

PENTECOST MC WORSHIP SERVICE ONLINE

Psalm 91 and Pandemics (English)
Mark 5:25-34 "生命的盼望" (Mandarin)

DAY OF WORSHIP

03.05.2020

<http://pmc.org.sg/sundayworship>

Scripture Text: Psalm 91
Title: Psalm 91 and Pandemics
3rd May 2020

Sermon outline

Introduction: The various ways Psalm 91 was interpreted / used.

1. During COVID-19, the mentioned preacher said that *“Based on Psalm 91, The coronavirus will not kill you....”*.
2. In the fifth century, verses of Psalm 91 are inscribed into what was known as magic amulets or bowls. They were believed to be able to protect those who own them from demonic forces.
3. Satan himself seems to be familiar with Psalm 91 and used it to tempt Jesus (Luke 4)
4. To interpret Psalm 91, we need to understand what are Psalms.

What are Psalms?

5. Many of the Psalms are what the people of old said to God and about God; and on some occasions, God responded to the Psalmist and tell them about Himself.
6. *The key question: How do words spoken by the Psalmists to God function as a Word from God to us?*
7. Two characteristics of Psalms: They are metaphorical and different types of Hebrew poetry composed as songs. Therefore we cannot read or interpret Psalms like e.g. Paul’s letters to the churches.
8. The seven types of Hebrew poetry found in Psalms are:

La_____ ; Th_____ ; Hymns of _____ ;

Salvation-_____ ; Celebration and _____ ;

W_____ ; Songs of _____ (Psalm 91)

Psalm 91 – structure, context

9. The main idea of Psalm 91 is clear even we are to just look at its structure (2 halves, 56 Hebrews words in each half emphasizing “trust” and “salvation”)
10. The preacher believes that Psalm 91 **was written to encourage the Jewish people while they were in exile; or at least while they were in deep trouble**. This is mainly because of Psalm 91’s many references to the book of Deuteronomy (especially chapter 32).

Psalm 91 – interpretation and application

Psalm 91:1-2

11. God is our fortress and refuge. We are to “dwell” in Him. Dwelling does not mean go to God as and when we like it; but to stay close to Him.
12. We could be feeling discouraged staying home in our “physical fortress”; Psalm 91:1-2 gives the strong encouragement that God is our everlasting fortress and refuge.
13. We can fully place our trust in God to do what is beneficial to our souls. He offered it to His people in exile; He also offers to us as we live in isolation of one another.

Psalm 91: 3-13

14. While verses 1 and 2 talks about the Psalmist’s trust in God to be Israel’s refuge and fortress, verses 3-13 talks about **how** he expected God to do that in action. This is where it differs (between us and them).
15. God’s covenant with Israel was that if they choose to turn back to God, the Psalmist was sure that God will save them from their precarious situation.
16. Can we simply claim all that was said to Israel and apply it to us? **“Yes and No”**.

“No”: How we should not apply Psalm 91

17. Covenantal promises are contextual to the people in exile. We cannot simply claim them and derive the doctrine that as long as we believe in God, we will not be infected by coronavirus!
18. Danger of quoting Psalm 91 out of context:
 - Might not get ourselves tested if we develop symptoms since we do not believe that we can get infected. (Shincheonji example)
 - Misunderstanding about “faith”

“Yes”: How Psalm 91 applies to 21st century Christians

19. As reinforced by verses 1 and 2, God is still our refuge and fortress. He promise to be with us when we run into trouble.
 20. The timeless biblical truth we can have from Psalm 91 is that **as believers, we should choose to dwell in God and trust His will; even if all the things around us are falling apart.**
 21. **However, He will not do so with us as with Israel at Mount Sinai; He will do so with us through the New Covenant established in the blood of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.**
 22. Ours is the **New and BETTER Covenant! (Better: Restoration of what was lost; eternal life where there will be no more death, sin, tears).**
 23. So **MAKE IT COUNT** during this Circuit Breaker. Make it count for our souls!
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