

TITLE AND NUMBER: 70. A safe place in hard times



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Psalm 91:1-15

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' (v1-2) 'Because he loves me,' says the Lord, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges his name. He will call on me, and I will answer him.' (v14-15a)

LOOKING FURTHER: Psalm 23; Romans 5:3-5; Romans 8:38-39

What does this Bible passage tell us?

This Psalm reassures us that God will keep us safe if we call on Him. However, it is easy to misunderstand this promise. I am sure we have all met people who thought that turning to God would be the end of all their troubles, and who were disappointed when things did not turn out like that.

The mistaken idea that nothing bad happens to Christians often comes by taking verses out of their context, that is, their place in the whole Bible. The Bible makes it clear that we will all face hard times. Verses 3-6 of Psalm 91 talk about plagues and terror facing the reader, but reassure them that God will be with them in the difficult times. Even the gentle language of Psalm 23 ("The Lord is my shepherd") with its pictures of quiet waters and green pastures also refers to "the valley of the shadow of death."

God's promise is not that He will spare us from hard times, but that He will be with us through them, and will not allow them to come between Him and us. Romans 8:38-39 declares that nothing will be able to separate us from God's love.

God sometimes allows us to experience hard times because overcoming challenges makes us stronger and teaches us more about His faithfulness. Romans 5:3-5 says that, "suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us".

God does not allow us to be tested so He can find out how strong we are, but so that we can see how strong He is. If we love Him and call upon Him, He will walk with us through it.

Reflections:

- Think about what a fortress or castle is like; if you enjoy drawing, you might like to draw a picture of one. How is God like a fortress?
- What challenges are you facing at the moment? As you call on God to help you through them, try and imagine yourself safe inside the thick walls of a fortress, or walking hand in hand with Jesus.
- Who else do you know, perhaps in prison or perhaps family members outside, who is facing a hard time right now? Pray that they will trust in God and that He will help them to feel His peace and "lie down in green pastures."

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

