

“Prepared and Protected”

Message by DD Adams
Providence United Methodist Church
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Today we're reading verses from the Old Testament. First, from the book of Proverbs, chapter 27, verse 12. “A sensible person watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them. The simpleton never looks and suffers the consequences.”

Now from Psalm 91, verses 1 and 2 and 11 through 15. “Living in the Most High's shelter, camping in the Almighty's shade, I say to the Lord, “You are my refuge, my stronghold! You are my God—the one I trust! He will order his messengers to help you, to protect you wherever you go. They will carry you with their own hands so you don't bruise your foot on a stone.

You'll march on top of lions and vipers; you'll trample young lions and serpents underfoot. God says, “Because you are devoted to me, I'll rescue you. I'll protect you because you know my name. Whenever you cry out to me, I'll answer. I'll be with you in troubling times.” This is God's word for God's people. Thanks be to God. Let's pray. God bless our time together this morning. Give us ears to hear and hearts that believe with the desire to apply what's been heard. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

Peace be with you! Thank you for being here to worship with us today Troop 1023 and helping to run the worship service. We value your participation and appreciate all you do for our church. We love to see your faces.

Now let's take a look at verse 12 in the book of Proverbs 27. Let me read it again. “A sensible person watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them. The simpleton never looks and suffers the consequences.”

Everyone knows the meaning of sensible, but the word simpleton isn't used that much; it means someone who doesn't have much sense, and they don't consider the consequences of their decisions. You are no doubt aware, that common sense really isn't that common, but then again, we also know it can be difficult to make good and right decisions all the time.

When I was 17 my father was the vice-principle at my high school—in charge of *discipline*. That was a long 2 years, but I'll admit, with my dad being disciplinarian, I'm sure it kept me more in line.

One time a young man who was a sophomore called me up. He wanted me to make a copy of my dad's office key. He said a bunch of kids were going to "decorate my dad's office." I said, "What exactly do you mean by decorate?"

This is where he began to stutter, and then there was a few seconds of silence. Finally he said, "Well we were hoping you'd go along with the idea of, well, not so much "decorating," but doing a few things in his office to, ummm, play a joke on him." I said, "Like what?" "Well, like putting some thumb tacks on his chair, getting some water balloons and attaching them to his office door so when he went in the balloons would break—you know—stuff like that."

Without thinking or even caring how many friends I had left at the end of the year I said "NO WAY. No thank you. This isn't a good time, sorry. Bye." That was one time I was cautious and prudent. I thought about the consequences, and decided against it. It's important to prepare for things—that shows care and good judgment. Any *sensible* person can make mistakes, and a person *without sense* can *escape* mistakes, but overall, one who is careful and cautious will have a smoother time of it.

It can be the same with the unspiritual person and the spiritual person. The person who doesn't include God in their decision making only looks at the appearance of things. The spiritual person exercises their whole being when

making a decision—body, soul, and spirit. The unspiritual person lacks vision, but the spiritual person knows that God can see around the curve, and they can't.

Now looking at Psalm 91—there's a lot to be said for trusting God to take care of us in life. We can find ourselves in dangerous situations. And the application is not just for ourselves, God will put all kinds of people along your path to help.

The message of Psalm 91 says there's help in the midst of life's worries and its dangers. I read some statistics about the worries and dangers we face in life. What are you afraid of? 54% said they were afraid of their parents dying, 44% said failure, 43% of dying, 34% of having a car accident, 33% of being lonely, 29% of being beat up, 28% were afraid of getting a disease, and 28% of being rejected.

This is how we feel sometimes, but listen to what God says in the first 2 verses of Psalm 91. Let me read it again. "Living in the Most High's shelter, camping in the Almighty's shade, I say to the Lord, "You are my refuge, my stronghold! You are my God—the one I trust!" When we're cautious we let God into our decision making, and when we do that, we rest easier.

There are more than 100 names for God. In the first two verses of Psalm 91 we find four of those names. The first is that God is *The Most High*. That means God is over all things in the entire universe. God is high and lifted up. What a height advantage! God can see everything, everywhere, all at once, and at the same time!

The second name is The Lord or Yahweh. That means God is eternal. God always existed and always will. God is the first and the last the beginning and the end—time has no advantage. The third name is The Almighty or 'El Shaddai.' This name is linked to mountain heights, power, and invincible strength. Do you need a strong one that has your back, sees everything that goes on, and has all power and strength?

The fourth name is My God. That's explanation enough! My God is a God who's near, accessible, and always present to help in a time of need. God is a personal God that leads my decision making and helps me think things over.

So what do we do? Let's hear the first two verses again, "Living in the Most High's shelter, camping in the Almighty's shade, I say to the Lord, "You are my refuge, my stronghold! You are my God—the one I trust!"

The response is that we live under and in God's shelter and include him in our decision making. We camp under the shade of God and trust that all is well despite the circumstances. We claim God as "My God" who is a refuge and stronghold—the one we trust. When we say and believe this, our fears and worries subside, and our doubts and insecurities roll off. We know we'll be protected in all that we do *as we do* what *we can* to be *sensible and cautious* as we trust God.

So in a time of trouble and worry, say and believe God is *your God*. One who is matchless in strength and sees all things and rescues and delivers. Pray with me now. God you are my shelter, protection, and covering. You are a refuge from the storms in my life and the dangers I can't see ahead of me. *You God* are my shield. Send your angels, rescue and protect us as we acknowledge you in our decision making. When we cry out answer our prayer in troubling times. Remind us that your love transcends all other love—we can't earn it, we can only accept it and rejoice over it. Amen.