

Putting Psalm 91 Into Practice After the Texas Church Massacre

Hardly anyone would expect terror to strike a small Baptist church in a small town in central Texas. But that is exactly what happened this past weekend during the Sunday-morning service at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. An individual, dressed in black and carrying a high-powered weapon, walked in the door and proceeded to slaughter 26 worshippers and wound numerous others.

This heinous act came on the heels of the tragedy in New York City involving a Muslim jihadist who killed eight people with a rented pickup he drove into a crowd of people. And don't forget the recent evil and tragic events at Las Vegas, Orlando and San Bernardino, not to mention the thousands of Christians in the Middle East who are being slaughtered for their faith. What is going on?

In 2 Timothy 3:1, Paul says, "Know this: In the last days, perilous times will come." The word "perilous" is translated from a Greek word that means "fierce," "violent" and "dangerous." It is the word used of the two demoniacs of Matthew 8:28 who terrorized that region until Jesus came and set them free. In other words, the violent character of those two demon-possessed madmen will be characteristic of the last days, the days in which we now live.

There are also religious terrorists who prey on the naïve and unsuspecting with their alluring doctrines and sensational claims. The New Testament refers to them as false apostles who come as angels of light and propagate doctrines of demons (2 Cor. 11:13-15; I Tim. 4:1). We certainly are living in the perilous (dangerous) times that Paul spoke about in 2

Timothy 3:1.

What Is The Secret Place?

God, however, has provided a place of refuge and safety in this dangerous and unpredictable world. Psalm 91:1 (NKJV) speaks of this place of refuge: The person who “dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

What is the “secret place” to which this passage refers, and why is God here referred to by two different names? The answers to these questions provide insight into powerful truths concerning the place of safety God has provided for every believer.

The secret place is a place of personal intimacy between you and God. It is a space known only to you and God. In the ideal marriage, there is a place of intimacy, sharing, and closeness no one else can breach. In the same way, each of us has the privilege of finding a secret place with God, a place of personal intimacy and closeness where it is just you and God.

How I Found the Secret Place

A number of years ago, I became ill and feared that I might die. To build my faith, I not only read and reread the promises of healing in my Bible, but I also pored over all the faith-building books on healing that I had ever read. As my faith grew, I found myself overcoming questions and doubts. There was, however, one final obstacle to my faith, an obstacle that I could overcome only by finding my own secret place with God.

This final obstacle to faith was tied to the fact that many of the faith-building books I was reading had been written by people who had died of sickness or who had gone through sicknesses from which they were not healed. I knew, for example, that John G. Lake, whose books had greatly helped me,

had died of a stroke at the age of 64. Smith Wigglesworth, whose writings were also faith-building, had endured a painful ordeal with kidney stones. He did not receive healing for the condition and finally passed them through his urinary tract in a grueling process that took three years.

Realities like these raised the question in my mind: "If these people of such great faith had not been healed, how could I confidently expect to be healed by God?" I struggled with this. Finally, I found my own secret place with God, and in this secret place, it was just God and I. I cried out:

"Oh God, I don't know why John G. Lake died of a stroke or why Smith Wigglesworth was not healed of kidney stones, or why his daughter was not healed of deafness. I don't know why healing evangelists like Jack Coe died of polio and Kathryn Kuhlman died of heart failure. But Lord, I don't have to know! That is between you and them. This is between you and me. I am here in Your presence with Your promises. This is not about anyone else. This is just You and me and the promises you have made."

As I fellowshiped with God around His Word, I found a faith that was not tied to anyone else's experience. My faith became rooted in my relationship with Him as never before. I found my own secret place with God.

The Significance of the Names for God in Psalm 91

The first name for God in this passage is *El-Elyon* and literally means "The Most High God." The nations around Israel all had their gods. The God of Israel, however, was The Most High God. In order to be in that place of safety, one must dwell in the secret place of El-Elyon. This means that our faith cannot be a derivative or reflection of somebody else's faith. We must find our own place of personal intimacy with God and live there.

The person who finds this place of personal intimacy will abide or remain under the shadow of the Almighty. "Almighty"

is a translation of the Hebrew *El-Shaddai*. *El* means “strong or mighty one.” *Shaddai* is derived from the Hebrew word *shad*, which means “breast.” *El-Shaddai* thus portrays God as a nursing mother nourishing her infant with her own life. What is more secure than an infant in the arms of its mother being nourished at her breast?

Under His Covering

“Under the shadow” is a metaphor or word picture for “a protective covering.” The protective covering is not a pastor, church, denomination or self-proclaimed apostle. It is, instead, a personal thing between the individual and God. God Himself—*El-Shaddai*—will be our covering when we live in that secret place. This passage is clearly saying that the one who dwells continually in a place of personal intimacy with God will live under His protective care and be nourished and sustained by His own life.

How Do We Live in The Secret Place?

First of all, we must get rid of religiosity and approach God as a friend—with reverence, but as a real person who wants to have a personal relationship with us.

Secondly, we must give priority to reading and studying His Word, particularly the Gospels and the New Testament. Smith Wigglesworth said, “I cannot know God by how I feel; I can only know God from His Word.” As we read the Gospels, we will get to know what God is like. Jesus is God Incarnate and as we are getting to know Him in the gospels, we are getting to know God.

Third, we must worship. Someone has noted that when we pray, we are preoccupied with our needs. When we praise and give thanks, we are preoccupied with our blessings. But when we worship, we are preoccupied only with Him.

In the Secret Place, We Come to Know Him

In John 17:3 Jesus prayed to His Father that His followers “may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” The word “know” in this passage is the Greek word *ginosko*, and it refers to a knowing that is not merely intellectual but is rooted in an intimate relationship between the knower and the object known.

This same word is used of the intimate, physical relationship between a husband and wife. For example, the Hebrew form of this word is used in Genesis 4:1a, which says, “Now Adam knew (*ginosko*) his wife and she conceived and bore Cain.”

And *ginosko* is the same word used by Paul in Philippians 3:10 where He says his burning passion and ultimate goal in life is to know (*ginosko*) Christ. Paul wanted more than anything else to live in that secret place.

How about you? Have you found your own secret place with God? If not, I encourage you to reach out to Him today. He has promised that if you seek for Him you will find Him, when you seek for Him with all your heart (Jer. 29:13). {eoa}

Dr. Eddie Hyatt is the founder of Revive America and the author of Pilgrims and Patriots, which documents the radical Christian origins of America and how it was birthed out of the First Great Awakening. His books on spiritual awakening and the nature of the church and Christianity can be found on Amazon. His vision for another Great Awakening can be found at his website, .