

Family Group Outline – May 3rd, 2026

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MBC:

1. Our monthly Church Workday is this Saturday at 8:30pm. There are projects for all ages and abilities. Lunch is provided at 11:30am.
2. Registration is open for volunteers for VBS on July 13-17. Please fill out the online form if you're interested!
3. To prepare for the preaching of the word on this coming Lord's Day, we would encourage you to meditate on the passage ahead of time. This Sunday's sermon will be from 1 Corinthians 15:6-11.

WHAT WE BELIEVE: *Of the Perseverance of Saints* - We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18; 1 John 2:19; John 13:18; Matt. 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9; Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30-33; Jer. 32:40; Psa. 121:3; 91:11-12; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Jude 24-25; Heb. 1:14; 2 Kings 6:16; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:4.

WISDOM: "A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent." – John Calvin

WORD: "The Conduct of the Contenders", Jude 17-23

Suggested questions:

1. Read Jude 17-23. Was there anything that particularly challenged, impacted, or confused you from this Sunday's message?
2. What should our response be to false teachers in the church?
3. How do we know when to contend with a false teacher and when to have mercy on those who doubt?

DIGGING DEEPER: How Do We 'Dwell in the Shelter of the Most High'?

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-do-we-dwell-in-the-shelter-of-the-most-high>

How Do We ‘Dwell in the Shelter of the Most High’?

John Piper

God is our refuge and our fortress. And in that great refuge psalm of Psalm 91, we are given this glorious promise: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1). Such a high promise prompted APJ listener Anna to write in. Anna lives in Atlanta. “Pastor John, hello, and thank you for your faithful labors,” she writes. “My question comes from Psalm 91:1. What does it mean to ‘dwell in the shelter of the Most High’ and to ‘abide in the shadow of the Almighty?’ Is there a New Testament equivalent to this for believers in Christ? And is the practice of daily Scripture reading part of it?” Pastor John, what would you say to Anna?

Yes, there is a New Testament equivalent, and yes, Scripture reading is certainly part of the way you keep dwelling in the shelter of the Most High. But to get at the actual meaning, let’s quote the psalm, Psalm 91, and then look at an event from the life of a martyred missionary, Jim Elliot, whose biography is titled, by his wife, *Shadow of the Almighty*.

Safe in His Shelter

The phrase comes from Psalm 91, which begins like this: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”

And then it continues in verse 7 with these amazing words: “A thousand [arrows] may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place . . .”

So, it sounds like to dwell in the shadow of the Almighty and in the shelter of the Most High means that if someone throws a spear at you, it will not hit you.

For the Sake of Gain

So was Elizabeth Elliot naive, unbiblical, when she titled her husband’s biography *Shadow of the Almighty*, even though he and four others were speared to death by the Huaorani Indians on January 8, 1956, in Ecuador, while they were trying to evangelize them? She’s been asked that question. She’s with the Lord now, but she was asked that question, and I personally spoke to her many times. Most people considered her confidence in God’s sovereignty to be a little bit misplaced. Here was her answer at the end of the book. You can read it on the last pages of that biography: “The world did not recognize the truth of the second clause in Jim Elliot’s credo: ‘He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.’”

Now, what did he mean by that? What did she mean when she quoted it? Well, they both meant this: if God sees fit to let the arrow that flies by day or the spear of a Huaorani Indian to kill one of God’s children, God has done it for the sake of gain. Jim Elliot said “to

gain what he cannot lose.” God has done it for gain, not loss. And I think she’s right. I think he was right. That’s a right interpretation of Psalm 91.

Here’s why I think that: Satan tried to use Psalm 91 in Matthew 4:6 to tempt Jesus to jump off the temple, because Psalm 91 promises that the angels are going to catch you. But Jesus won’t use Psalm 91 that way. Neither did Stephen when he was stoned to death. Neither did James when he was beheaded. Neither did Paul when he was beaten repeatedly with rods. Neither did Jesus as he bent down over the cross. None of them understood Psalm 91 to mean that God’s children will never suffer at the hands of their enemies.

Everything You Need

So what does it mean? I mean, Satan was trying to get them to think it meant that. What does it mean to abide in the shadow of the Almighty if you can be killed in the shadow of the Almighty? Well, let’s go to the New Testament counterpart of this text. So Anna asks, “Is there a New Testament counterpart?” There are several. For example, Jude 21 says, “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” I think that is virtually the same as “Keep yourselves in the shadow of the Almighty.” Or Jesus says in John 15:9, “Abide in my love,” which I think is the same as “Abide in the shelter of the Most High.”

In other words, dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty and abiding in the shelter of the Most High means trusting implicitly in the love of God, the power of God, to give you everything you need to do his will and glorify his name, whether you live or die. Or to say it another way: dwelling in the shadow of the Most High and keeping yourself in the love of God means trusting the love of God and the wisdom of God and the power of God to protect you from everything that could destroy you utterly.

Never Defeated

Now, why do I say that? One of the clearest reasons for saying that is found in Romans 8:32–39, maybe the greatest paragraph in the Bible. Paul argues that God’s love for his elect, his adopted children, proven in the death of his Son Jesus, means that he will, with absolute certainty, “graciously give us all things.”

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32) Answer: he will. But what does that mean — all things? And he goes on to explain, and he even uses the Psalms to explain it. He argues that if we are in the love of Christ, in the shadow of the Almighty, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Then he throws out a few possibilities of what might separate us, and it shows he’s really quite aware of Psalm 91. He says, “Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” (Romans 8:35) — or he might have added, “or a Huaorani Indian spear?”

And then he quotes Psalm 44:22: “As it is written, ‘For your sake [not sin’s sake; your sake] we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered’” (Romans 8:36). So even the Psalms knew God’s people die while doing good. Then he shouts the answer: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

So Paul is saying Christians can keep themselves in the love of God and in the shadow of the Almighty and still be slaughtered like sheep, and yet be more than conquerors. So if the arrow that flies by day goes straight into your chest, and you drop dead in the cause of Christ, it does not defeat you. You are more than a conqueror.

Step into Everlasting Presence

How are you more than a conqueror? Because the very arrow that seemed to get the victory becomes your servant and accomplishes God's sovereign purpose in the world. And God's saving purpose for your life is everlasting presence. Here's how the book of Revelation says it: "And they conquered [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death" (Revelation 12:11).

So they die in persecution, but they conquer Satan. How? This is the answer to Anna's question. How do you dwell in the shelter of the Most High? They trusted implicitly in the blood of the Lamb, that it had absolutely secured for them their future happiness forever. And they opened their mouth and gave testimony. And the fear of death did not stop them. And in that moment, they were safe in the shadow of the Almighty, and they conquered the devil and they entered paradise. I think that's the kind of triumphant safety that God is calling us to in Psalm 91.

Jude 17-23

¹⁷But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” ¹⁹It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. ²²And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.