

Storm Shelter (God's Embrace In Psalms)

Six Week Lesson Series

Table of Contents

Note from Pastor Kermit:	1
Time to embark on a new Bible Study Series; I believe that it will be a blessing!.....	1
Lesson 1	2
The Shelter of God's Presence – Psalms 23:1-6.....	2
Lesson 2	4
The Shelter of God's Salvation – Psalms 27:1-6	4
Lesson 3	6
The Shelter of God's Forgiveness – Psalms 32:1-7.....	6
Lesson 4	8
The Shelter of God's Encouragement – Psalms 42:1-3, 6-8; 43:3-5	8
Lesson 5	10
The Shelter of God's Peace – Psalms 46:1-11.....	10
Lesson 6	12
The Shelter of God's Protection – Psalms 91:1-4, 9-11, 14-16	12

Note from Pastor Kermit:

Time to embark on a new Bible Study Series; I believe that it will be a blessing!

- ❖ Be engaged
 - Take notes and do the homework
- ❖ Be in prayer
 - Allow God to be God in your life
- ❖ Invite a friend

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Lesson 1

The Shelter of God's Presence – Psalms 23:1-6

What is the biggest storm you've ever encountered?

Psalms 23:1-3

- 1 A Psalm of David. The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

He leads us. Sheep aren't smart. They often wander aimlessly into one problem after another. That's why a shepherd's staff have a hook on one end, to haul sheep out of holes and ravines when they fall in. Likewise, God desires to help you navigate the tough places of life. When we're pulled off course or wander away, His presence guides us back onto "the right paths." The Shepherd isn't just interested in our rescue, but also our restoration.

He provides for us. A shepherd does more than just keep the sheep out of trouble; he also provides for their needs. God does the same for us. Because He is such a Good Shepherd, we will lack nothing. In the midst of life's needs, sorrows, and grief, God provides perfectly for us.

He restores us. The psalm refers to green pastures (a place of rest). It's only through God's presence in our lives that we can reach and enjoy these places of refreshment.

Discussion Question #1

- What's your initial reaction to these verses?

Psalms 23:4-5

- 4 Yea, 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, they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

- When the diagnosis comes, all you can do is take the medicine. And pray.
- When the company is headed toward a financial downturn, all you can do is work hard. And pray.
- When a relationship is on the verge of collapse, all you can do is love deeply. And pray.

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Six Week Lesson Series

Discussion Question #2-3

- What sometimes keeps us from recognizing God's presence?
- How has God's presence in your life made you braver than you would be otherwise?

Psalms 23:6

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

- When we feel like temptation is pursuing us, God is more determined to win our hearts.
- When sorrows seem to be around every corner, the Lord is present to wipe our tears and win our hearts.
- When life is just plain hard and we don't know if we can overcome the pain, the Shepherd is present to guide us toward His love.

Discussion Question #4

- What does it mean to you that God's goodness and love will follow you?

Live It Out

Consider the following suggestions for living in the reality of God's presence and care:

- **Evaluate.** Identify circumstances in your life where you need protection, comfort, or care. Pray that God will help you be more sensitive to His presence in those situations.
- **Memorize.** Commit Psalm 23 to memory as an internal reminder of God's presence in your life.

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Six Week Lesson Series

Lesson 2

The Shelter of God's Salvation – Psalms 27:1-6

When did you first feel independent or on your own?

Psalms 27:1

1 *A Psalm* of David. The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Two great questions:

1. Whom shall I fear?
2. Of whom shall I be afraid

Discussion Question #1

- In what kind of situations do you often feel afraid?

Psalm 27:2-3

2 When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I *will be* confident.

Discussion Question #2-3

- What are the similarities and differences between self-confidence and confidence in God?
- What are some positive and negative ways to face our foes?

Psalm 27:4-6

4 One *thing* I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.

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Six Week Lesson Series

5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Discussion Question #4

- How can we connect David's expressions of worship to our daily lives?

Live it out

Consider the following suggestions for responding to the truth that God Himself is your salvation:

- **Accept the Savior.** Trust Jesus Christ. Let His salvation give you the freedom, confidence, and security nothing else can.
- **Surrender your fears.** Make a list of circumstances that cause you to feel worried or afraid. Talk with God about your list through prayer, and then throw it away.
- **Share your faith.** Your friends and family have the same need for security and freedom from fear. Share with them the confidence and security you have found in Christ.

The gospel message that Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place for our sins is an amazing truth.

He did not arrive on this earth simply to be a good example or to help make us the most moral people around. He is our light, our stronghold, and our salvation.

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Six Week Lesson Series

Lesson 3

The Shelter of God's Forgiveness – Psalms 32:1-7

What "guilty pleasure" would be hard for you to give up?

Psalms 32:1-2

1 *A Psalm of David. A Contemplation. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.*

2 *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.*

David found joy when he laid down his deception (vs. 2). We must do the same in order to experience God's full forgiveness, but it's hard especially when we deceive ourselves saying:

- My sin isn't that bad.
- I can stop whenever I want to.
- It's ok because no one really gets hurt.

Discussion Question#1

- What emotions do you experience when you receive forgiveness?

Psalm 32:3-5

3 *When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.*

4 *For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.*

5 *I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*

Discussion Question #2 & 3

- What's at stake when we hold on to unconfessed sin?
- How would you describe the process of confessing sin to God?

Storm Shelter (God's Embrace In Psalms)

Six Week Lesson Series

Psalm 32:6-7

6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.

7 You *are* my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

Discussion Question #4

- How have you experienced God's forgiveness as protection or a hiding place?

Live It Out

Consider the following suggestions for seeking joy through the blessing of God's forgiveness:

- **Confess.** Confess any sins that plague you. Turn from them, accept God's forgiveness, and make a plan with God about how to refuse their power in your life from this point forward.
- **Pray.** Pray for others who have not yet experienced the joy of God's forgiveness in salvation.
- **Forgive.** Offer forgiveness to someone who has wronged you.

We all want the gift of joy in this life. We usually grasp for joy in the same we find happiness but that won't work. Instead, choose to surrender as your path to joy. Surrender your will, let go of your sin, and relish the restoration that only God can bring.

Storm Shelter (God's Embrace In Psalms)

Six Week Lesson Series

Lesson 4

The Shelter of God's Encouragement – Psalms 42:1-3, 6-8; 43:3-5

When do you feel like singing the blues?

Psalm 42:1-3

1 To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the sons of Korah. As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, "Where *is* your God?"

Assess your spiritual desires:

- Do I desire God himself?
- Do I desire scripture?
- Do I desire to worship God?
- Do I feel sorrow away from God's presence?

Discussion Question #1

- In your own words, how would you describe what the writer of the psalm experienced?

Psalm 42:6-8

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me; Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, From the Hill Mizar.

7 Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me.

8 The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song *shall* be with me—A prayer to the God of my life.

We can learn to be thankful even for the difficulties of life because even those difficulties remind us of God's presence.

Storm Shelter (God's Embrace In Psalms)

Six Week Lesson Series

Discussion Question #2 & 3

- When have you seen Jesus make a dramatic difference in someone's life?
- When you feel overwhelmed, what truths about God help you put one foot in front of the other?

Psalm 43:3-5

3 Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your tabernacle.

4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God.

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

Discussion Question #4

- What are some ways to trust God when you don't know what to do?

Live It Out

How will you respond when hard times arrive? Consider the following suggestions to prepare yourself even now.

- **Choose worship.** Make the decision to actively worship God both in public and in private. Seek him at all times so you'll know how to find Him when you're overwhelmed.
- **Encourage others.** Be intentional about speaking words of encouragement to friends, family, and coworkers this week.
- **Find help.** If you experience prolonged periods of depression, consider speaking with a close friend, pastor, or counselor about the deeper issues at the core of that struggle.

Whether or not you fight the blues, you will feel overwhelmed at times the waves of doubt will crash around you. But you don't have to drown. Depression will seek to embrace you, but you can choose the presence of God instead. Seek Him.

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Six Week Lesson Series

Lesson 5

The Shelter of God's Peace – Psalms 46:1-11

What have been your most successful New Year's resolution?

Psalm 46:1-3

1 To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamoth. God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 *Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled, *Though* the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

Refuge: shelter or protection from danger or trouble

Discussion Question #1-2

- Where do you go to experience Peace?
- God is our refuge, strength, and helper. Which of these three resonates with you right now?

Psalm 46:4-7

4 *There is* a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy *place* of the tabernacle of the Most High.

5 God *is* in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

Discussion Question #3

- How are you currently affected by the conflicts raging in today's culture?

Storm Shelter (God's Embrace In Psalms)

Six Week Lesson Series

Psalm 46:8-11

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

Discussion Question #4

- What steps can we take to seek God instead of our own ideas of peace?

Live It Out

Consider the following suggestions for allowing God to work in your life and bring peace.

- **Dwell in God's Word.** Read Psalm 46 daily for the next week. Choose one verse to memorize so you can remind yourself about God's power during times of turmoil.
- **Take a retreat.** Spend a significant portion of time alone in prayer and worship this week. Ask God to give you peace.

You're going to face turmoil every day. That's not a pleasant reality, but it's true. Fortunately, you can actively choose to make a resolution in the face of turmoil. Be intentional to let God work a revolution in your life—a revolution of His peace and presence.

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Six Week Lesson Series

Lesson 6

The Shelter of God's Protection – Psalms 91:1-4, 9-11, 14-16

What causes fear in some people but not in you?

Psalms 91:1-4

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, "*He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.*"

3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler *And* from the perilous pestilence.

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

Most High.. No one is above God. He is the One who stands in the loftiest position. He is supreme.

Almighty.. God holds all of the power in all creation throughout all eternity.

Lord.. This is the name that God used to reveal Himself to His chosen people. It is the covenant name Yahweh, which means "I Am." In other words God is self-existent, self-sustaining and eternal. He is the one who creates and holds everything together.

Discussion Question #1

- What do the names and images in this passage reveal about God's character?

Psalm 91:9-11

9 Because you have made the LORD, *who is my refuge, Even* the Most High, your dwelling place,

10 No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;

11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.

Discussion Question #2

- How can we reconcile the reality of suffering with the truths in these verses?

Storm Shelter (God's Embrace In Psalms)

Six Week Lesson Series

Psalm 91:14-16

14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

Discussion Question #3-4

- How does our culture influence the way we view God's protection?
- What responsibility do we have in being sheltered by God's protection.

Live It Out

How will you express trust in God's protection?

- **Accept God's protection.** Learn about the different cultures of the people in your community. Ask about their customs, heritage, and beliefs. Become a student of different cultures in an effort to start discussions.
- **Keep a journal.** Follow Paul's example by attending a worship service within a different culture. Seek out common ground in order to build bridges between that culture and Christ.
- Share the news. Read Psalm 91 to a friend experiencing troubles. Share from your experience about the meaning of the Psalm and how to trust God when the days get dark.

The lure of fearful self-preservation calls us to live helicopter lives, hovering over each day a long list of "don'ts" and risk to avoid. God invites us instead to do something, to be lovingly devoted to Him and to trust Him completely.