

Security in the Fray
Psalm 125:1-5
Halifax: September 18, 2011

Introduction

As most of you know, my regular sermon series at present is in the book of Acts.

- As most of you also know, it is our custom to adopt a song for a few weeks that goes along with our regular sermon series.
 - For the past several weeks, we have been singing Psalm 67 in connection with our study of the first two chapters of Acts.
 - It is a Psalm in which we express our yearning for God to bless us so that we will be a blessing to others!
 - We have seen, in Acts 1-2, how Jesus promised to pour out His Spirit on His disciples after He ascended into heaven,
 - and how He told them that He would use them to spread His kingdom to the ends of the earth!
 - They were blessed in order to be blessing!
 - And we saw how our LORD made the outpouring of the Spirit very visible,
 - accompanying it with signs before the Jews who had gathered at Jerusalem from all over the world for the feast of Pentecost!
 - And we saw how Peter preached Jesus and the resurrection to them and how there were 3000 who heard and who repented and were baptised and added to the church!
 - And we saw how that fledgling church lived beautifully together in fellowship as His people and how they continued to bear witness of Jesus in Jerusalem.
 - We were given a picture of the church as it ought to be and as indeed it will be when our Lord completes His work in us!

And while we saw that there were many on the outside who were impressed with the church such that the church found favour in their eyes,

- we must by no means suppose that the church continued without opposition for long!
 - As soon as we move into chapter 3, we will see that the authorities rise up against the church to stamp it out.
 - And not only that, but we will see in chapter 5 that hypocrites arise even from within the church!
 - How is the church ever to stand against these attacks and with this hypocrisy?
- And if you know anything about church history,
 - You know that there are many who have sought to destroy the church—
 - if not with the sword, then with the tongue!

- There are enemies within and enemies without...
 - Yet the church has stood these 2000 years!
 - How did they do it in the face of all these attacks?
- And consider our own day.
 - Still, we have many enemies.
 - Many of our brothers and sisters are imprisoned and tortured and murdered all around the world.
 - We see many enemies who write and speak against what we believe and who mock us and who laugh at us.
 - We even see many in the very leadership of the church who attack the truth with bitter hatred.
 - A recent study found that only 17.3 per cent of Christian Colleges define the authority of the Bible to mean that you are to believe everything it says!
 - How can the church to go on in the face of all these attacks?
- We are secure because our gracious Lord Jesus preserves us from destruction!
 - We will see how He preserves His church from all kinds of destruction in the book of Acts—not only in these next few chapters, but all the way through!
 - We will see Him giving them boldness to go on despite their enemies.
 - We will see Him using various means to restrain their enemies from wiping them out.
 - We will see Him exposing hypocrites and purging them from the church.
 - All of things are patterns of the work that He continues through the ages to preserve His people.
 - As we look at this in Acts, we need to be encouraged that He who has always preserved us will continue to preserve us today!
 - As we hear sermons about this from Acts over the next few weeks,
 - it is only fitting for us to remember the security that we have in Him as the Lord of glory who ever defends us and to praise Him for it!
 - Psalm 125 gives us suitable words to bring before Him as we remember and rest ourselves in the security we have!
 - Oh how we need to encourage one another with this Psalm.
 - Listen now as I proclaim this Psalm to you today!
 - Prepare yourselves to sing it over the next few weeks with joy and assurance in the security that belongs to you if you are trusting in the Lord!

TRANS> See in the first place...

I. How secure you are if you trust in the Lord!

A. Verse 1 says that you are like Mt. Zion which cannot be moved!

- **Ps 125:1: Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, Which cannot be moved, but abides forever.**

1. This is talking about the physical mountain itself!

a. This is one of the Psalms of Ascent which were sung as the Jews made their way up to Jerusalem to worship...

- As they approached the city, they saw the city and the temple there upon Mount Zion.
- How firm it was! How secure! How permanent!

b. Although the temple as well as the city of Jerusalem were torn down several times—

- Mount Zion itself always stood firm!
- It always remained—strong, stable, and secure!

2. This is the security that belongs to all of you who are in the LORD!

a. He is the LORD!

1) This is His covenant name—Yahweh!

- When we find the word Lord in the Old Testament with all upper case letters, it shows us that it translates the name Yahweh.
- Out of reverence, the Jews did not pronounce this name and so when they did the Greek version of the OT, they substituted the word kurios which is the Greek word that means Lord.
- But the name Yahweh means “I am that I am!”
- It speaks of God as the self-existing, self-sufficient, eternal unchanging one!
- It is the name above every name before which every knee will bow!
- It is the name of the one from whom all things have their being!
- It is the name of the one who holds the destiny of all things in His hands.

2) **LORD** is also the name of the One who made a gracious covenant in which He swore to be God to all who trust in Him!

- He swore by His own name because there was no greater name by which He could swear.
- And then to keep His promise He came into this world as man so He could represent us—God in human flesh!

- And then He went to the cross to make a complete offering for our sins and His Father accepted His offering and raised Him from the dead!
 - And then He was given the name Lord—Kurios in Greek—
 - Kurios—the name that was used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for Yahweh!
 - The name that the early church used when they confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord!
 - The name the Father used when He exalted Him and declared that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is LORD.
 - This was the confession of the earth church and that is our confession today...
 - Jesus Christ is Lord! He is Yahweh!
 - Cezar had claimed to be Lord, but the Christians refused to call Him Lord.
 - They knew that Jesus was LORD and that the kingdoms of this world belong to Him.
 - This is the One the church is trusting in for her protection!
- b. Verse 2 says that He Himself surrounds you as the mountains surround Jerusalem—forever...
- This one who is LORD surrounds you the way those mountains do...
 - The mountains around Jerusalem are not like a wall, but they are more like sentinels or guards who have been posted—each in its place around Jerusalem, watching over it.
 - That is how LORD surrounds His people forever!
 - He is there all round them to keep them, to bless them, to make them absolutely safe and secure.
 - That is why you, church of Jesus, are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved.
 - The LORD of glory is there for you, looking out for you, keeping you forever safe in His grace!
 - Even though the very mountains be cast into the sea, you will remain safe and secure because the everlasting LORD is with you.
 - Take comfort!

B. What security there is if He is yours because He is LORD!

1. Consider what this means to have Him who is LORD as your own LORD!

a. First of all, it means that you are justified forever!

- Your sins are completely forgiven.
 - They were laid on Him when He went to the cross.
 - He was charged with them.
 - He bore the shame, the pain, and the guilt for them all and the Father accepted His offering and raised Him for our justification.
- That means that in Him, your sins will never be charged against you.
 - That is the best security in all the world!
 - It is sin un-atoned, not provided for, that cuts men off from God and that at last sinks them into the depths of hell where there is no recovery!
 - But in Christ—if you are in Him—you are forgiven forever!
 - You are as secure in righteousness as Jesus Himself is because you have your righteousness from Him!
 - He is the LORD of glory who was crucified for you!

TRANS> But there is yet more security... more security in Him...

b. If He is yours, it also means that you are alive in Him forever!

- We have seen in Acts how He poured out the Holy Spirit on all who believe...
 - And the Holy Spirit changes us forever!
 - He shows us our sin and our need of Christ,
 - and He shows us how Christ is everything we need so that we come to Him and trust in Him and follow Him.
 - And the Spirit abides with us forever, giving us a new heart and a new life that grows out of it.
 - He causes us to delight in following Christ and in doing His will—and to delight in Him as our LORD.
 - And then we are sealed so that we can never reject our Lord Jesus—never!
- We may stumble, we may fall into grievous sins—but we will never utterly reject our Lord because the Holy Spirit keeps us.
 - He never allows the seed of life to become completely extinguished,
 - and soon He rekindles the fire so that our love for our Saviour is renewed.

- In this way, we are kept by the power of God through faith—by the person of the Spirit who exercises in us the same power that raised Christ from the dead.
- That is security—you will never utterly depart from Him!
 - You cannot sin to apostasy—the seed of new life remains.

TRANS> So we have seen two aspects to our security—

- We are justified forever by Jesus—
 - We are sanctified forever by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus gives us
 - But that is still not all there is to our security in the LORD!
- c. We are also established in firm hope—in our risen LORD!
- He is raised and He is LORD of the resurrection.
 - At the last day, He will return with glory and with all His holy angels...
 - And all who are justified and sanctified will go to meet Him.
 - Whether you are in the grave or in the world, you will go to meet Him if you belong to Him.
 - You will be raised to glorious new life—completely free from sin, completely free from death and all infirmity...
 - And the whole earth will be restored so that there is no more curse.
 - All things will be made new and then we who are His will live in glory with Him as our king forever and ever!
 - You look at this world now and you see evil rulers and you see the curse that extends to nature itself,
 - but Jesus Christ is LORD and He is coming back!
 - He is LORD now and nothing is running out of control!
 - He is working out His purposes in the earth for that glorious last day.
 - He is gathering all His elect from the ends of the earth.
 - And then there will be glory!

TRANS> You are secure, if you trust in Him, because He is the LORD of all and this is what He is doing!

- Your forgiveness is secure, your new life is secure, and your future is secure!
 - You are justified, sanctified, and have a glorious inheritance awaiting you
 - You are secure in these blessings and you cannot be moved because the one you are trusting in is LORD of all—even Jesus who has been revealed.

2. But of course you must *actually trust Him* if you are to have these blessings!
 - a. The Psalm does not say that *everyone* is like Mount Zion—it says that *those who trust in the LORD* are like Mount Zion.
 - 1) There is a great difference between the condition of those who trust in Him and those who are spoken about later, in verse 5, who turn aside to their own crooked ways...
 - or those in who are called “the workers of iniquity.”
 - They are not at all like Mount Zion which cannot be moved.
 - 2) They are more like the sand that is blown about by every wind of doctrine.
 - They have not settled upon the Lord.
 - They may have thought about Him, they may have considered His claims.
 - Perhaps they have even thought that someday they might trust in Him...
 - But they have failed to settle down with Him, to rest in Him.
 - Their faith is not fixed.
 - b. What a contrast there is for them!
 - Until you are settled upon Jesus, you are not settled upon anything that can keep you or hold you...
 - An oak tree is firm only because it is holding on to something much bigger than it is—it is planted in the earth.
 - What if you planted it on the top of a dog house—
 - It would have very little to hold on to—it would not be settled—it would topple over.
 - That is why Peter, in our New Testament scripture reading, said that we are kept by the power of God through faith...
 - We are firm because we are holding on to that which can keep us.
 - In 1 Peter, we also saw we are secure because of the word of God—the gospel that is preached to us—is firm and secure.
 - Peter quoted Isaiah and said,
 - “The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of God abides forever!”
 - And then he tells us that the word is the gospel that is preached.
 - If you have hold of Jesus as He is promised in the gospel,
 - That is what makes you secure...

- You are planted in Him and that means that you will live as long as He does!
 - Not because you have such a great grip, but because He has a hold of your roots so that you cannot be shaken.
- c. So what are you trusting in?
 - The word translated *trust* in verse 1 is *batak*—
 - It means to rest in—to settle upon something for your security.
 - To trust in the LORD means that you have come to settle upon Christ as your LORD and Saviour and have no where else to go.
 - You are not trusting in your cleverness or your goodness or your good looks...
 - You are not trusting in man or in the horoscope or in your country or in your wealth...
 - You are not trusting in your future or your past.
 - You are trusting in the LORD who made heaven and earth!
 - The LORD of glory who came to earth and died for us!
 - The LORD who was raised again for our justification!
 - The LORD who is reigning at the right hand of the Father until He makes all His enemies His footstool!
 - If you have come to rest upon Him, you are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved but ever shall abide!
 - The LORD surrounds you from this time forth and forevermore as the mountains surround Jerusalem!

TRANS> But do not suppose that His keeping of you means that He keeps you from the fray!

- It is not that there will be no battles to face or that all battles will be won with ease!
 - He does not set you off in a sealed room away from every trial and temptation.
 - If that is what you think His keeping entails, you are greatly mistaken.
- Oh no! It is far more interesting than that!
 - The Lord's keeping is a dynamic keeping in which you experience many a conflict and in which you must sweat and wrestle and labour and weep!
 - Yet, you are still just as secure in His care as if you had already departed to be with Christ...
 - You may not always *feel* that secure, but objectively, you are every bit as secure—

II. Look at how His keeping of you is described—it is dynamic!

- A. First, you are told that the wicked's domination will not continue forever!
- In verse 3, it says:
 - **Ps 125:3: For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, Lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity.**
1. That almost sounds like that the LORD will let the wicked rule over you right up until you reach the breaking point!
 - a. Just when we are so worn down under oppressive ungodly government that we are about to turn away from God's service...
 - Just when we are about to reach our hands to iniquity...
 - to be drawn into their sinful ways by their constant enticements...
 - or to be driven from our confession by their scorn and their persecutions...
 - just then—He will set us free of them.
 - b. Let me explain the words...
 - The **sceptre of wickedness** refers to rule of the ungodly—the rod of oppressive authority.
 - That it will not **rest** means that it will not settle in or remain permanently.
 - Israel was in Egypt for 400 years, then the LORD broke the sceptre of Egypt.
 - The **land allotted to the righteous** refers to the Lord's inheritance for His people—the portion that He has given to us—
 - It comes from the parcelling out of land by the casting of lots.
 - so the idea is that the wicked are ruling over God's people—ruling over them in the land that He had given to them...
 - This happened, of course, when the Assyrians, and then the Babylonians, and then the Greeks and then the Romans ruled over Israel!
 - It was also the case when wicked kings who were among the covenant people ruled over the Lord's heritage—
 - kings like Ahab or Manasseh or Jeroboam.
 - And it has been the case for the Christian church as well...
 - From the very start, there was the wicked rule of the apostate Jews who had crucified Christ and who then persecuted the church...
 - And then there were the terrible Roman persecutions that had to be endured.
 - How many Christians today are under ungodly governments that persecute them for following Jesus!

- And not only that, but there are many apostate Christian leaders who have been given authority over God's people...
 - There have been the popes who usurp the authority of Christ and impose their own way of salvation and worship...introducing all kinds of superstition.
 - There have been the wicked protestant leaders who reject the authority of God's word so that they can promote their own ways, and who scoff at those who believe.
 - The sceptre of the wicked has often been upon God's people!

c. But you see the promise...

1) The promise is that the sceptre will not rest so long that **the righteous will reach out their hands to iniquity.**

- The idea is that it will not remain so that they break down under the reign of the wicked and turn from their service to Him.

2) But do we not see this happen in mammoth proportion?

- Do we not see Roman Catholic churches full of unbelief and superstition?
- Do we not see protestant churches full of scepticism and far from the gospel that saves?
- Have there not been many who caved in when persecution came;
 - what Jesus called the stony ground where the word is quickly believed but has no roots so that they turn away?
- Do we not see people who are afraid to confess Christ because of the mocking that would come or because of family pressures?

TRANS> Well how is it then that our LORD says that He will not allow the sceptre to rest so long that the righteous will reach out their hands to iniquity?

3) It is this...

- It is not the **righteous** who have stretched out their hands to iniquity—it is only those who **profess** to belong to Christ.
 - The righteous are tested and proven by persecution... and by temptations and enticements... to see if they will turn away...
 - But they do not because the LORD will not allow the righteous to be moved.
 - He will not allow them to be tempted above what they are able.
 - It is only the false sons in the kingdom who are cast out.
 - Once we have our righteousness in Christ, we are kept by the power of God through faith until the last day.

- Jesus told us repeatedly that there would be wheat and tares...
 - good ground and stony ground...
 - good ground and thorny ground...
 - those entering by the narrow way and those entering by the broad way...
 - those producing fruit and those not producing fruit...
 - the elect, who persevere to the end, and others not elect whose love will grow cold.
 - those who continue in His word and are His disciples indeed, and those who turn away.
 - It is the righteous who will not be brought to the breaking point.
 - It is for them that the days of persecution are shortened so that they will endure to the end.

2. What a wonderful promise this is!

a. Our LORD cares for us!

- He watches over us to keep us and to preserve us.
- He makes sure that nothing comes that will destroy us in our present state of grace.
 - We may deny our Lord as Peter did...
 - We may fall into grievous sin as David did...
 - But we will not reject Him as Judas did and as Simon Magnus did.

b. The battle will be fierce and the pressures will be great at times...

- But if we are trusting in our LORD we will only learn from it how strong He is—how able He is to keep us and preserve us.
- And our love for Him and trust in Him will only increase—not decrease...
 - because when the fiery furnace is lit and we are threatened by it,
 - we are forced decided between our Lord and escape from the fiery furnace!
 - And if we have Jesus, we will at last choose Him!
 - We will come to see that it is far better to be cast into the fiery furnace with Him than to be anywhere else without Him!
 - Before the test came, we did not have to look at our LORD so closely—to consider Him and how worthy He is of our devotion...
 - but when we are forced to make a choice—then we look at His beauty and we see that He is much more than we ever thought!
 - Like Job, we say, “I heard about you, but now I see you!”
 - That is what affliction does for the righteous!

- But don't misunderstand!
 - The struggle is very real!
 - There are times when you may indeed feel like giving up under the pressure...
 - but you just won't be able to do it at last.
 - You will come away wounded and sore—but loving Him better than ever before!
 - We learn to love Him in this fallen world!
 - That is one of the reasons that we are left here for a time.
 - When the pressure is on, we bear much fruit!
 - In 2 Cor 4, Paul says that our trials are working greater glory for us!
 - **2 Cor 4:16-18: Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**
- c. Be sure of it little Christian! suffering Christian!
- The sceptre of wickedness will not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity...
 - It will come and it will remain for what seems a very long time,
 - but it will not remain there—it will be lifted.
 - There will always be an end to their rule...
 - Job's sufferings came to an end.
 - David's sufferings under Saul came to an end.
 - Joseph's sufferings in Egypt came to an end.
 - Paul's sufferings for Jesus came to an end.
 - The Roman persecution ended.
 - Even Jesus' sufferings on the cross came to an end...
 - And so will yours!
 - Your Father has no intention of snuffing you out by the rod of wickedness.
 - Affliction is the diamond dust He uses to polish His jewels.
 - He is preparing you for glory.
 - You are as secure as Mount Zion which cannot be moved but remains forever!

- You are absolutely surrounded by His protecting love and grace.
- **1 Peter 1:6-9: In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.**

TRANS> But what are you to do in the middle of the battle?

- The Psalm goes on very naturally to show you what to do when you and your brothers are being oppressed by persecution...
- It is just Peter and John and the disciples do in Acts when persecution comes...

B. You must cry out to the LORD in the heat of the conflict!

- You must cry out for yourself and for the church as in verse 4:
 - **Ps 125:4: Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, And to those who are upright in their hearts.**
 - This is the cry of the righteous who are hanging on to the Lord under trial and temptation!

1. You will say to me—but who is the Psalmist praying for?

- a. Does the Psalmist not say elsewhere, “There is none good, no not one,” so who is this prayer for?
 - This is for those who have been made good by the LORD.
 - We are not good in ourselves...
 - even after our conversion, we are all the more aware that in our flesh—what we are apart from God’s grace—there is no good thing.
 - But In Jesus we are a new creation.

b. Have we not already seen that when we trust in our LORD...

- The One who made heaven and earth...
- The One who came to earth and took human flesh...
 - The One who went to the cross to atone for our sin...
 - The One who was raised from death to give us life...
- I say, when you trust *Him*, He gives you new life!
 - He baptises you with His Holy Spirit so that you repent and become His disciple forever!
 - The Spirit connects you to Jesus and His sacrifice and in Christ you are good—not yet perfected—but good...
 - given true life that abides forever!

- given a heart to follow your Lord forever!
- by grace, made a true disciple of Jesus who continues in His word and whose love for Him is not snuffed out.
- by grace given a new heart and a new life that will not depart from Him.
 - These are the ones you pray for when you say:
 - **Ps 125:4: Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, and to those are upright in their hearts.**

2. Consider what a simple request this is!

a. Simply “do good” to them!

- It is the prayer of one who recognises that the LORD knows just what to do for His people!
 - He knows how much they can bear!
 - He knows what afflictions they need!
 - He knows what grace and support they need!
 - He knows what encouragement they need from their brothers!
 - He knows when they need relief!

b. And so you just express your trust to Him for the church in the furnace of affliction and ask Him to do good!

- And you know that He will because He loves His people!
 - But He wants you to ask!

3. Indeed, you must ask!

a. If you are elect, you must ask—you cannot *not* ask!

- You pray because you have to pray...
 - Not simply that God told you to pray and you know it is your duty so you do it... not that kind of “have to”...
 - But that you pray because you are driven to it.
 - You know that unless the Lord does good—unless He provides what His people need—the church will indeed perish!
 - You pray as one who knows this and who must have His help.
 - You are more desperate for His help than a crack addict is for His crack!
 - You must have it or you will die—the church will die!

b. This is the prayer of Jacob when he wrestled with the LORD until his was lame and still would not let go until he was heard!

1) That is when his name was changed from Jacob to Israel.

- He prevailed with God—

- His family—the church in whom were all the promises—was threatened with destruction... so Jacob prayed.
 - He gave up on his schemes and prayed and would not desist until he was heard.
- 2) How I wish that all Christian parents would pray like that for their children!
- That when we see them in danger to the pressures of this world and its enticements that we would drop to our knees and plead!
 - That is the most important thing you can do as a parent!
 - Pray as if their souls depended upon God working!
 - Pray as if that were so because *it is so!*
 - If the LORD does not do good to them, they will perish!
- 3) And pray that way for yourself and for the whole church when we are under pressure by enticement and by persecution!
- God must work in us or we will perish!
 - He must do good or we will not go on in His ways.
- c. Praying is a true mark of election.
- It is not a formula, but it is the outworking of faith...
 - It is the outworking of the faith of the one who realises He has nothing else to hang onto but the LORD—nothing else to trust in...
 - And that if God does not keep him, he will not be kept.

TRANS> So you see the dynamic way that keeps us—

- Not insulated from all troubles—but right in the furnace of affliction...
 - So that we are forced to cry out to Him for our very continuance as His people!
 - But there is something that makes this whole dynamic all the more dynamic...
 - and that is that we see many disciples who do turn away from the LORD.

C. You see that the Psalm frankly acknowledges that there are many who turn away.

- Verse 5 says:
 - **Ps 125:5: As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, The LORD shall lead them away with the workers of iniquity.**
1. *Such as turn aside to their crooked ways!*
- This means that there will be those who walk with us in the church,
 - who are baptised in His name,
 - who worship with us and partake of the Lord's supper,
 - who give to us and receive from us...

- and then forsake it all—turn aside from our blessed Lord!
- As David says in Psalm 91,
 - **Ps 91:7: A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you.**
 - These are his companions who were fighting with him—at his right hand!
 - There was Absalom, David’s own son who turned from the Lord.
 - There was Ahithophel, David’s once trusted counsellor who betrayed him.

TRANS> It is a painful thing when those we walked with in the house of the Lord reject Him.

2. But you must not let it shake your security in the LORD.
 - You are still just as secure as Mount Zion which cannot be moved, surrounded by the LORD Himself as your protector forever.
 - These who turn away are said to turn to their crooked ways.
 - They were never genuinely in the LORD’s way as we have already seen.
 - They are false sons, hypocrites, pretenders who never know our Jesus.
 - Their way is a crooked way, so sooner or later they turn to it.
 - So seeing them fall away should not cause you to think that you might also fall away—not if you have come to Jesus.
 - It will not happen to you if you are indeed trusting in the LORD.
 - But this does make us see the reality of the battle—
 - It makes us see that the battle is such that apart from the LORD’s keeping grace we would fall away!
 - And may I add to that, apart from our prayers, we would fall away...
 - Prayer is truly essential—
 - And for the elect, it is real—it is a real taking hold of God...
 - And it obtains real answers and real help.
 - God has made it part of the equation of the dispensing of His keeping grace.
 - 3. You see here that God deliberately turns the hypocrites away...
 - a. It says that He leads them away with the workers of iniquity.
 - You see, it is like this—they have their crooked ways that they are attached to.
 - They have never really come to the LORD to walk in His ways.

- So they become a problem in the church because they are always wanting to follow these crooked ways and they are discouraging others.
 - Sometimes this is not at all evident, but it is there because their heart is not really with the Lord at all.

- b. And you see that God will not have people like that in His church forever, just as He will not allow the wicked to rule over His people forever.
 - He promises to lead them away with the workers of iniquity—with those who never knew the Lord.
 - He leads them away so that they will not corrupt His church.
 - He purges us of them and His church is left purified.

- c. But how does He go about leading them away?
 - Often, He does it by heresies.
 - Other hypocrites come along and they have this antipathy for God's word, so they begin to preach works righteousness, or legalism, or antinomianism, or that God's word is not infallible...
 - something like that...
 - and the hypocrites are drawn away with them!
 - To them, the heresy sounds very attractive, so off they go—drawn away with the workers of iniquity!

 - This is what is spoken about in Acts 20:29-30 when Paul says:
 - **Acts 20:29-30: For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.**

 - In 1 Cor 11, Paul says this about heresies...
 - **1 Corinthians 11:19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.**
 - This is one of the reasons we have denominations!
 - There must be factions to show who is approved—who comes forth following God's word.

 - You see, this is God's way of purging His church—of showing who is true and who is false.
 - Not that we can always tell—we are warned in scripture about judging before the time...
 - but over time, it becomes clear.
 - Heresies are God's filtering system—his sifter to separate out hypocrites when they begin to overwhelm the church.

- d. When you are in the middle of it, it is dynamic...
 - You have to wrestle with the heresies and you have make judgements.
 - And there are times of uncertainty and struggle...
 - But in the end, God preserves all those who truly trust in Him.
 - We might make a wrong judgement and go off with what is later to develop into a full blown heresy,
 - but if we are God's elect, He will eventually rescue us.
 - That is why the struggle is real and why prayer and is needed.

Conclusion:

- What security you have!
 - You who trust the LORD are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved!
 - You are joined to Jesus Christ the LORD by faith and nothing can separate you from Him.
 - Not the wicked who come to rule for a time...
 - Nor the hypocrite who walks beside you and then turns to His crooked ways.
 - The LORD Himself is your protector
 - You are absolutely secure in Him because you trust in Him and have made Him your refuge...
 - You are the Israel of God!
 - the one who cries out to Him for salvation.
- And so the Psalm closes most appropriately with these words:
 - **Peace be upon Israel!**
 - Peace is security, well-being, prosperity—
 - Indeed, like Mount Zion
 - surrounded by mountains of God's protection
 - yourself a Mount that cannot be moved because you are joined to the LORD Almighty.
 - Peace indeed!