**Psalm 91**

**God our Loving Protector: Part 2**

*God’s Covering*

**Psalm 91:4**

*He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*

* Old Testament Jews would understand ‘His wings’ and ‘feathers’ to refer to the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle.

-Found in the Holy of Holies the central focus of all Israel.

-Ark made of hard acacia wood over laid with gold:

 (Humanity and divinity).

-Mercy Seat hammered out from solid slab of Gold.

 (Plenty of it: came from after 400 years of slavery - backpay!)

-Housed 3 items: Pot of manna, Aaron’s rod, 2 stone tablets of law.

(All symbols of man’s shortcomings: standards, provision and appointed leadership).

-Blood poured out on the mercy seat to ‘cover’ sin on Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement by High Priest.

 (Nowadays Jesus blood goes deeper & cleanses & removes sin).

 -Beautiful picture of how mercy triumphs over judgement.

**James 2:13** *For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

* God sees only the cleansing blood, not our shortcomings… because we are ‘in Christ’: covered by His feathers and under His wings.

**Is God’s mercy & special grace automatic?**

Consider these two pictures.

* Jesus talks about chickens!

**Luke 13:34-35** *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!*

 -God does not force His protection on us: consent is needed.

* Even Ruth the outsider Gentile Moabite came under the Lord’s (Boaz) refuge:

**Ruth 2:12**

*The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LordGod of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”*

* God speaks to us from a place of mercy…not judgement!

**Exodus 25:22**

*And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony,*

* New Testament connection:

**John 20:11-12**

*But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*

-Today the tomb remains empty testifying to Christ’s completed work where all that is left is to commune with Him in unhindered intimacy.

-The mercy seat today is a picture of what gives us access to God’s throne room of grace.

 **Hebrews 4:16**

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**Fear loses to faith:**

**Psalm 91:5-6**

*You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
6Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.*

* **Fear**: mild **uneasiness** and procrastination to **stark terror** spectrum.

-Not talking here about the reverential awe & respect for the Holy God but fear of ‘terror’ ‘arrows’ ‘pestilence’ and ‘destruction’ .

(Common things that affect humans in a fallen world.)

* **Fear spoils the present**, paralyses action, and opens the door to satan who creates negative false images of your future.
* When we know God’s character as our protective loving Father and His promise of protection, we can see that it is entirely possible to:

-“ not be afraid of the terror by night.” (Psalm 91:5)

-Fearless ‘in the midst’ of adversity.

* Why? Because the ‘God of peace’ is with us! (Romans 15:33)

-As we **focus on His unmerited favor & protection, God’s p**erfect love (for us) casts out fear.

-Keep our eyes on **His** love for us…not focused on our love for Him.

**1 John 4:18-19** *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19We love Him because He first loved us.*

 -He is still ‘Jehovah Shalom’ – the God of peace who calms our storms:

 (First, in our minds & then also in our circumstances).

-As we offer the ‘incense’ of worship to Him in the ‘midst of trouble’ it fumigates the spiritual atmosphere, dispelling fear.

-As we agree with God’s estimation of us we rise up against fear.

(God said that Gideon was described as a ‘mighty man of valor’).

**Final Take Away**

* Because God has graciously and freely made His protection available to us let us receive His word over us today:

**Isaiah 41:10**

*Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’*