except that Abraham was already 99 years old.... and had no kids....

That is why He needed God **ALMIGHTY!** The God for whom nothing is impossible.

(Going to come back to v. 2....)

First, check out the long list of things you find PROTECTION from under the Shadow of the Almighty...

Psalm 91:3

"For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence."

The most dangerous enemies are the **UNSEEN** kind....

Infantry soldiers will tell you that landmines..... and insurgents who might have bombs strapped to them scare them more than anything...

If we **know** another person is your enemy you can be wary of things they say and do....

But (as Kidner says) against the UNSEEN foe..... both the strong and the weak are both helpless....

Are you aware believers.... that you have **UNSEEN** foes... who would love to destroy you...

Who lay seductive TRAPS for you.... to LURE you away from GOD

These are like landmines in your path..... but they don't look like landmines... at all....

They are SNARES.... that hide beneath attractive things that pop up on your computer screen..... or people who are themselves deceived... and are used of Satan to **entrap** others....

There are forces who intentionally try to **infect** your mind with spiritual poison..... like false doctrine.... that eats away like cancer at the well being of your soul...

So... as Christians... we in continual need of making God our **HIDING PLACE**.....

Living the Christian life is a continual process of **RUNNING into** the Strong Tower of the Name of the LORD.....

Christianity is a continual process of intentional LIVING UNDER the Protection of God...

Listen to His promise.... which is also His **invitation** to Come Under His Shelter:

Psalm 91:4

"He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler."

The boys and I were out on my brother's boat last month down in Va. Beach... and we went right by two ospreys (like this one) sitting on a nest. The female was brooding over her young..... spreading her wings over them to shield them... The

male... was perched on the edge..with his eagle eyes checking out every approaching danger...

That is the word picture God wants you to have of His Protection over you....

The 'you" in all of these verses are **singular**.... meaning that God wants to know that His protection of you is INDIVIDUAL...

It is **PERSONAL**... it is **intimate**.... and it is **trustworthy!**....

God is ever faithful to actively **SHEILD** His children from unseen danger...

As you think about ABIDING under that protection.... look at the benefits He promises:

Psalm 91:5-6

"You will not **fear** the **terror of the night**, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday."

SAFETY is one of our most basic needs.... whether you admit it or not.... all of us have things that make us afraid...

- But when you have made the LORD your trust.... when you are at Peace with Him.... He uses **that trust** to deliver you from all your fears....

The more you come to KNOW (experientially) how He watches over you..... the more you can believe that nothing will be allowed to touch you..... unless He has chosen to use it (ultimately) for your good...

That is LIBERTY! It is only under the wings of a God like that ...you can find true REST.

Look at how **audacious** these promises get:

Psalm 91:7-8

"A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked."

Unlike many of the Psalms that record David as their author... this one is officially anonymous...

Yet... how many times in the life of David... did we see God give him this very protection on the battlefield?

God distinguished in a very PERSONAL way between David and his enemies...

But what about for us.....how does He fulfill this promise for you and I?

It may not always **SEEM** like God is DISTINGUISHING us from the wicked..... here in this life..... because He uses the same adversities to teach us to trust Him.... that He uses to punish them and give them a foretaste of His wrath in hope that they will repent.....

But a DAY **is** coming.... where there will be a grand and final **DISTINCTION**....

That is ultimately what this is pointing to.... the Day when God separates the sheep from the goats.... the believers from the unbelievers..... and the wicked are **repaid** for ALL their evil deeds..... while the righteous... **STAND** forever... in the presence of God... because of they have made Him their **REFUGE**.

Psalm 91:9-12

"Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place— the Most High, who is my refuge— no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Take note how God not ONLY personally protects you from evil...from on High...

But He has specially commissioned angels to **GUARD** your **every step**....

Just **PONDER** what the Word of God is saying here..... as you walk to your car today....

As you walk into your office tomorrow.....angels have been commanded to **ATTEND** to your every step!....

Like they did for Daniel.... as he prayed.... they fight spiritual battles for you.....

That is not so you can wantonly follow your own path..... but so that as you seek to follow Jesus... you can be confident you have His **full protection**, and you do not have to **FEAR any** evil..as you go about doing His will...

In fact, whenever you catch yourself **FEARING** evil.... it is an indication that you have either **forgotten** these truths or chosen **not** to believe them....(for the moment)

Because ...your heritage...as an offspring of the Most High..... is not to merely **SURVIVE**....

(like some of you are struggling to do right now....)

But He wants you to persevere..... Believing that your future involves ultimate **VICTORY** over all your enemies! ...

Psalm 91:13

"You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot."

Again, the "you" is emphatic and it is singular..... This is a promise for **every** child of God.

VICTORY over all our enemies through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...

So if you have grown WEARY....in enduring the emotional and spiritual attacks.... if you feel like you are barely keeping your head above water.....

Take this promise into your soul.....it is the **forecast for your future**.... of which you can be **CERTAIN**...

Because... you have come under the Protection of God Most High.... you have entered into a Covenant of Peace with Him... through Jesus Christ.

That is the reality of the PLACE God wants you to make your nest... to ABIDE in Him....and He in you... through your trust in that Word....

- But HOW do we get there?

What is the MEANS of God enacting those promises for us....

You both **enter into** God's Treaty (Covenant) of Peace....(for the first time.... as some of you may need to do this morning....) and you re-affirm your reliance upon the gospel in the same way....

God's Treaty of Peace

2. **Declare Your Faith** in Prayer

The most intimate covenant ceremony between two people is a **wedding**. The most tender part of a wedding is when the husband and wife exchange vows....

They enter into that covenant through a declaration of their union with the other person.

We enter into the New Covenant of peace with God.... by telling Him in prayer that our trust is now exclusively in Him.

Psalm 91:2

"I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, **in whom I trust**.""

This whole Psalm is an OT glimpse of the NT reality we have in Jesus Christ....

Here, the psalmist is speaking directly to God in prayer..... Not only do I believe that you can be a refuge for others....

but I have made you **MY** refuge.... and MY fortress.... you are now **MY God** in whom I trust...

Similar to when Thomas entered into the treaty of Peace by trusting in Jesus:

You might remember that he is called **Doubting Thomas**... because he said he needed more EVIDENCE that Jesus was raised from the dead... if he was going to believe.... So Jesus met him right where he was in his faith...

John 20:26-28

"Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, **"Peace be with you."** Then he said to Thomas, **"Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."** Thomas answered him, **"My Lord and my God!"**"

Jesus, the messenger of the covenant... brings Him a declaration of **PEACE**.... and an invitation to enter into that covenant through faith...

Thomas responds by declaring His faith...

"My Lord and my God"

That is our **ONLY** role in this covenant of peace.... to **BELIEVE** ... that Jesus is our Peace....

That **ALL** the promises of God... not only in Psalm 91 but in all the Bible have their **YES!** in Christ Jesus.... for those who believe....

So we who believe... **CONFESS** Him... as My Lord and MY God... in whom I **trust!**

This is our **VOW**... our confession....

As a gift of His grace... God gives us faith to believe and then calls upon us to exercise it....

Romans 10:8-10

"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

Baptism – (which we plan to observe next Sunday) is the **initial** means God has ordained for His people to **publicly** PROFESS... that Jesus is their LORD....

(explain baptism?)

The Lord's Supper (which we are going to observe in a few minutes) is the **ONGOING** means for those who are already in the covenant (by faith) to **RENEW** this vow.... to re-affirm...

You are my God in whom I trust!

(explain)

Why would we NEED a means a reaffirming this covenant?

Because we **SIN**.

We **fail** to hold up our end of the agreement.... We effectively break our end of the covenant....

Have you broken the covenant this week?

Thankfully, even when we are faithless.....

.(which is what you are every time you sin)

God REMAINS faithful....

He **KEEPS** the covenant (the treaty of Peace for us) because it is based on what JESUS has **already accomplished** in his life.....

It is sealed by His **blood**...

The Lord's Supper is a formal / PUBLIC means of re-affirming..... I **STILL** believe....

It has been a rocky road....but I am still relying on JESUS and His righteousness alone....I am still (by His grace) holding fast to the atonement of Christ.....my hope is in His life and death on my behalf...

I will **say** to the LORD!! "my refuge and my fortress – my God in whom I trust!"

That is our part of the agreement.....(say that to the Lord) in your heart... just before you partake....

Because AS you partake.... you are saying it outwardly to principalities and powers... to God Himself... and to others who are here...

When believers **SPEAK** their faith in Christ to God....

God responds in this way:

Psalm 91:14-16

"“Because he holds fast to me in love, **I will** deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, **I will** answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and **show him my salvation.**”"

The progressive (ongoing) means of you demonstrating that you are TRUSTING in God.....

the evidence that you RELATE to Him through the realities He has revealed in His NAME....

is that you **HOLD FAST** to Him **in love**....

That means..... when you are TEMPTED to follow your flesh..... or your friends.... or anything CONTRARY to what you know pleases Him...

Instead of going with the temptation..... you CLING to the Promises of God's goodness in prayer....

You FIGHT to hold fast to God in covenant **love**.... RATHER than pleasing your flesh...

That is what a marriage is supposed to be.....

Marriage is a covenant relationship designed (by God) to be a reflection of His LOVE relationship with His people.....

God LOVES His people....with an **everlasting** love....

He is FAITHFUL to us.... even though we are spiritual whores....

Some times we speak and act JUST like His enemies.....

and (think about it)most people **destroy** their enemies...

The REASON that God originated this covenant of peace...(instead of destroying us along with the world) is because **God is LOVE**.

Every one of the promises...you see here.... (which He will NEVER break) is His personal **commitment** to LOVE you in the deepest possible sense...

God's Treaty of Peace

3. Receive God's **Everlasting** Companionship

These are incredible PROMISES / vows which God makes to you...

And He wants you to **RECEIVE** them....because of Who He is....

So they can be the foundation of your relationship with Him.....

Both now and forever.

Look at some of them!!

- When He calls to Me....“I will **ANSWER** him!”

(no **voicemail**....)...no call waiting....No terse text message.....

RECEIVE the reality that God WILL answer your prayers....

- Do you really **EXPECT** an answer when you pray?

Some people talk to God as if they are talking to a TV.... they don't EXPECT Him to answer....

Says right here I WILL answer him when he calls.....

His answer might not be immediate... but **sometimes** it is!

Sometimes the answer is delayed by spiritual warfare....

Other times... God wants to increase our faith.... by having us **keep on asking**...

But you MUST believe that an answer is coming...

Because He has promised!

In fact, (read 1 & 2 Sam.) you will see that **when David** called on the LORD....and he did **NOT** answer... David knew something was WRONG.....(on their end)...

it was because there was unconfessed **sin** in the camp...

Scripture says that our husband is our Maker....

Note how similar what God promises to do for His Bride here..... is to the role He asks husbands to play in their marriages...

God promises.....to **honor** you.....to **protect** you....to RESCUE you when you are in trouble...to satisfy you....

- To be FAITHFUL to you in love... and ultimately to SHOW you... with in a brilliant display of glory....

The SALVATION OF God.... of which you are already a part...

He promises to show you the COMPLETED BEAUTY of the work He is doing in you... and in the rest of His church right now.....

The trophy of His amazing grace!

The beautiful BRIDE of Christ.... Here is what it will be like:

Our eyes will see..... (just as He promised) the SALVATION of God.....

Revelation 21:1-3

" Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

- Do you see the connection?

We confess this reality now by faith.....and God shows it to us in everlasting splendor....forever... in His presence.