



In the Shadow of the Almighty.

*“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” (Ps. 91:1)*

Call to Worship

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,

and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

(Ps 100)

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

May the words of our mouths

and the meditations of our hearts

be acceptable in your sight,

our Rock and our Redeemer.

Amen.

(Ps 19:14)

Psalm 84 (How Lovely is Your Dwelling Place)

How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts to me.
My heart cries out and even faints,
the courts of God to see.
The sparrow finds a place to nest,
beside your throne of grace.
Oh how I long to find my rest,
and dwell with you always.

A pilgrim now for all my days,
my gaze is set above.
The desert blooms with autumn rains,
You bless the ones you love.

Your people go
from strength to strength,
until we see your face.
Your eyes are turned to us in love,
You hear us when we pray.

I'd rather live for just one day
and gaze upon my Lord.
Than spend a lifetime far away
from where your praise is heard.
There's no good thing you will withhold,
from those who follow you,
O Lord my sun and mighty shield
my soul will trust in you.

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Confession and Assurance

“O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.” (Ps 139:1-4)

Have mercy on us, O God

According to your unfailing love;

According to your great compassion.

“‘Yet even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.’ Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.” (Joel 2:12-13)

So we will confess our sins against God, and against our neighbour.

Please kneel or be seated.

Prayer of Confession

Have mercy on us, O God,

according to your steadfast love;

according to your abundant mercy, blot out our transgressions.

Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin!

For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.

**Against you, you only, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgement.**

Hide your face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities.

Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

Cast us not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from us.

Restore to us the joy of your salvation, and uphold us with a willing spirit.

O Lord, open our lips, and our mouths will declare your praise.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or we would give it;

you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

Our sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;

a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Ps. 51)

Assurance of Pardon

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.” (Rom 5:8-9)

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it
mount of God's redeeming love.

Here I find my greatest treasure;
hither by thy help I've come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
bought me with his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.

*Robert Robinson, 1758
The Psalter Hymnal, 1987*

God's Word

First Reading: Lev 26:2-13

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsive Verse: Rom 8:31-39

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning,
is now, and shall be forever,
age after age.
Amen!**

Second Reading: Psalm 91, p. 497

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: In the Shadow of the Almighty (Mark Payne)

Psalm 91 (Abiding in the Almighty)

He who dwells within the shelter
of Jehovah, God Most High,
will abide in the Almighty,
in His shadow safely hide.
To the Lord I will declare,
"You are my God, my sure defense;
my strong Fortress and my Refuge,
all my hope and confidence;
my strong Fortress and my Refuge,
all my hope and confidence."

He will save you from the trapper
and from deadly pestilence,
with His wings surround and hide you,
shield you with His faithfulness.
Nightly terrors shall not harm you,
nor the arrow's flight by day;
dread disease and bleak destruction
shall not fill you with dismay;
dread disease and bleak destruction
shall not fill you with dismay.

Though a thousand die beside you,
thousands fall at your right hand,
it shall not approach to slay you;
in disaster you will stand.

You will see the wicked punished,
for your Refuge is the Lord.
Evil will not come to meet you,
nor a plague find your abode;
evil will not come to meet you,
nor a plague find your abode.

Mighty angels charged to serve you
will come swiftly to your aid.
They will guard you as you journey,
keeping watch on all your ways.
lest a stone should make you stumble,
they will lift you in their hands.
You will tread down fearsome lions,
on the serpent safely stand;
you will tread down fearsome lions,
on the serpent safely stand.

"I will save him," says Jehovah,
"for he knows and loves My name.
I will set his soul in safety,
lift him up from death and shame.
When he calls Me, I will answer,
in distress be ever near;
length of days shall be his comfort;
My salvation will appear;
length of days shall be his comfort;
My salvation will appear."

*Words: © 2016 Esther Arnold.
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The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

After each petition:

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

The Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

All baptised Christians who trust in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to lead a new life by God's mercies, are welcome at this table. If you do not profess faith in Christ, simply allow the bread and wine to pass by, and reflect on what is taking place.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Please join in saying the Sanctus ("The Holy", based on Isaiah 6:3)

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died;
Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Heavenly Father, we offer you eternal praise and thanks that you have so blessed us poor sinners, that we would be drawn into the communion of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom you have delivered to death for us, and whom you have given us as the food and drink of life eternal. We humbly beg you, heavenly Father, to keep us as faithful members of your church, to strengthen us by your Spirit, and to draw us together in love and unity, that we may serve through those good works which you have prepared for us to do through Jesus Christ our Lord, and for His glory, Amen.

Gifts and Offerings

Gifts and offerings may be placed in the offertory box at the back of the hall.
"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you." (Deut 16:17)

Jerusalem the Golden

Jerusalem the golden,
with milk and honey blessed,
beneath your contemplation
sink heart and voice oppressed.
I know not, O I know not,
what joys await us there,
what radiance of glory,
what bliss beyond compare.

They stand, those halls of Zion,
all jubilant with song,
and bright with many an angel,
and all the martyr throng;
The Prince is ever in them,
the daylight is serene;
the pastures of the blessed
are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David,
and there, from care released,
the shout of those who triumph,
the song of those who feast.
And they, who with their Leader,
have conquered in the fight,
forever and forever,
are clad in robes of white.

O sweet and blessed country,
the home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country,
that eager hearts expect
Jesus, in mercy brings us
to that dear land of rest;
who are, with God the Father
and Spirit ever blessed!

*Bernard of Cluny (1145)
Translator: J. M. Neale
(Rev. 21-22)*

Benediction

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**In the Name of Christ,
Amen.**

Sermon Outline

In the Shadow of the Almighty

God Establishes the King (and us in Him)

God Assures the King (and us in Him)

God Delivers the King (and us in Him)

Notices for Calendars & Prayers

Please diarise and pray for the items below:

Sun 7th Sep	Morning Worship	10am
Sat 27th Sep	Wedding of Prince & Kesha at TCC. All warmly invited	1pm
Thu 11th Sep	Psalm Sing	7pm

Introduction

Ps 90 (the basis of the BCP's "Order for the Burial of the Dead") with its message of *"Make peace with God; death awaits you"* is important context for Ps 91, which is arguably the most encouraging in the entire Psalter (Spurgeon). Consider v. 2, 3, 7, 19. But is that really your experience? Does it sound so outlandish that you skim over it? Or is the problem that you lack faith?

It's essential that we see that Ps 91, above all, is about Israel's Messiah (compare Lev. 26:2-13), and about Israel's King (compare Ps 21). And it's confirmed by, of all beings, the evil one, when (in Mt 4 and Lk 4) he quotes Ps 91:11-12 and challenges Jesus to prove he is the one, which Jesus of course refuses to do, to *"put the Lord to the test"*. What's striking is a) that Satan acknowledges that Ps 91 is about the Messiah-King, the Son of God, b) that Jesus does not deny it applies to Him, c) that Satan does not deny that either. His aim is not denial of the truth. His aim is that Jesus would succumb to temptation. But Jesus, as the covenant head of his people, does what Israel never did. He is faithful through his wilderness testing, and the promises of Ps. 91 therefore apply above all to him.

But not only to him. Also to those who are in him. (cf. Ps 91:11 & Heb 1:14; Ps 91:13 & Lk 10:19; 2 Tim 4:17). See how Rom 8:31-39 echoes the truths of Ps 91. We have the firstfruits of these promises in Christ ((Eph 1:13-14).

God Establishes the King (v. 1-2)

This is the Messiah-King testifying to his relationship with God. v. 1 is the headline truth, v. 2 is what he therefore does. The repetition of phrases is noteworthy and drives home the point that the only true place of shelter is not in any temple or with any man, but with the Most High. That is where we can *abide, dwell, be at home! God Establishes the King (and us in Him)!*

God Assures the King (v. 3-13)

We're not 100% sure who is speaking, but various clues point to another voice, that of a Prophet. His message is that 1) *Nothing Will Destroy You* (consider v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6), because 2) *The Lord, the Most High Will Protect You* (consider v. 9, 10, 11, 12).

That raises some important questions.

1. Who are these promises for?

As already stated, they're for the Messiah-King first and foremost. But also for those in him. He will gain the victory, *“trample the serpent underfoot”* (cf. Gen 3:15) and see off *“our adversary the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion.”* (1 Pet 5:8).

2. Are these promises absolute?

No. The opening words tell us there is a need to run to the shadow of the Almighty. The closing words (v. 15) tells us that there is a (desperate) *“call in need”*, and a need for the Lord to *“be with him in trouble.”* Life will clearly not *“be a breeze.”* But as Paul assures us in Rom 8, *“Who shall separate us...?”*

The life of Jim Elliott, and the memoir written by his widow Elisabeth, *“In the Shadow of the Almighty”*, testifies to the fact that life on this earth will be one of trouble followed by blessing. Undoubtedly she knew that the mere fact that Jim had died, did not mean that he had left the *“Shadow of the Almighty.”*

It meant that he was kept there.

God Delivers the King (v. 14-16)

Here God himself speaks. The Messiah-King, God says, he *“holds fast in love.”* He is protected... *“because he knows my name.”*

To *know* the name of God is to *know* God deeply, personally, intimately. How can we sinners possibly come to *know* him in that sense? Only by one who already, *“knows his name.”* And so Jesus in John 17, his High Priestly Prayer prays to God the Father. He says, Father *“⁶ I have manifested (declared and shown) your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world... ¹¹ I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name which you have given me...”* And he ends the prayer with these words: *“I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”*

Jesus' desire, his ask of the Father, is that you get to know his name, to know Him, and that you are eternally held secure in Him, by Him! How could the prayer of God the Father, to God the Son, ever be denied. The elect are secure—that prayer is answered! He *“holds fast”*, for us!