



SOJOURNER PSALMS

“Rest”

Psalm 91

Sunday, March 31, 2019

1. Sunday Summary: This morning we continued our sermon series for Lent that we’re calling *Sojourner Psalms*. Why a series on the Psalms? Because the Psalms train us well in essential Lenten practices, and especially in prayer. This morning we examined Psalm 91 and looked at how we can find the rest and peace our souls crave, especially in the midst of the troubles and dangers of the world. This Psalm outlines...

- a) The extravagant promise of peace and rest (verses 1-4) - It’s clear from this part of the passage that God is our shelter and shade, our refuge and fortress. He will protect us, and that gives us a peace, and the ability to rest. The image of being covered “with his feathers” is a particularly helpful one in this regard. Not only does it communicate the idea of being protected, but there is a tenderness about that protection as God is likened to a protective mother bird. However, we should also note that this protection and tenderness are only offered to God’s covenant partners.
- b) It’s easy to misunderstand the promise – The middle part of the Psalm (verses 5-13) seems to suggest that if we trust God that nothing bad will ever happen to us. But that’s a naïve reading at best, as so many other parts of Scripture bear out. Think of the story of Job (Job 1-42), a man who clearly loved and trusted God, and all the dreadful troubles his life saw. Satan also wants us to read it like this, just like he tried to get Jesus to understand this Psalm that way (Matthew 4). The way we ought to understand God’s protection is that we are protected in an ultimate way, just as in the story of Joseph, God uses the difficulties in Joseph’s life to bring him to a place where he can save and protect God’s covenant family.
- c) How we enter into the promise of peace and rest – We have to learn to trust God *in* times of trouble to become people who can handle trouble. Verses 14-16 show us the way to get there. Verse 15 in particular says he will be “with [us] *in* trouble.” But, we don’t really know what this means in it’s fullness until we get to the New Testament. It’s there in the Gospels where we see Jesus who, before he came to earth, was exempt from trouble, now coming down and experiencing every kind of trouble we do, and more. This means we have a God who understands us, and sympathizes with our troubles. In fact, he went to the cross and bore the worst of them, so that we would never experience the worst trouble of all – eternal separation from God. We enter the promise of peace and rest through Jesus.

2. Connecting Questions: (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- What are your “go-to” coping mechanisms for when dangers and troubles crop up in your life? What part does prayer play?

- Have you ever had a time in your life when you were angry with God for allowing some sort of trouble into your life? If so, talk about that.

- Does it help you to know that God is with you in your troubles? Why or why not?
- What insights from today's message were most helpful for you?

3. Truth Questions: (What does the Bible say?)

- Think together about some other passages that deal with the topic of resting in God's protection. Can you think of any? What might they add to the conversation?
- Read Hebrews 4:14-16. How does Jesus identifying with us, make going through trials and troubles more bearable? Or, does it make it more bearable? How does knowing that Jesus has been through all the difficulties of life help us to approach God boldly to ask for what we need?
- Read Genesis 50:20 & Romans 8:28. Does it help you to know that God is using the difficulties of your life to bring about good things? Or does it feel like a hollow promise? Are you able to see good come from the troubles? Talk about it.

4. Formation Questions: (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the gospel truth that we dealt with today deeper into your life throughout this week? What will you do about the message you heard today?
- How can you remind yourself to enter God's rest through Jesus this week when difficulties come up?
- How will you use today's learning in your prayer life this week?

5. Resources for Further Study:

1. Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms As Tools For Prayer*. (Harper One: New York, NY. 1989).
2. Brueggemann, Walter. *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, MN. 1995).

