



Page I volume 93

VOLUME 93 OCTOBER 2014
THE SHADOW OF SHADDAI *part one*

Greetings friends!

We pray that you all are fulfilling the purpose to which you are called and walking in your God-given destiny in Christ!

God has continued to be good to the Dickerson's. We just recently returned from a much needed vacation to Saint Simons Island, GA where we created many memories and, at the same time, got too much sun.

The Lord has continued to bless our ministry and we are moving closer towards the high calling of Christ Jesus. I knew from the very beginning of my Christian life that God has called us to GREAT things. The first prophetic word I ever received was that I would reap a greater harvest than I can possibly imagine. So I stand fast on that word, knowing that what the Lord has promised, He is faithful to perform.

Along the way, there were temptations to doubt because things progressed very slowly and during some seasons it didn't seem like anything was happening. Well, this is when you must understand that just because you are not seeing much fruit above the ground that does not mean that growth is not occurring. Oftentimes, as we see throughout God's Word, the growth begins underneath the ground and it doesn't appear that anything is happening. But this is the most important part of our growth process because the roots growing downwards will ultimately determine how high we can go and how long we can endure.

So I say all of this to encourage you- despise not the day of small beginnings, for in due season you will reap if you faint not. Take advantage of this time to lay a deep foundation in His Word. Use this opportunity to let your roots go deep in Him. For this will eventually produce, not only much fruit, but the kind of fruit that remains. Hallelujah!

Well, as for the direction that we are to go with this month's teaching, I felt impressed by the Spirit to share with you a synopsis of what the Holy Spirit has been teaching us at High Point Church over the past several months.

We recently concluded a study through Psalm 91 that I entitled "The Shadow of Shaddai." In this teaching, we focused on God's will to protect His children. And, oh, how timely this message is because we are living in perilous times, saints!

In these latter days, darkness and wickedness are spreading like cancer over the face of the earth. And the things that once were called evil are being called good and the things that were once called good are being called evil. With this depravity of our society will invariably come an increase of dangers, tragedies, and natural disasters. We have already begun to see this. Therefore, it is imperative that we as the children of God become fully persuaded in the ability and willingness of our God to keep us safe and sound.

And this is what this invaluable psalm declares to us... It declares God's promise to protect and provide for His people, no matter the plague, the evil, or the snare. It clearly reveals to us God's will to keep us free from all harm. Now we know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Therefore, faith for protection must come by hearing the Word concerning His protection, amen?

So that's what I want us to begin doing this month; I want us to begin to hear what the Spirit is saying concerning His protection through looking at this powerful psalm. So let's get right into it, shall we? We will begin in the first verse of Psalm 91...

THE SHADOW OF SHADDAI

Notice how verse one reads: He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the

Almighty. What this verse is saying is that it is the one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High that shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. In other words, it is not just a blanket promise for everyone. It is a promise of protection for those who live in that secret place. Amen?

Now the shadow of the Almighty describes his protective covering. We know from James 1:17 that God has no shadow of turning and in Him is no darkness at all. So the picture we see painted here is not of a literal shadow, but of a covering provided by His presence because notice that the Psalmist says that we shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Therefore, I believe some synonymous terms we could use here for "shadow" are "covering, shelter, or (here is my favorite) umbrella."

Therefore, as we dwell in the secret place of the Most High, we shall abide under His protective umbrella- which shields us from the elements brought on by this world and the enemy. It is important to note that this also denotes the proximity in which we are to Him because to be in someone's shadow definitely means you are abiding close to them. (We will look at this principle a little closer in a moment).

But here is the point I want you to get today: As you dwell in the secret place, you are, by default, abiding under His shadow. In other words, when you decide to live (because to dwell means to live) in His secret place, you are choosing to abide under His protective umbrella. Therefore, it is your decision where you choose to dwell; it is not up to God.

You see, I can stand beside you with an umbrella covering you from the rain, but if you decide to move away from me and do your own thing, it doesn't matter how much I desire for you to stay dry, you are going to get wet if you do not stay close to me and heed my instructions. Well, this is the choice God has always given His people- to abide under His shadow or to do what seems right to us- which will always lead to death.

Saints, God has always given His people a choice. Many incorrectly believe that if God wants something to happen that it just automatically will happen. Nothing could be further from the truth. While God is certainly sovereign- in the sense that He is all powerful and can do anything- this does not mean that everything that happens in the world is a part of His plan. If God were "in control" of everything then He is doing a poor job because there is a lot of evil and injustices going on in the world today that are out of control to say the least. No, the poor job is not on God's part, I can assure you. The poor job is being done by His body- the church- this sleeping giant that has not risen up to turn the world upside down.

You see, God originally gave this earth to the sons of men. He told Adam to have dominion over this earth and to rule over it. But when Adam sinned, he forfeited that authority and lost the ability to effectively have dominion. But God! But God sent Jesus to the earth to restore to us what Adam lost in the fall! He placed mankind back in the Garden, or more literally, placed the Garden back in us! And now we are commissioned to "Go, therefore." Why? Because all authority had been given to Him in heaven and on earth, and we are now commissioned to be His ambassadors on the earth! Hallelujah!

So I say all of this to say, that God has given His church the ability to rule and reign here on the earth and to pray for His kingdom to come and His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Why would He tell us to pray this way if His will was being done automatically? It doesn't make sense, does it? No, we are His representatives and have been given the awesome privilege of being His hands and His feet (i.e. His body) on the earth.

So I submit to you that the two reasons we see so much death, destruction, and calamity in the earth today is because, number one, we have an enemy that is going about like a roaring lion, seeking to steal, kill, and destroy, and, number two, we, the church, are not taking our rightful place and executing God's will in the name of Jesus!

But with this authority that we have been given comes the free-will to choose His will. We have the right, as Israel did, to choose life or death, blessing or cursing. And in this case, God has given us the free will to choose His protection. He allows us the choice to draw near to Him and then He will draw near to us. So, as He told Israel in

Deuteronomy, choose life! Choose today whom you will serve! As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord- and we know that as we serve Him, we are choosing a life of His perfect protection! Amen!

But in saying this, it is important for us to realize that although God's protection is conditional, it is not conditional upon our works, our goodness, or our holiness. No, it is simply conditional upon Him being your Lord. Now I know that seems like a reference to all who call themselves Christians, but it is not. As we see throughout the New Testament, Jesus is not someone's Lord just because they say He is (Luke 6:46)! Jesus is one's Lord when they do what He says to do when He says to do it! That is what it means for Him to be the Lord of your life.

Let me give you an example of this: It is always interesting to me when I hear the questions raised in our nation when calamity and tragedy hits- "Where was God?" For instance, when the tragedy of 9/11 occurred here in the USA, that was the resounding question among the world- "Where was God on 9/11?" In other words, what they are asking is- "Why didn't God keep that tragedy from happening?" Well, I love the wisdom that came from Rev. Billy Graham's daughter- Anne Graham Lotz- when this question was raised to her following the events of 9/11: She responded, "Well, let's see... We kicked Him out of the schools. We kicked Him out of the courtrooms. So I guess that is where He was; He was out." There is a lot of wisdom in that response because how can one expect God's protection when they willfully reject Him? I mean, we call ourselves a "Christian nation" here in the United States, but are we? Sure, our nation was founded upon Christian principles and prayer, but the majority of Americans have rejected the foundation that our nation was founded upon. And God, in His great longsuffering, gives us space to repent and turn to Him, but the wages of sin are death, and when we persist in going in a wrong direction, bad fruit is inevitable.

We see clearly in the Old Testament how when God's chosen people- Israel- rejected Him for other gods, they were turned over to another nation to oppress them. This happened time after time after time! And there were several times, after they cried out to God in their bondage, that the Lord would respond through the prophets- "Why are you crying out to Me? Call on your gods. Ask them to deliver you." In other words, what He was saying was: "Cry out to those whom you are serving. Don't expect deliverance and protection from Me when I am not your Lord."

Saints, it just doesn't work this way! Again, while God's protection is conditional, it is not conditional upon your works, but it is conditional upon "abiding" close to Him.

Notice how Psalm 91:1 uses the terminology- abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. This is the same terminology Jesus used in John chapter 15 in describing how we, as the branches, are to abide in Him, the True Vine. In this passage, Jesus said that when we abide in Him and He abides in us, we will ask whatever we will, and it will be done for us. This sounds like a conditional promise too, doesn't it? But why is abiding so important? It is because if we remain, stay, and live close to Him, we are in position to have His provision and protection; not because He doesn't want to perform His good word to us if we are not doing something for Him- but because remaining close to Him is what enables Him to do what He always wanted to do in the first place.

So again, abiding under His shadow is important! But far too many Christians are doing their own thing and have gotten out from under His umbrella of protection. It is not as though God is sitting in heaven saying, "You better do this and that or I won't protect you." No, it is that we remove ourselves from His protection when we choose not to abide in fellowship with Him – not continuing in His Word and not being led by His Spirit.

WHAT IS THE SECRET PLACE?

And that leads me to the question that should be asked next- If dwelling in the secret place of the Most High is what is contingent upon me abiding under the shadow of Shaddai, then what is the secret place? This would be the wise question to ask, right?

Well, the first thing we need to understand about the secret place of the Most High is that it is not meant to be secret from us; it is secret for us. There is a big difference between these two things.

Saints, the Lord has this hiding place set aside for us, His disciples, where no foe can find us. This secret place is the place God has prepared for those who love Him. Just as Jesus said concerning the mysteries of the kingdom, they are hidden and reserved for His disciples- not just the casual Christian. But it is also secret to all outsiders, including the enemy.

Secondly, it is important to understand that the secret place is not a physical place. One cannot say, "It is here" or "It is there." No, it is a place with God that is hidden to the naked eye.

Do you remember the account in the Gospel of John where Jesus was ministering to the woman at the well? We see in John chapter 4 how He told her that the time was coming where we will not need to worship the Father on a particular mountain or in a particular city, but the time was coming where those that worship the Father will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Jesus went on to tell us why: He said that God is a Spirit. Therefore, this is why our worship of Him does not need to be in any physical location. So now we can make any place that secret place because as we choose to enter into that spiritual place, we are entering into that place where God is. Let's turn over to Matthew chapter 6 in order to see this truth more fully...

In Matthew 6:6, Jesus was teaching about the necessity of having a private prayer life. His main point was to teach His followers how we need to avoid the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of His day- how they prayed for public praise and just to be seen of men. And in this verse, He said, "But you, when you pray, go into your room (The King James version renders "closet") and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

Now notice how Jesus said that we are to pray to our Father who is in the secret place. Who is in the secret place? The Father! So we can conclude that our Heavenly Father is who is in the secret place! Therefore, when we go into our "prayer closet" we are going into the presence of our Father God! Praise God!

Now I want us to look deeper into this by looking at this word "room"... This word "room" comes from the Greek word "tameion" and, in their day, this word described something quite different than a closet or just a general room; In the Greek language, this word described a bedchamber. Therefore, this Greek word for room & closet described a place of privacy & intimacy. In other words, it is a place where just you and the Father go. Just like when a married couple has visitors into their home, they openly welcome them in the dining room, in their living room, and even into their kitchen and bathroom, but their bedroom is usually not the place where they let their guests go. Why? It is because that is their private place where they share intimacy with their spouse.

So the secret place (i.e. our prayer closet) is the place where just you and God go- just you and Him. It is that intimate place where you go to fellowship with just Him and where no one else can follow. So just as we do not let people into our bedrooms, others cannot go into our secret place with the Lord either.

Do you remember that passage of Scripture where Jesus said to His disciples- "the place that I go you cannot go..." (John 13:36)? Well, while the common consensus was that He was talking about God's presence in heaven, I believe He was also talking about God's presence here on the earth! In other words, He was talking about the secret place- that place of intimacy where no one could go with Him. Now His disciples could certainly have that private place with the Lord- just them and Him. But they could not follow Jesus into His prayer closet because that was only reserved for Him and His Father alone. Amen.

So we can see that the secret place is that spiritual place where the Father is. It is that place where just you and He go to spend time with one another. We see this echoed in Psalm 31:20 where we are told- "You shall hide them in the secret place of your presence." So we see here that the secret place is the secret place of His presence! Of whose presence? Of our Heavenly Father's presence! Therefore, we can clearly see that the secret place is the Father's presence!

PROTECTED IN HIS PRESENCE

Now when you talk about the presence of God, there are two viewpoints that need to be understood...

First of all, we must understand that a born again believer is always positionally in God's presence- meaning, we are always with the Lord and He is always with us. This is why Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you, even to the ends of the earth." The Lord promised us that if we went to the heavens, He is there. If we make our bed in hell, He is there. Saints, He will never leave us or forsake us! These are all promises that plainly declare that God is always present with us. Amen.

And this is part of the truth about the secret place that we need to understand- that being Christ's through being born again and thus becoming a new creation in Christ- we are in Him. What this means is that we are positionally placed in Christ and the result of this is that we are in the secret place in regards to protection from sin and spiritual death. Friends, we are in Christ and this means sin cannot touch us, corrupt us, or taint us. We are covered by the blood and sin cannot even find us anymore. The Book of Colossians tells us this when it says that our life is hidden with Christ in God. Glory!

However, we are talking about the spiritual realm here. How many of you know that we also need His presence and protection in the natural realm too?

This is why the Apostle Paul said in other places for us to put on Christ (Romans 13:14) and to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians chapter 6). Putting Him and His armor on is what differentiates the casual Christian from the radical Christian. So when we put on these things, we are not just hidden from the spiritual assaults of the enemy, we are now hidden from the natural assaults of the enemy as well. And, saints, this is where the promises of Psalm 91 begin to be experienced in our lives.

For instance, when we put on the whole armor of God- notice it is not just our own armor that we are putting on, but it is the Lord's armor. Therefore, from the enemy's perspective, it is the Lord who is standing against him. This is a great picture of us being hidden with Christ in God! No, this is the actual putting on of His presence and this is when not only can we not be touched by sin in our spirit; it is when we cannot be touched by Satan in our body. Glory to God!

Now, in conclusion, let's turn over to Psalm 27 and look at what David said regarding the secret place of God's presence...

In verse 4, David begins to say, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek..." The Hebrew word for "one" here describes the bringing together of several different things or a uniting together of multiple things. So what David was saying was that if he could summarize everything that he desired from the Lord; if he could bring everything together that he asked and sought the Lord for, it would be for this one thing: "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."

Now this is not referring to going to church. I know we call church "the house of the Lord" but this would not be realistic. How many of you know that you cannot go to church all the days of your life? No, that is not practical. So David was evidently talking about something else, right?

So what was he referring to here? Well, to the Jewish mind, the house of the Lord (i.e. the Tabernacle and then the Temple) was synonymous with God's presence. To them, the house of the Lord was where God lived- in the holy of holies. And did you notice the word "dwell" here in Psalm 27:4? This is the same terminology used in Psalm 91 in regards to the secret place. So this is where the child of God is meant to live- in God's presence!

So what David was saying was that if he could summarize everything that He asked the Lord for and sought Him for, it would be to dwell in God's presence all the days of His life. In his estimation, there was nothing more important than this, and this should be our mentality as well.

And why was this such a great desire of David's? It was because he knew just how wonderful time spent in the Father's presence was! He went on to say at the end of verse 4 what the purpose of his one desire was: "to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple."

You know, there are some things you just will never know outside of fellowshiping with God in His presence. You will not be able to behold with your own eyes just how beautiful the Lord is outside of this secret place. And not only will you not see how beautiful He is, you will not be able to learn of Him like you can in the secret place. Dwelling in the secret place of His presence is where you truly taste and see that the Lord is good. Why? Because some things are better caught than taught!

My brothers and sisters, we need to get in this secret place and truly behold Him and hear from Him. This is when, not only will we be able to truly see Him as He is, but also, we will be changed into the same image from glory to glory! Amen!

But notice what David went on to say next in Psalm 27:5- David says, "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion. In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock." So here, David explains another major reason why dwelling in the presence of God all the days of His life was His greatest desire... You see, not only did He get to experience the myriad of blessings associated with spending time in God's presence, he also knew that this was the key to being hidden and protected in the time of trouble. Praise God!

And notice what he called this hiding place from the troubles that would seek to harm us: He called it the secret place of His tabernacle... So we have come full circle here. The presence of God that David desired to live in (i.e. the tabernacle) is called the secret place of His presence. Why? Because it is the place where God hides His people from the snare of the fowler! It is that place of protection, that place of defense, and that place of deliverance!

Saints, may we all find that place in Him where we are kept and shielded from the enemy! My sincere prayer for each of you is that you discover that place of intimacy with the Father that few ever experience. But it is your choice! God has put the ball in your court and said, "Seek Me as I have sought you! Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you!" Find that secret place today! Amen.

Again, I want to encourage you that you can listen to our messages concerning Psalm 91 on High Point Church's website @ www.highpointmacon.com. What you read today was a compilation of the first three teachings in this series, and of course, there was a lot more information and revelation given in those close to 3 hours worth of messages. So take the time to listen to them and be blessed by their content. I know you will. ☐

Until next month, be blessed and highly favored in His presence! Maranatha!

Victoriously,

