***Psalm 91:1-4 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” 3Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. 4He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.***

Our God is a protector here in this life. It is important that we recognize His presence in our lives and, when we do, we encourage others by sharing our confidence that God is with us. Psalm 46:1 says *God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.* God is a very present help – the Hebrew has the idea of vehemently present. God is present, just as Jesus sat by the fire with Peter, so the Holy Spirit abides with us today. God is not some distant idea that we will go and see someday, someway in the far-off tomorrow! He is with us now, today, as a refuge and a strength in times of trouble, giving us a secure place to abide no matter what is going on around. It is not God that chooses not to be present. It is us who chooses not to be present in Him.

Verse 1 says *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*He who dwells – that word “dwells” has the idea of sitting down and remain. He who remains under the covering of the Most High shall abide, shall live in the shadow of the Almighty. Is there any more comforting place to be than resting in the shadow of our God that created it all, knows all, and controls all? But we must choose to dwell! We must choose to sit down. We must draw near so He draws near to us. We must believe He is present.

Verse 2 *I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”*God is our refuge, our fortress. In God I will trust – the word here for trust means refuge, a place we can be confident in. I talked with a young man this week struggling with trusting God. He knew God was in heaven, but didn’t have a firm belief that God was with Him here on earth. My prayer for him wasn’t for Salvation, he had that. My prayer for him was that he would feel the presence of Almighty God in his life and know that God isn’t just waiting for him past the sunset, but is walking with him today in the sunshine. Our God is a refuge, a fortress, a strong and mighty tower and many of us have felt His presence in times of trouble.

Verse 3 *Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence.* There is no doubt that God will snatch us away from literally the spring net of any seeking to ensnare us. God will deliver us from the plague that rushes upon us. We need not fear the unseen – God sees the unseen. We need not fear the speedy – God is quicker than the speedy. We need not fear the calamity or catastrophe – God is mightier than the catastrophe.

Verse 4*He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge;* Many of us have seen mother birds protect their young beneath her wings. In Matthew 23:37 Jesus *says, “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 chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!* You recall, of course, that in verse 1 we talked about that we must choose to sit down, to dwell. Jesus wanted to gather Jerusalem as a hen gathers the young… but they were not ***willing*.** They did not choose to dwell, to take refuge and abide. They did not choose to trust in the Truth of God.

The second part of verse 4 says - *His truth shall be your shield and buckler.* John 14:6 - *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* God’s truth is Jesus Christ. Ephesians 6:16 *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.* The only shield that will protect us is the shield of Faith in Jesus Christ.

This week let’s examine where we are in relation to God. Are we dwelling in His shadow? Are we trusting in His protection? Are we abiding in His fortress? Are we resting beneath His sheltering wings? When Jesus reaches to gather us, are we swept in and shielded by our faith or is He finding us unwilling and unfaithful? Are we witnessing so others may know this same protection and divine Presence? Be assured, the Holy Spirit still lives within us… nothing has changed. Christ our High Priest is still interceding for us… nothing has changed. God is still a very present help in trouble… He is God, He never changes. He is always present for us. We must each answer the question - how present am I for Him? Have I chosen to dwell in the presence of the Almighty?