



ABIDING IN HIM DURING CRISIS!

A Topical Message

Abiding in Him During Crisis!

Psalm 91:1-16

Sunday Morning Service

Sermon given on March 22, 2020



Pastor Rick Lancaster

Abiding in Him During Crisis!

Psalm 91:1-16

Opening Comments

- We just have to start with stating the obvious – we are living in unprecedented times in this country
- We are here at the church, just a very few of us
- Because we believe it is important that we continue to worship together, even if we can't do it within the same room
- I am very thankful that you chose to join us online and I pray this message is a blessing to you
- Turn to **Psalm 91**
- Today we will pause the study through 2 Corinthians
- Everyone is scrambling, trying to figure out what the church looks like when we can't gather together
- After all, community and fellowship are foundational to the faith
- What do you do when you can't do what you usually do?
- Well, what we are doing is accepting, adapting, and adjusting
- We are accepting the circumstances as they are
- We are adapting to the new reality
- And we are adjusting what we do so that we can still minister to the people God has called us to love in His name
- That summarizes what the church is doing
- We are still working out some of the specifics of that, and if you have filled out the Digital Connect Card you will be advised as those changes take place
- There is a link below in the description that will take you to that form
- What I want to share today is what we all need to be doing during this crisis
- And I can summarize that in a single word – Abide!
- As I look around the world right now, I see fear, panic, chaos
- What I want to share today is something that, if we embrace it, can make it so that we don't get caught up in the world's response

- This is a time for believers in Jesus Christ to shine with His love, hope, joy, peace, and truth
- And that can happen as we are abiding
- Let's pray and then we will get into it
- **Pray**

Teaching

- The title of this morning's message is **Abiding in Him During Crisis!**
- Let's start with a definition of the word 'abide'
- **Abide: to continue in a place, position, or situation.**
- In our text for today we are going to see that there is a benefit to abiding in the right place
- I have never hidden the reality that Christians are about as likely to experience difficult circumstances and situations as anyone else
- The current crisis is an example of that
- The Coronavirus does not discriminate between saved and unsaved people
- The impacts of the shutdowns are affecting people indiscriminately, whether they are Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, or atheists
- Psalm 91 is one of the anonymous psalms, though it is commonly believed that Moses wrote it near the beginning of the 38 years wandering in the wilderness
- The nation of Israel was being punished because they had rebelled against God and not trusted Him to keep His word
- They didn't know that it was going to be 38 years before they would be able to enter the Promised Land
- And we don't know how long this health crisis is going to last
- It won't be 38 years, it will be weeks, maybe months
- **Psalm 91:1-2**
- It all begins with a choice and a confession
- Moses wasn't focused on the wilderness and the consequences of wandering out there
- He was focused on the Lord who would be with them in the wilderness – He is my refuge and my fortress, my God!

- At the end of the 38 years Moses was able to say to Joshua

Deuteronomy 31:7-8

Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He *is* the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”

- Moses also made a confession of faith in God – ‘in Him I will trust’
- Listen, your mind will focus on what your mouth is saying
- The result of that choice and confession is to ‘dwell in the secret place of the Most High’
- That means – to live in the presence of God
- God is omnipresent – everywhere present, all the time
- There is never a moment when anyone is ever away from God’s presence
- But, it takes faith to live in His presence **Hebrews 11:6**
But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- To understand living in the presence of God, we must remember God is a God of relationships
- To the Jews of Moses’ time, this meant God would use His divine power lead, protect, and provide for them
- But for the Christian it means that and more **1 John 3:1**
Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!
- To the Jews, God’s relationship was national – to the Christian it is intimate, as a Father to His children
- But unlike human fathers, He is perfect, holy, loving, almighty
- Living in His presence means living with the reality that God is always watching over us – that we can trust Him – **1 Peter 5:6-7**
Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
- In God’s presence He will take care of you
- The psalm goes on to say what that will look like
- **Psalm 91:3-6**
- ‘pestilence’ – Coronavirus
- The closer you walk with God, the less afraid you will be

- In God's presence is the fullness of joy, an overwhelming sense of His love
- When my children were growing up, they knew that I loved them
- That knowledge comforted them – it didn't make the hard things go away, but they were able to endure them because I was there
- David felt that way about God's presence **Psalm 23:4**
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.
- 'the valley of the shadow of death' is where bad things are happening
- But David wasn't afraid – God was with David, and David was living in His presence
- No matter how bad it gets, God is still there
- **Psalm 91:7-8**
- COVID-19 is a pestilence and tragically people are dying because of it
- But that doesn't change the fact that even if everyone around was dying God can protect you
- **Psalm 91:9-13**
- God's sovereign creative power is able to protect us from anything, including a virus
- The angels serve God and when He assigns them to, they serve us by protecting us from the evil and dangers around us
- This psalm ends with a declaration from the Lord Himself
- **Psalm 91:14-16**
- That is a little hard to follow in the NKJV, so here it is in the NLT –
Psalm 91:14-16 NLT
The LORD says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation."
- Six times in three verses God says 'I will' – those are promises – God always keeps His promises
- But we should note that these are conditional promises – to those who set their love on Him and trust Him
- So the first step to dwell in His presence is to love God and trust Him
- Lets be honest, the world around us is freaking out

- And it is hard not to get caught up in the panic
- There is a good reason to be concerned, cautious, and prudent
- But if you are a Christian, there is no reason to panic
- California may be shut down, but Heaven isn't **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.
- I think now is a good time to believe that and do it!
- The stores may be running out of toilet paper and other things, but God's supplies never run out **Philippians 4:19**
And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
- People around you might be freaking out, panicking, and making decisions based in fear, but you don't have to **2 Timothy 1:7**
For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
- God has done all the heavy lifting so that you can abide in His presence
- Christ died on the cross so that you can be forgiven of your sins, giving you access to the very throne of the Most High God, not through religion or ceremony, but because of love through faith
- The moment Jesus saved you, the Holy Spirit moved into your life **1 Corinthians 3:16**
Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
- Then Paul prays that Christ lives in our heart through faith **Ephesians 3:16-17**
...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...
- To abide in God's presence unleashes His mighty power, grace, and love into your life
- It means to live as if God were right here right now
- It means that we know Him and His will through His Word
- It means that we love Him with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength
- It means that we trust Him with absolutely every aspect of our lives, especially those things that are threatened by the things of this world

- It means that no matter what is going on in the world around us, we look to Him for the answers and peace and hope we need
- Listen, very few people we know are likely to catch the Coronavirus, but we are all being impacted by it
- We have an opportunity to prove to the world around us that Jesus is real and that He is the only hope this world has
- We do that by ‘abiding under the shadow of the Almighty’
- Listen, the closer you draw near to God during this time, the brighter you will shine for Jesus
- And the better you will be able to go through the ‘valley of the shadow of death’
- Just a few things to think about before we close
- Verse 4 says “His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler.”
- Abiding in God must be on the basis of God’s revealed truth – the Bible – His Word
- I know some of you have more time on your hands – use some of it to get to know your God better
- Because God is a God of relationships, part of abiding with Him includes community with other believers
- That is complicated by the ruling forbidding gathering but doesn’t make community impossible – reach out to people in the church
- Fill out the Digital Connect Card and we will give you ideas for community during this crisis
- We are working on making all our Bible Studies online – get involved in one
- And then finally, remember, there are others who do not have the same hope you do, or are not as blessed as you are
- Make sure to reach out to others – We have two elderly couples across the street – I was blessed to eavesdrop on Kelly as she called to check on them and ask them if they needed anything from the store
- During this crisis – let’s not add to the panic – instead, let’s add the light of Jesus Christ as we abide in the presence of the Most High
- **Let’s pray!**