

DeLong Sermon Series

Nazarene Bible College

Preaching Manuscript Cover Sheet - March 3, 2011

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Sermon Title: Where Are You Dwelling?

Sermon Text: Psalm 91

Sermon Design and Development Outline

Scripture Text: Psalm 91

Title: “Where Are You Dwelling?”

Point: To *dwell* in the shelter of the Most High is to live in *surrender* to God, confident his will is best for your life. To *rest* in the *shadow* of the Almighty is to *trust* in His love and promises, even during the *dark* times of life.

Purpose: To challenge listeners to fully surrender to God. To assure them that daily surrender will lead to confident trust in God, which will sustain them in difficult times and bring them greater joy during good times.

Introduction: What did Jesus preach about when he spoke in the Synagogues? Imagine living in the time of Christ and hearing him preach. Perhaps he would say something like this...

What? Read scripture text. Who wrote Psalm 91, Moses or David? It doesn't matter as much who wrote it, as it does to understand the message of God in the psalm. What is the message? The message is a command and a promise. You are commanded to dwell in the shelter of the Most High. The promise is that you will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

So What? How did listeners respond to Jesus? How do we respond to Jesus? How do we respond to this Psalm? It could be a psalm of disappointment if we view it through a lens of selfishness and pride. However, if we understand the true message, that to dwell in the shelter of the Most High is to live in full surrender to His will; then it will be a psalm of rest for our souls.

Now What? I challenge you to examine your level of surrender to God. Are you living in fear, disappointment, or addiction? Are you ready to be set free and find rest in God? Today Jesus is asking you, “Where are you dwelling?”

Conclusion: Prayer of surrender and commitment.

Have you ever wondered what Jesus preached about when he went into the Jewish Temples and opened the scriptures? There is no doubt it was exceptional preaching. The Bible says that people were amazed at his teaching and praised him. The people said that He taught with authority, not like their teachers of the Scriptures. Who were their teachers? Their teachers were the Rabbi's, Scribes and Pharisees, who seemed to specialize in arguing about their different opinions. It must have been a refreshing change for the Jewish people to hear someone speak with confidence and authority regarding the Scriptures.

What scriptures did Jesus teach from? The New Testament wasn't written yet; so, He preached from the Hebrew Scriptures; what we know as the Old Testament.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a recording of Jesus' actual teaching? *When I was growing up, I read a fictional book which told of a scientist who discovered a way to extract sound waves from rocks. In the book, the scientist took a stone from an ancient temple in Israel and produced the sound of Jesus voice as he taught in the Temple 2000 years ago. Don't you wish we had that technology today! Sorry, as far as I know it hasn't been invented yet, so we will just have to do our best to imagine it.*

Travel back with me in your mind to the time of Christ. Imagine you are sitting on the floor in the Temple, and Jesus comes in to teach. He opens the scroll and begins to speak, perhaps saying something like this:

“Shabbat Shalom; may mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

Brother's and Sister's...Today, let us seek God's truth from Psalm 91.

This Psalm is often referred to as the Psalm of Protection. It is one of our most popular psalms.

We recite it each evening before bed and on each Sabbath day.

Have you ever wondered who wrote this psalm? Our teachers often argue about who may have written it. Some claim that David is the author... others insist that Moses is the author.

I say unto you, it is good to learn about the life of the author; yet, it is even better to understand the author's message about God and God's message to you contained in the psalm.

Hear now the words of Psalm 91. ([Recite Psalm 91 from memory](#))

Children of Israel:

The author of this psalm made confident statements about God's protection and provision. Truly, Our God does protect us and provide for us; yet, do you feel that God always protects and provides for us? Was the author of this psalm able to make such confident statements because they had only experienced a safe and secure life filled with blessings from God?

Consider that the author of Psalm 91 was either King David ~ or ~_Moses; regardless of which man wrote this psalm, we must remember that both of these *Men of God* did experience times of pain, times of fear, and times of disaster.

Think of David being anointed by Samuel to be the next King; yet he had to wait 7 years for that prophesy to be fulfilled. During that time of waiting, King Saul turned against him...tried to kill him. David became a fugitive, always on the run to escape from Saul's rage.

Think of Moses, who, after killing an Egyptian to save a fellow Israelite, was mocked by those Israelites who saw him commit the murder. Pharaoh heard about it and sought to kill him. Then he became a fugitive. He spent 40 years in the desert...trying to forget his desire to save Israel...feeling like a failure...feeling unfit to free his people from cruel slavery.

Yet, both of these *Men of God* also experienced incredible times of victory ...think of David killing a bear and a lion with his bare hands... slaying Goliath with a simple sling-shot.... Think of his successful 40 year reign as King of Israel.

Think of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt as the LORD Our God demonstrated his mighty power time after time, to protect them and deliver them from slavery, thirst, and starvation.

I tell you the truth, this psalm was written by a person who experienced both disaster and victory as they walked with God. This psalm was written by a person who had learned to surrender to God's will, and trust God **in every situation**. Today, I proclaim to you, that the secret of learning to trust God is found in the first verse of this psalm, 'If you dwell in the shelter of the Most High; then you will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.' Where are you dwelling?

I am not asking, 'Where are you living?'

I am not asking about your physical home or your physical location...

.....I am asking about you ... Where are YOU dwelling?

Are you dwelling in fear of the enemy.....or are you dwelling in faith in God to save you?

Are you dwelling in anger and bitterness from the pain in your life.....or are you dwelling in trust that God will bring good from the pain?

Are you dwelling in frustration because God has asked you to wait for the fulfillment of His salvation for you...or are you dwelling in faith that God will bring you salvation...in His time...in His way?

I say to you today, the truth of this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing . . . ([Stretch out arms like on a cross](#))...Behold, God's Salvation.

I and the Father are one...before Abraham was, I am.

If you dwell in me, I will be your refuge and your fortress.

If you dwell in me, you will find rest for your souls.

Dwell in me and I will dwell in you...together we will bear much fruit... the fruit of love in place of fear; the fruit of forgiveness in place of bitterness; the fruit of a humble patient heart in place of a prideful selfish spirit.”

Thank you for joining in my imagination of Christ preaching. My hope is that this brought you to a place of sensing His spirit, His passion, and His love for the people of Israel also His love for you today.

How did people respond to Jesus? Some believed and became His disciples. Others doubted and later joined the angry crowd yelling, “Crucify Him.”

How do we respond to Jesus? How do we respond to this psalm of protection? Do we read this psalm through a lens of trust and gratitude...saying with confidence, “Blessed be the name of the Lord, He gives and takes away!”

Today, I can read it with trust and gratitude; but for many years I read it through a lens of selfishness. It was not an inspirational psalm for me. It was a psalm of bitter disappointment ...because God didn't work the way I thought this psalm promised. Have you ever felt that way?

For example, vss. 9 & 10 say: “If you make the Most High your dwelling – even the LORD, who is my refuge – then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.”

When we read those words, perhaps we remember a time when we thought we were making the Most High our dwelling, doing his will, sacrificing our wants and desires to follow His call ...then harm and disaster befell us...

I remember several NBC graduates who made it through all the difficult school years to earn their degree, become ordained, and take their first church! Then, one of them experienced

his home destroyed by fire; one of them experienced his wife leave him for another man; and another experienced his child struck with chronic illness. That sounds like harm and disaster to me! I became angry at God on their behalf!

How can we make sense of this psalm of protection when it seems that God isn't protecting us, when it seems that God isn't providing for our needs, when we are doing all we can to dwell in the shelter of the Most High, and God doesn't come through the way we think He should?

I suggest that one reason we might not be able to make sense of this psalm could be because we are looking at it through a lens of selfishness. We want God to give us only physical comfort and rest, only emotional peace and joy, only material protection and provision, all the time.

Or perhaps, we are viewing the Psalm through a lens of pride? Deep down we actually feel that our idea of protection and provision would be better for us than what God is allowing to happen in our life. We want God to protect us, but we want him to protect us according to our plan.

I suggest that if this psalm is confusing to us, then we really don't know what it means to "Dwell in the shelter of the Most High." This was true for me. There was a time in my life when I was trapped in selfishness and pride because of the suffering in my life...at that time I could not believe this psalm was true.

In my confusion and pain, I cried out to God to help me truly understand what it means to "dwell in the shelter of the Most High." I mean, how does a person dwell in the shelter of God? We can't go to his home in heaven. He hasn't set up "safe houses" on Earth for us to run to when

we feel threatened. I also wanted to understand what it means to “rest in the shadow of the Almighty.”

We can’t even see God, so how are we supposed to find his shadow to rest in it?

As you may suspect, God didn’t answer me right away...so I just went about my day...waiting for God to answer....

Later that morning, I was listening to former President George W. Bush in an interview about his new book, “Decision Points.” He said that in his early years, Christianity had been about obeying rules; but later in life, after a talk with Billy Graham, he came to realize that Christianity is actually about full surrender to God. That is when he decided to fully surrendered to God, then God set him free; free from many years of addiction to alcohol!

When I heard former President Bush say the words full surrender, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and answered my question from earlier that morning, this is what the Spirit said:

“To dwell in the shelter of the Most High is to live in total surrender to God. Then you can rest in confident trust that God loves you...even though He may keep you in the shadows of His plan for your life ... even though He doesn’t always tell you why he allows bad things to happen. To dwell in the shelter of the Most High is to say as Christ said when facing the cross, “Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.”

This insight was a new thought for me. I had never thought that the meaning of “dwell” could also be described as “surrender.” Yet, the Hebrew root of the word we translate as dwell in this psalm means to **live**, to **inhabit**, to **stay**Isn’t that what happens when we fully surrender to God? Think about it...

We **live** in Christ when we *surrender* our life to him.

We and the Holy Spirit **inhabit** one another through our *surrender* to obey his voice.

We **stay** in the Father when we *surrender* our will to His will.

Jesus' life demonstrated this link between the words dwell and surrender. Jesus was able to dwell in the shelter of the Most High because he lived a life of full surrender to God's will. He was confident that God's will was best for his life. Jesus did experience pain and suffering, but God was with him...God delivered him...God was his refuge and strength...

As a result of his full surrender to God, Jesus received the promise of God for those who dwell in him...Jesus was able to rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Jesus fully trusted in God's love and believed God's promises, even during the dark times of his life on earth.

Today, Jesus is asking us:

“Where are you dwelling?”

Maybe, like George Bush...you are dwelling with an addiction...

Maybe you are dwelling in fear...fear of the evil in this world; fear of unemployment; fear of the unknown; fear of the future...

...Will you dwell in Him? Will you surrender your desire to be in control of your life...your desire to know how everything is going to work out?

Maybe you are dwelling in pain...pain from disease...or pain from a difficult emotional situation?

Will you dwell in Him? Will you surrender your desire to tell God how and when to heal you...how and when to help you; will you trust that His timing is best?

Psalm 91 tells us that God wants to rescue us, to protect us, to answer us, to be with us in trouble, to deliver us and honor us, to satisfy us with long life, and show us his salvation.

However, you must surrender all to receive these gifts.

In a moment we will watch a music video of Lincoln Brewster's song "Surrender."

Here is your challenge: Take this moment to evaluate your life. Have you surrendered every part of your life to God? Is there an area you are still trying to keep, to manage on your own? Allow God's Holy Spirit entrance into your pain, your fears, into the earthly treasures you want to keep. Let him show you what area you need to surrender to Him today.

Our relationship with Jesus has to be a partnership.

Just this weekend, I was reading the assignment for Doctrine of Holiness class from Mark Quanstrom's book, *A Century of Holiness Theology*. I discovered that holiness theologians have been writing about the need for the Nazarene Church to expand our doctrine of entire sanctification to include multiple times of surrender or "crisis" experiences with the Holy Spirit.

Mildred Wynkoop, Rob Staples, H. Ray Dunning, and others all seem to be saying that it is important for us to recognize that our surrender to God can happen in a variety of ways. It can be a one-time surrender, resulting in a sanctified loving relationship with God and others for the rest of our life....

Or it can require a second time of surrender / a second work of grace to get us to a place of truly dwelling in God's love...

Or it can require multiple times of surrender...as it has for me.

Why? Because the extent of the Holy Spirit's work to transform us into Christlikeness is contingent upon our understanding of what areas we need to surrender ...and our willingness to surrender.

In Revelation 3:20, Jesus said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and will open the door, I will come in..." This was written to believers, not to unbelievers.

The Holy Spirit won't force your surrender. You must give it willingly.

Jesus gave his ALL for you; will you surrender all...to gain Christ?

Show Music Video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WUD2oWYn1Y>

Let us pray:

“Almighty GOD. We want to learn to dwell in you.

We need your promised rest for our souls.

Teach us to surrender ALL to you, Holy Spirit.

Help us to be able to say as Christ said:

“Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.”

In Jesus name, Amen.