

God's Protective Care

Ephesians

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled God's Protective Care. The Scripture reading is Psalm 91:1-16. Thank you to Glynnis, Dave, Debbie and Don for being part of the video. We'd like to send out some milestone birthday greetings. John M and Ann S who have recently turned 90 and Jenny P who has turned 50. If you're watching from home, we consider you part of our congregation and would love to get to know you. Visit beamsvillechurchofchrist.ca/contact to send us a message.

Welcome, Announcements & Prayer

We begin. Good morning, everyone. It's great to see you all and great to see all the Great Lakes students here this morning. I know I personally talked to a few of them this morning. They are raising money. So I don't know if you got told, but I got told and was able to donate a little bit to their community service project. Okay. That wind yesterday was crazy, wasn't it? We had a tree blow down in our backyard. It was a dead tree, so wasn't that big a deal. But it is very good to see the sunshine this morning, that's for sure. Hi, Jo! Hi, Johnny. Good to see you. Awesome to see you. We want to welcome people that are joining us online. Apparently, we have people from Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, Florida, California and India. And certainly we welcome you wherever you may be, might be just at your home, sitting in your comfy chair. And that's good, too.

Daniel and Helene are in need of a new place to live. They're looking for something with three bedrooms. If you have any contacts for a place here in Beamsville, please either speak to them or to Geoff. If you have any leads. The Youth Rally for Great Lakes is coming up on the 21st to the 23rd. And they're looking for people who can open their homes, for people that will be coming in. For that, please get in touch with. That would be Friday and Saturday night. Get in touch with Don Rose at Great Lakes if you can help out in that way. Like I mentioned, the community service day for Great Lakes is coming up and they are raising money. So if you want some more details that they can't furnish, you can check on the bulletin board as well. On a few more sobering notes, we have Paul M's grandfather. David Hotchkiss passed away this week. We do have a couple of prayer requests that you add to your list for the Cramp family and of course, for the Hotchkiss family.

Okay, let's gather together in a word of prayer. Good morning, God. It truly is a great morning. God, it's so good to see the sunshine. It cheers our hearts. It makes us feel so good just to have that promise of spring dancing in our eyes and certainly in our imaginations. God, we thank you so much for taking such good care of us. We thank you for bringing us together for our service today. We ask your blessing on it. We are so grateful that we have each other to worship with and to gather around your table with. And we ask your blessing for understanding of the the messages and the joys that you just lavish upon us. God, we love you. We thank you so much for everything that you give us. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Communion

It is amazing. Every time the Spirit works and I just have to shake my head sometimes and be amazed, like to talk about the heart. Some of us have recently had more experience with this than me, and

many of us who are older are on medications to prolong our heart. Defined as a hollow, muscular organ in an animal that receives blood from veins and pumps it through the arteries by alternating dilation and contraction. We all have one of those right? If you doubt that, take your pulse. Put your finger on your throat or on your wrist. And you will feel that Pope actually working. This is a good sign you're alive. [Amen!] But I would like to consider a different concept of the heart. And it's much more than just a pulse. All languages on earth use idiomatic speech. You know what an idiom is. Well, in English, it's estimated we have 25 million idioms. It's no wonder. It's a hard language to learn. It's words that have different meaning from the literal. So if taken, literally, some of these idioms would be impossible. You may have heard someone refer to wearing their heart on their sleeve or a broken heart. Cry your heart out. Someone with a heart of gold. Someone who had a change of heart. Not that could be possible now. And someone who says to eat your heart out. Well, you can probably come up with a few hundred more of these idioms. It's, if taken literally are comical to envision and absurd. But it speaks to this different meaning of a heart. Here the human heart is the center or source of our innermost thoughts and feelings. It's a central, vital essence, a consciousness, a conscience, and any number of a variety of feelings love, devotion, sympathy, etc., etc.. Simply, let's go to the heart of the matter.

Depending on which translation you read heart, the word is mentioned between 762 and 826 times in Scripture. Very, very few of these are talking about the literal pump. Remember when Jesus was asked, What's the greatest commandment? Teacher worship or to love God with all your heart and soul? And mind. And love your neighbor as yourself. There are a number of scriptures that pull this together and you can think of many of them, that many in the Bible. We can see that we have determined. We felt it. We're alive physically. But here is where we get to be really alive. I'm going to read from Ephesians two verses four through seven. The title is The Beginning of the Chapter is Made Alive in Christ Sorry in verse four. But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ, even when we were dead in our transgressions. It's by grace that we have been saved and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in heavenly realms with Christ in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. The reason you are alive. Alive in Christ. Why we exist in Him is to love, love, God, love our neighbor. So here's the heart of the matter. The love of God provides the greatest gift. It's our life being made alive in Christ. So where is your heart? Not just here.

Heavenly Father, as we take these simple emblems to remember the a gift of your love in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, we are continually being made aware of the incomparable riches of Your grace and kindness to us in Christ. May we be inspired with all of our hearts to be truly alive in Christ. We pray in Christ's name, amen.

Reading

Psalm 91:1-16

Good morning. The reading this morning is Psalm 91 verses one through 16. Whoever dwells in the shelter of the most high will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, He is my refuge, my fortress. My God in whom I trust. Surely He will save you from the snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers and under his wings. You will find refuge. His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night. The arrows that fly by day, nor the pestilence that stalks from the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may

follow at your side, 10,000 at your right hand. But it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

If you say the Lord is my refuge and you make the most high your dwelling, no harm will overtake you. No disaster will come to your tent where he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. They will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra. You will trample the Great Lion and the serpent. Because he loves me, says the Lord. I will rescue him. I will protect him. For He acknowledges my name. He will call on me and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him with long life. I will satisfy him and so on. My salvation.

Sermon

Good morning, everyone. It's fun to have fun in church. It's good. I just have a brief message today and I hope it will be as positive for you as it was for me. There are a number of books that are really helpful and it seemed like the Apostle Paul was often in a really good mood when he wrote those positive books. And that's the Book of Ephesians. It's a marvelous book. A number of years ago, I think back in the early seventies, Lynn Anderson preached a series called Living to the Praise of God's Glory. And throughout this book of Ephesians. It's repeated that we live by God's glory, the blessings of God's glory. So the good news that I want to share with you today come from the book of the Book of Ephesians, and I'll just notice a couple of scriptures today, and I want to just help us that when you have a bad day, things aren't going so well. To remember that God is with us every second of the day and that He blesses us with spiritual blessings, that we sometimes forget chapters one through three in the book of Ephesians. Basically, is this all the blessings we have in Christ? And then chapters four through six tells us, Here's how we ought to live because of all the blessings we have in Christ. It's God just showering us with His love and blessings upon us. So I'm just going to read a couple of excerpts from the book of Ephesians.

In verse three of chapter one, it says this Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ, every spiritual blessing in Christ. He gives us how remarkable is that? He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and to be blameless. And then in verse six, he says to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves in Him. Christ, we have redemption through Christ's blood. We have the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us. It just it's just too vague. He gives us every thing we need for life. He gives us every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. And I don't think any of us have even tapped a little bit of those blessings living to the praise of his glorious grace in him. We have redemption, which means forgiveness through his blood. The forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

And then he says that He lavished upon us. I like the word lather that he lathers upon us. You know, when your kids are in the bath tub and they've got bubble bath and so forth, and that just get more bubbles coming up and soap going up and all this thing that's flying around. And it's just they're having so much fun splashing in the water and having a good old time. And I know that might be a long skip to this point, but I think the lavish that God gives us lathers those blessings upon us. You can't put a stop to the blessings God gives us for the reason that says to bring unity to all things in heaven and on Earth under Christ, to bring all things together in Heaven and on Earth, under Christ. Why does He give us

that? Because he lavishes his love upon us. And then it's interesting in verse 12 where he says, in order that we who are the first to put our hope in Christ might be for the praise of His glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, when you believed you are marked in him as a seal. The Promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit? Listen. Who is a deposit for each one of us? For each one of us who has a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are in God's possession to the praise of His glory, guaranteeing our inheritance. Beyond blessings. And then he says what he says all throughout this book. It's for the praise of God's glory.

So then in chapter two, you get it talks about this grace that we have in Christ. He made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions. It's by grace that you have been saved. And God, again, look at this blessing. God raised us up with Christ. Picture this and seated us with him in the heavenly realms. We're not there yet, but we're almost there. And some of our loved ones are there, seated in the heavenly realms with Christ, a promise to each one of us in Christ. Jesus. And it's all through faith. And then He says, So how do we earnestly down for it's by God's grace. It's by God's grace that you have been saved if you believe it says through faith. This is not from us. This is the gift of God. He gives us himself, Jew and Gentile alike. And then he reminds people who sort of forgot about this. He said, Remember that formerly you were not part of you were not part of it. But he says and remember, at that time, you were separate from Christ. You were you were excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise with you were without hope. You were without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus. You, who were once far away, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace. Christ is Your Peace. Christ is my peace. Who has made all of us come together as one? He destroyed the demands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two. All the New Testament coming together as one. And the result is Jesus Christ Himself. Consequently, you're no longer a foreigner. You're no longer a stranger. You are welcome into the household of God. And if you're here today visiting with us, we welcome you to the household of God. And it's not just in the worship, but the part is that we are all part of the heavenly peace that we will one day return to.

But until that time, we're still part of all that part of our loved ones who are gone and yet are still living with us. No one ever dies. We live in Christ, whether alive or with Christ. So consequently, you're no longer strangers but your fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone lesson in Him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. So God has marvelous plans for all of us, Jew and Gentile, coming together as one. And so he says this in chapter three God's intent was that now through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and to authorities, even in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus, our Lord, and in Him in through faith, in Him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence. What will it be like when you and I stand alone before God? I used to be fearful, but not anymore. Can't you wait? Can't you just wait to be with your loved ones again? Can't you just wait to look into the eyes of your loved ones again? And you can. And you look into the eyes of God who created each one of us. We are never for one second alone. We may forget that God is with us, but He's with us every second of the day.

And He's pouring out his love to us through remarkable ways in in unique ways. So when Paul writes this book to the church at Ephesus, he's trying to put it to put it so that they can understand it. And so

he says, I pray out of Christ's glorious riches that he may strengthen us with power through his Holy Spirit, in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I just think it's important, just a couple of times a day maybe to remember, Oh, yeah, Jesus is with me. He's with me. I think it's important to remember how the Holy Spirit is with me. God is with me. He gives us this wonderful grace. So he says because of all that. Share that with others. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bonds of peace. Remember, there's one body and one spirit, just as you recall, to one hope. When you recall one lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father who is above all, through all and in all. So when Paul writes this letter, I just see him writing away and he just throws the quill up in the air. I can't take all these blessings. It's just God filling him with. Here's some more blessings. Here's some more blessings. Here's some more blessings. He says, Remember your former way of life and you put that off and now we are in God and His righteousness and His Holiness He gives to us. And so because of that, be careful. Be careful. Don't get so caught up that you forget how easy it is to slide back into maybe the way things were.

Remember that right now God is with us. Don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths. But only what is helpful for build each other up. Be kind to one another. Be compassionate to one another. Forgive each other. Just as in Christ. God forgave you. In that Jesus is our example. And then He says something. That's pretty cool. Maybe when you are young and you put on these old armor things, protective things, playing war and so forth, well, it's pretty cool that he uses this. He says this. Put on the full armor of God. What's that? Be strong in the Lord. And in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the devil's schemes for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and the authorities and against the powers of this dark world. And against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. But one day, there will be no more evil. There will be. There will be no darkness. There will be us and Christ and our loved ones. So we stand firm with the belt of truth around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness, with your feet fitted with readiness to come. The Gospel. Take up the shield of faith which you can extinguish all the arrows in flames. Always remember Christ is with us.

And then he concludes the book. And I conclude as well. He says this peace. And I think it goes something like this: [exhale] You remember some of you when your kids were young and babies fussy and they just couldn't get comfortable and you tried everything. You walked them in the buggy, you patted them on the back, you just held them. And they just seem that they weren't ever going to settle. And then all of a sudden, all of a sudden, you feel them go [exhale] and they fall asleep. It's the preciousness of God's love. The Book of Ephesians is full of blessings that we have in Christ. We don't earn them. He gives it to us. May I say to all of us? Let's just remember who God is. Let's remember the blessings that we have. And Paul concludes with these words, and I conclude with these words. Peace, to brothers and sisters and love with faith from God in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. Please remember, we have every spiritual blessing in Christ. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Oh, thank you, Don. That is so encouraging. And I couldn't help but be thinking as I was sitting there that you are blessings in my life. Truly, it. I've been very fortunate to have done some traveling in the last little bit and it's so good to come home and see you. And I know that sounds kind of crazy because we're not super close, most of us with one another. But like Johnny and Jo, honestly, it just makes you

are so encouraging to me. It just your mother and father in our faith. And, you know, I always think of how Johnny made this and I wonder what it was like when he was making it. And and there's so many of you I don't know all your stories, but thank you for being a blessing in my life. I truly, truly appreciate it. Let's gather together and a word of prayer.

Dearest Lord, God, truly, you are amazing to think that in pledging our hearts, our mind, our soul, our strength to you and love it, that you lavish upon us, you lather us up over and over and over again with so many blessings. God truly, there's a part of us that's speechless with how rich you have, how richly you have blessed us. God, we pray that you would help us to keep it. Keep that in our minds, God, to remind us of all of the good things that You've given us. God to ascribe them to you. To take that breathtaking moment and just say, Oh, God, you are so good. God, we love you. We thank you. We pray that you'll help us to in some way let our joy, because of the rich sleep, the richness that you've blessed us with, help it to overflow so that we can encourage others to come closer to you. God, we love you. We pray for a week ahead. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

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