



PSALMS: THE PRAYER BOOK OF JESUS

Session 7: The Trust Psalms

PSALM 23, *Dominus regit me*

The Lord is my shepherd; *

therefore I can lack nothing.

He shall feed me in green pastures *

and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.

He shall refresh my soul *

and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness

for his Name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow

of death, I will fear no evil, *

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff comfort me.

You shall prepare a table before me, in the presence

of those who trouble me; *

you have anointed my head with oil,

and my cup shall be full.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all

the days of my life, *

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

THE TRUST PSALMS

- The world can be scary. We can easily feel lost or in danger. We can feel like our adversaries, both physical and spiritual, are closing in on us from all around.
- "There is much evil in the world and in ourselves, terrible things, and one does not need to be far advanced in life to be in fear of much and to feel the need of a firm faith in life hereafter and to know that without faith in God one cannot live, one cannot bear it. But with that faith one can go on for a long time." – Vincent van Gogh
- This is why the Trust Psalms, or Psalms of Confidence, are so necessary.

THE TRUST PSALMS

- What are the Trust Psalms?
 - They express deep personal and communal confidence in God's protection.
 - They emphasize guidance, safety under God's care, deliverance from danger, and assurance of his presence in times of trouble.
 - They don't deny hardship but proclaim that God can be relied on as refuge, shepherd, or fortress.

THE TRUST PSALMS

“The psalms of trust do not promise exemption from suffering. They promise the presence of God in suffering, and that makes all the difference.”

– John Stott, *Through the Bible Through the Year*

“Trust psalms give us the vocabulary for dwelling in safety when there is no safety to be seen. They tutor us in resting, not in circumstances, but in God’s unshakable character.”

– Eugene Peterson, *Answering God*

THE TRUST PSALMS

- The [Typical] Structure of Trust Psalms
 - Statement of trust (e.g., “The LORD is my light and my salvation,” Ps. 27:1).
 - Description of threats (though sometimes implied more than explicit).
 - Confession of confidence (e.g., “Therefore we will not fear...” Ps. 46:2).
 - Encouragement or exhortation (sometimes urging others to share in the trust).

THE TRUST PSALMS

- Characteristics of Trust Psalms
 - Personal assurance: “The LORD is my shepherd...” (Ps. 23:1).
 - Imagery of protection: refuge, rock, fortress, wings, shade.
 - Calm tone: more serene than lament psalms; not crisis-driven but trust-filled.
 - Often brief: many are short, almost like creeds of trust.
 - Sometimes communal: assurance shared by the whole people (e.g., Ps. 46).

THE TRUST PSALMS

- Examples of Trust Psalms:
Psalm 11 — confidence in God's sovereignty when foundations are shaken.
- Psalm 16 — trust in God's guidance and eternal security.
- Psalm 23 — the Shepherd psalm; God as provider and protector.
- Psalm 27 — trust in God's light and salvation.
- Psalm 46 — God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- Psalm 62 — trust in God alone as rock and salvation.
- Psalm 91 — God as shelter and deliverer from danger.
- Psalm 125 — trust in God's protection of his people like mountains around Jerusalem.

PSALM 91, *Qui habitat*

Whoever dwells under the defense of the Most High *
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say unto the Lord, "You are my refuge and
my stronghold, *
my God in whom I will trust."
For he shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter *
and from the deadly pestilence.
He shall defend you under his wings, and you shall be safe
under his feathers; *
his faithfulness and truth shall be your shield and buckler.
You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, *
nor of the arrow that flies by day,
Of the pestilence that walks in darkness, *
nor of the sickness that destroys at noonday.
A thousand shall fall beside you, and ten thousand
at your right hand, *
but it shall not come near you.
Indeed, with your eyes you shall behold *

and see the reward of the ungodly.
Because you have said, "The Lord is my refuge," *
and have made the Most High your stronghold,
There shall no evil happen to you, *
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.
For he shall give his angels charge over you, *
to keep you in all your ways.
They shall bear you in their hands, *
that you hurt not your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the lion and adder; *
the young lion and the serpent you shall trample under your feet.
"Because he has set his love upon me, therefore I will deliver him; *
I will lift him up, because he has known my Name.
He shall call upon me, and I will hear him; *
indeed, I am with him in trouble; I will deliver him
and bring him honor.
With long life I will satisfy him, *
and show him my salvation."

THE PSALMS OF COMPLINE

- Psalm 91 is one of four psalms (Psalm 4, Psalm 31:1-6, 91, and 134), that form the backbone of the Daily Office of Compline (Night Prayer), with Psalms 4 and 31 also being Trust Psalms and Psalm 134 being a Praise Psalm.
- These psalms powerfully speak of the Lord's protection. They are part of a theme that runs throughout compline: God is our protector. It is the office that deals most directly with the assaults of the devil and the other perils we face, asking for God's peace and shelter. Compline is, in fact, a form of spiritual warfare.
- We are reminded of this warfare aspect in the Compline reading, "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).
- The entire office causes us to acknowledge the reality that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12) and, therefore, we put on the "whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:13).

THE PSALMS OF COMPLINE

- Compline Collects:
 - Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
 - Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.
 - Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
 - Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne, illumine this night with your celestial brightness, and from the children of light banish the deeds of darkness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE PSALMS OF COMPLINE

“Against demons, above all, Psalm 91 is effective. It speaks of the shelter and the shadow of the Almighty, under which every attack of the evil one is destroyed.”

– Athanasius, *Letter to Marcellinus*

“We sing this psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends His Church and His Word, against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and sin.”

– Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Psalms*

PSALM 31, *In te, Domine, speravi*

In you, O Lord, have I put my trust; *

let me never be put to confusion; deliver me
in your righteousness.

Bow down your ear to me, *

make haste to deliver me,

And be my strong rock and house of defense, *

that you may save me.

For you are my strong rock and my castle; *

be also my guide, and lead me
for your Name's sake.

Draw me out of the net that they have laid
secretly for me, *

for you are my strength.

Into your hands I commend my spirit, *

for you have redeemed me, O Lord,
O God of truth.