



# THE COMPASS

RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Compass:  
*Encounter-Examine-Explore-Embrace* God's Word  
on  
Your Discipleship Path

Sermon Series: "Summer Psalms."

(Pentecost, 2026)

"Rest." Text(s): *Psalms 91.1-6, 9-10, 14-16.*

**☐ Day #1—Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Read: Psalm 91.1-2. –Encounter: God's Word and your life—What do you Hear and/or See?**

Old Testament scholar Derek Kidner describes Psalm 91 as a "psalm for danger: for times of exposure and encirclement or of challenging the power of evil. Some of its language, of strongholds and shields, reminds us of David...other phrases echo the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, as did Psalm 90...it is in fact anonymous and timeless, perhaps all the more accessible for that."<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of the psalm expresses great confidence in God's care using images common in the ancient world. The titles used for God in *v.1*, "Most High" and "Almighty," reflect God's power and sovereignty. In *v.2*, "Lord" and "God" are both God's names as well as a description of His character. As Kidner describes, the psalm is...

...an eloquent opening, enriched not only by the four metaphors for security but by the four divine names. *Most High* is a title which cuts every threat down to size; *Almighty* (Shaddai) is the name which sustained the homeless patriarchs (Exod. 6:3). By the further appellation, *The Lord* (Yahweh), Moses was assured that 'I am' and 'I am with you' (Exod. 3:14, 12, NEB); while even the general term 'God' is made intimate by the possessive, as *my God*.<sup>2</sup>

The descriptions of God's "shelter," "shadow," "refuge," and "fortress," all reflect divine protection and care. "Shelter" (*seter*) is a hiding place (also used in *Pss. 27:5; 32:7; 119:114*, "refuge"). The "shadow" was "perhaps the shadow of a bird's wing (cf. 91:4), also pictures shelter and protection as well as comfort. God is also the believer's Refuge (*mahseh*, "shelter from danger")... and Fortress (*mešûdâb*, "strong protection"; used in *18:3; 31:3; 71:3; 144:2*). Psalm 91:1–2 admirably expresses the fact that safety is in the LORD."<sup>3</sup>

These initial verses set the theme for Psalm 91 as well as the foundation for the believer's (our) confidence in God. God nature, character, and power are the foundation of our faith, offering us hope and peace—our *rest* in God!

**Consider/Reflect:** "(S)helter . . . shadow . . . refuge . . . fortress. These metaphors depict the sure defense found in the Lord God. The shadow is not ominous, but comforting, as that of the shadow of a mother bird's wings (*v 4; 17:8*). Four names for God correspond to the metaphors, and each gives the basis for the strong confession of faith in God's protection. 'Almighty' and 'Most High' especially depict God's incomparable power over any threat or danger."<sup>4</sup>

**☐ Day #2—Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Read: Psalm 91.3-6. —Examine: The Text and its Message.**

The assurance that God can be trusted, and that His power will defend us, continues as the psalmist describes God's sovereign power through images of danger and protection in the natural world. A "snare" was a trap to catch birds, and reflected the hidden dangers and/or surprise attacks. "Deadly pestilence" was a general term for sickness and diseases of various kinds.

1 D. Kidner. *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, 1973).  
2 Ibid.  
3 J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck Eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1985).  
4 *The Lutheran Study Bible* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

In vs.4-6, the images reflect protection and care, assuring that nothing the believer faces, day or night, will ultimately defeat God's people or separate them from Him!

What is critical to remember here in Psalm 91, as in all of Scripture, is that the promises given do not mean that believers will *never* experience adversity, sickness, or attack. However, when these come, the followers of Jesus have the promise of God's power, strength, peace, and hope, no matter what may come! And, again, God views our lives from an *eternal perspective*. Our life in this world is but for a moment in light of eternity. Our Heavenly Father has achieved for us the ultimate and final victory over sin, death, and hell. In the present time, we engage our enemies but we have God's Word, Sacraments, and the power of the Spirit to defend us and empower us!

(V.4 may be)...A possible reference to the wings of the cherubim over the ark of the covenant in the temple (symbolizing a protective shield in a sacred place) or more broadly to any mother bird protecting her chicks...buckler. A bowed, round shield....God's security surrounds us whenever danger comes....terror of the night...The demonic realm could cause this fear, but it includes all unseen danger lurking in the darkness....arrow...Danger also comes from war. An arrow is a silent and deadly attack weapon.<sup>5</sup>

**Consider/Reflect:** "This psalm has long been a favorite of the people of God. Its opening verses are some of the best known and most quoted. It is not hard to see why this psalm is so loved. It is one of the most comforting in all the Bible. More specifically, it offers comfort for the fearful and troubled. Only those who have never been fearful and troubled can afford to neglect it."<sup>6</sup>

□ **Day #3—Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. Read: Psalm 91.9-10. —Explore: The background to this text(s).**

In these verses, the psalmist provides *the reason* that the believer can have hope in God in the midst of life's challenges...they have made the Lord their (our) "dwelling place." The Hebrew word, מָוֶן (*mā·'ôn*) can also be defined as "refuge," a place to receive help and support. Again, this is because God is the "Most High" עֶלְיוֹן (*'ēl·yôn*)...Pertaining to a high status, implying awe and splendor."<sup>7</sup> This God is the source of our power. The promises in v.10 are explained in v.11 by reference to God's angelic servants.

In protecting his people, the Lord mobilizes his angels to guard them (cf. Ps 34:7; Heb 1:14). This momentary glimpse behind the scenes of the cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil (cf. 2 Kings 6; Daniel 10; Ephesians 6) indicates that the people of God are never on their own. Those who walk on the Lord's path enjoy his protection. This, however, does not suggest that they should presume on God; but they must be faithful to trust and obey him, as Jesus did during his temptation (cf. Matt 4:6) when he countered the devil's misuse of this verse as he invited Jesus to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. VanGemeren notes astutely that God's people "trust their heavenly Father, while they act responsibly. Hence they do not test the Lord to see to what extent he will deliver them from troubles."<sup>8</sup>

And, as Kidner explains...

This is, of course, a statement of exact, minute providence, not a charm against adversity. The no less sweeping promise of Romans 8:28 ('... everything ... for good with those who love him') does not exclude 'nakedness, or peril, or sword' (8:35)...What it does assure us is that nothing can touch God's servant but by God's leave; equally (8) that no rebel can escape his retribution.<sup>9</sup>

**Consider/Reflect:** "Those who take refuge in the Lord are not exempt from these dangers, but will be protected in the midst of them. God will not let these threats separate us from Him so that we end up like the wicked (Rm 8:31–39)."<sup>10</sup>

□ **Day #4--Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. Read: Psalm 91.14-16.— Explore: The background to this text(s).**

The psalm ends with God's words through the psalmist. These verses reinforce what was promised at the beginning of Psalm

5 *The Lutheran Study Bible.*

6 R. Ellsworth. *Opening up Psalms* (Day One Publications, 2006).

7 J. Swanson. *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Logos Research Systems, Inc, 1997).

8 D.J. Estes. *The New American Commentary: Psalms 73–150* (B&H Publishing Group, 2019).

9 Kidner, *An Introduction and Commentary.*

10 *The Lutheran Study Bible.*

91, thus providing the foundation of the believer's confidence and hope.

The Lord speaks of the psalmist as one who has loved and known him. The verb *hāšaq*, “he has his heart set,” is used in Deut 7:7; 10:15 of the Lord's love for Israel (cf. also Gen 34:8; Deut 21:11). The psalmist does not just know about the Lord intellectually, but he truly knows the Lord personally. Consequently, the Lord affirms that he will deliver the one who is devoted to him, placing him high and out of danger.<sup>11</sup>

**(v.14):** As noted above, the phrase “Because he holds fast to me in love” reflects the idea of “setting one's heart on somebody or on some enterprise.” It is the commitment of God's people to our Lord that follows from God's call to His people to trust Him and find their hope (“Dwelling place”) in Him.

As man's commitment to God it comes only here. Deuteronomy (7:7; 10:15) reminds Israel that God's commitment, not man's, came first. *He knows my name* is the second element, since the relationship has rational content, and rests on revelation (cf. 76:1; Exod. 34:5–7). The third element asserts the basic simplicity of it: *he calls to me*. At bottom the bond is between helper and helpless, a matter of grace.<sup>12</sup>

**(v.15):** God assures us that He will answer the call of the believer. “The Lord will not abandon him in his time of distress, but he will be with him even in the most difficult times (cf. Ps 23:4). The Lord does not say *when* he will deliver the psalmist or *how*, but only that he will. Those who trust in the Lord never have to walk through trouble alone. Instead, the Lord rescues them and restores them to honor.”<sup>13</sup>

**(v.16):** The psalm ends with a final and foundational promise: To trust the Lord and obey His Word is to receive blessings and provision beyond what we could expect or hope for! The writer of Psalm 91 could trust (we can trust) that “In addition to delivering him from his specific trouble, the Lord will bless him with a long and good life (cf. Ps 92:14[15]; Prov 3:2, 16).”<sup>14</sup> Again, it must be stressed that, even in the midst of trouble and hardship in this world, we do receive divine salvation, provision, protection, and security. And, as believers, our lives continue on in heaven, where we will, in the words of *v.16*, ultimately and finally be satisfied with long life in God's presence! As Tremper Longman writes, “Christians can pray Psalm 91, knowing that God is with them in the spiritual battle of this life and that, in Christ, God will give them eternal life.”<sup>15</sup>

**Consider/Reflect:** “How quickly life can go from smooth and routine to troubled and fearful! How encouraging it is to know of God's protection. Our security comes from His promises kept. Jesus trampled Satan once and for all when He gloriously rose from the dead. We walk in victory even during dangerous times because He is with us and will not let us be separated from His love. [Pray]: Thank You, Lord, for Your security and strength in this perilous world. Amen.”<sup>16</sup>

□ **Day #5— Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. Read: Matthew 11.25-31.—Explore: The background to this text(s).**

Jesus makes clear that our salvation—our very relationship with Him, is not a human achievement. It is entirely on God's side that we are reconciled and redeemed. It is important to not miss what Jesus says in *v.26*—it is the Father's gracious will to save us! God wants you! He desires to be with you! You matter to Him! God came to get you! Also, notice the familial language: “Little children,” “Father,” “Son.” We belong to God's family and participate in the very life of the divine Trinity! As we go through our day, whether at work, school, or home, we are caught up in the Trinitarian community. Consequently, our days are holy, God is at work through you, and what you do in the name of God matters for eternity!

As the Father calls—we respond, we come to Jesus (the italicized words in the quote are the Greek words in the text).

Therefore Jesus issued a call to all . . . who are weary (*hoi kopiontes*, “those tired from hard toil”) and burdened (*pephortismenoi*, “those loaded down”; cf. *phortion*, “load,” in Matt. 11:30) to come to Him. People's weariness comes from enduring their burdens, probably the burdens of sin and its consequences. Rather, they should come and yoke themselves with Jesus. By placing themselves under His yoke and learning from Him, they may find rest for their souls from sins' burdens. By yoking, they become true disciples of Jesus and join Him in His proclamation of divine wisdom. To learn (*mathete*) from Him is to be His disciple (*mathētēs*). People can trade their heavy, tiring burdens for His yoke and burden (*phortion*, “load”), which by contrast are easy and light. To serve Him is no burden, for He, in contrast with those who reject

11 Estes. *The New American Commentary*.

12 Kidner, *An Introduction and Commentary*.

13 Ibid.

14 Estes. *The New American Commentary*.

15 T. Longman, III. *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary* (Inter-Varsity Press, 2014).

16 *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

Him, is gentle (*praus*; cf. 5:5) and humble.<sup>17</sup>

The “yoke” that Jesus described was a tool that crossed over the shoulders of an animal so that they could plow fields or pull a wagon. The Jewish leaders often spoke of taking on the yoke of the Torah to refer to the acceptance of the stipulations of the law; it symbolized obedience and the acceptance of covenant responsibility. However, as Jesus indicates, these religious burdens could become heavy. “Jesus’ yoke, by contrast, is easy, not because his call to discipleship is less demanding...but because it makes us pupils of one who is *gentle and humble in heart*. The key lies in the personal invitation, *Come to me*.”<sup>18</sup> Jesus calls us not to a program but to a person—Himself!

**Consider/Reflect:** “The thing hidden from the wise and understanding is God’s gracious plan of salvation, the message that both Jesus and John the Baptist proclaimed. Jesus’ contemporaries by and large rejected Him, preferring to live under the heavy yoke of the Law as the way to salvation. Jesus invites us to receive the yoke of the Gospel, which guarantees true rest. [Pray]: Dearest Jesus, I praise You that when I am yoked to You, no burden is too heavy. Amen.

□ **Day #6-Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Read: Psalm 91.—Embrace: God and His guiding you through His Word.**

Today we turn to the Daily Order of Prayers from *Luther’s Small Catechism*.<sup>19</sup> Read and mediate on *Psalm 91* and:

“[M]ake the sign of the Holy Cross and say: In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer:

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.*

*Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

(Depending on the time of day, pray the prayers below):

(Morning) I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

(Afternoon/Evening) I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

**Pray and Prepare for Worship Tomorrow...**

**“Summer Psalms”**

Scripture Texts:

Psalm 32.1-11

Romans 7.1-13

Matthew 10.34-42

<sup>17</sup> Walvoord, *et al.* *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

<sup>18</sup> Carson, *et al.* *New Bible Commentary*

<sup>19</sup> Martin Luther. “Luther’s Small Catechism.” Taken from, *The Lutheran Study Bible*. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).