



**“He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust.”**

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Shall rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, “*He is my refuge and my
fortress;*
My God, in Him I will trust.” Ps91:1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ozlCzOfiL8>

The word has come for us from God:
**who promises to shelter us under the wings of
hope and grace.**

The word has come to us from Jesus:
**who encourages us to remember the good
news we have received.**

The word flows to us from the Spirit:
**who reminds us to place our hope and trust in
God.**

I don't know about you but in these days, hope and grace are not always at the forefront of my mind - not always dwelling in the shelter of the Most High. Feelings of sadness, loss and disappointment can leave us feeling hurt and angry, with questions and doubts about the future coming from all directions, affecting us as individuals, families and for us - church family too. Remembering (living out) the good news we have received is not always easy! Take a few moments to dwell and pray this prayer, bringing yourself before God, under whose wings we find hope and grace.

**When we fall into the traps
of groundless fears,
you deliver us.**

**When an epidemic of worry
threatens to overcome us,
you protect us.**

**When harmful words
are flung at us,
you answer our cries for help.
**Gracious God,
we worship you.****

**When our lives crumble,
you urge us to buy hope's fields.
**When we are tempted by wealth,
you point us to those
who have nothing but share all.
When we are eager
to grasp senseless lies,
you wrap our hands****

**around God's promises.
Servant of the poor,
we follow you.**

**When the world silences our hope,
you give us the words to make
the good confession of faith.
When we have lost our way
and can no longer endure
the emptiness of our lives,
you satisfy us from the abundance
of God's grace and joy.
**Sheltering Spirit,
we seek your peace.****

**God in Community, Holy in One,
our Refuge, our Trust, our Hope,
we lift our prayer to you
as Jesus has taught us, saying,
Our Father . . .**

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 honour them.
I will reward them with a long life
and give them my salvation.”
Ps 91:15-16

Such promises are ours when we claim them for ourselves, when we place ourselves under the wings of God and dwell in His presence, waiting patiently for 'salvation' to come and rescue us from all that draws us away from His refuge.

Why, then, O Jacob's tribes, would you ever complain? And my chosen Israel, why would you say, "Yahweh isn't paying attention to my situation. He has lost all interest in what happens to me." Don't you know? Haven't you been listening? Yahweh is the one and only everlasting God, the Creator of all you can see and imagine! He never gets weary or worn out. His intelligence is unlimited; he is never puzzled over what to do! He empowers the feeble and infuses the powerless with increasing strength. Even young people faint and get exhausted; athletic ones may stumble and fall. But those who wait for Yahweh's grace will experience divine strength. They will rise up on soaring wings and fly like eagles, run their race without growing weary, and walk through life without giving up" Isa 40: 27-31

SB: 691

**WHEN you feel weakest, dangers surround,
Subtle temptations, troubles abound,
Nothing seems hopeful, nothing seems glad,
All is despairing, everything sad:**

*Keep on believing, Jesus is near;
Keep on believing, there's nothing to fear;
Keep on believing, this is the way;
Faith in the night as well as the day.*

**If all were easy, if all were bright,
Where would the cross be, and where the fight?**

**But in the hardness, God gives to you
Chances of proving that you are true.**

**God is your wisdom, God is your might,
God's ever near you, guiding aright;
He understands you, knows all you need;
Trusting in Him you'll surely succeed.**

**Let us press on then, never despair,
Live above feeling, victory's there;
Jesus can keep us so near to Him
That nevermore our faith shall grow dim.**

As I speak with people and listen to what is being said in both words and emotions, my heart is lifted by the desire and longing to physically meet together again in Worship, yet saddened that at this point we cannot do so, something I suspect many of you are feeling too! My desire and hope is very much, that when safe enough to do so, we will come together again, a family reunited with our stories to share and joy to be enjoyed, as we celebrate the love we have for God and one another, which is experienced most profoundly in loving Christian community. We cannot predict the movement of the virus, we don't know when restrictions will be further eased, so we cannot be sure when this will be but as we can, we will work towards this in some way, perhaps not quite as we knew it, but in a way that allows us to safely gather once more to dwell in the shelter of the Most High - together!

Now faith brings our hopes into reality and becomes the foundation needed to acquire the things we long for. It is all the evidence required to prove what is still unseen. Heb 11:1

So let us not grow weary, but press on then in faith, holding the vision in our hearts,
until our hope becomes reality!

**Holy Spirit:
With astonishment,
we see that you renew our
strength
constantly.
Allow us not to forget
your presence,
Even in adversity.**

**And,
in our turn,
we will renew our gratefulness
and we will sing
for your love.
Amen**