

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

6 March 2022

Welcome

Song: 'Jesus is Lord'

Prayer

We have made the Lord our refuge,
the Most High our dwelling place;
When we call, the Lord will answer us.
**Come now, O Lord, to dwell among us,
and show us your salvation.
Amen.**

Song: *Bless the Lord O my soul*

Reading : Psalm 91 by Anthea and Chris

¹Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.^[a]
²I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and
my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.'
³Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
⁴He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and
rampart.
⁵You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in the
darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
⁷A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

⁸You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.

⁹If you say, 'The Lord is my refuge,'
and you make the Most High your
dwelling,

¹⁰no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹For he will command his angels
concerning you

to guard you in all your ways;

¹²they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot
against a stone.

¹³You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the
serpent.

¹⁴'Because he^[b] loves me,' says the Lord, 'I
will rescue him;

I will protect him, for he acknowledges
my name.

¹⁵He will call on me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honour him.

¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.'

Prayer

Lord God, we need reassurance and
protection,

but we look for these things in the wrong
places.

The flattery of admirers, and the things that
money can buy,

fail to give us the security we need.

We open our hearts to you, Lord,
seeking the knowledge that you are always
with us,

that you have taken us under your wings.

Forgive us for seeking to dwell in the
shadow of worldly comforts,

and lead us to the reassurance that only you
can give.

Amen.

Song: Faithful one, so unchanging

Reading: Luke 4.1-12

All age: Duplo prayers

Using duplo bricks to pray, see
flamecreativekids.blogspot.com

Hold your brick.

Pray for yourself. Thank God for the things he has given you. Ask Him to bless you and to help you to bless others.

Count the bumps on your brick.

For each bump on your brick, pray for a different person- friends or family members. Ask God to bless them this week.

Spot someone who has a different colour brick to you.

Thank God for making each person special. Thank him for the things that are different but special about other people. Pray that we will learn how to celebrate and understand people who are different to us.

Put all of the bricks together and build a structure or tower with them.

Thank God for the church and the communities we live in. Pray that He will help us to include others and to help people know that they are loved and valued.

Lord's prayer from Ukraine

Song: You lead us through the wilderness

Sermon: Psalm 91 Under the shadow of his wings

I used to work at Walthamstow YMCA in PR and development. I was also a youth worker at the time and involved in all sorts of things which meant my life was pretty hectic. To save time, I'd often drive fast from meeting to meeting. Next to my desk was a wonderful man – Chris Kapnesis who ran the YMCA outreach centre for the homeless. He said: Ruth the angels get out at 70. The angels get

out at 70. In other words, do not put the Lord to the test.

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry and as we enter lent, we hear the devil tempting Jesus in the wilderness, aren't you hungry? You could make some bread huh? Don't you want authority? I'll give it to you and finally Luke 4 v9-10

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple saying to him, if you are the son of God throw yourself down from here : for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you to protect you and on their hands they will bear you up so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. And Jesus said : do not put the Lord your God to the test.

The devil has finally resorted to quoting scripture at Jesus, Psalm 91 that we heard read earlier. Why does Jesus reject the devil's interpretation of scripture? Surely, he could summon an army of angels? Surely the Lord would protect him from tripping over a rock?

Surely the Lord will protect my life, but I will not exercise, and I will eat badly?

Surely the Lord will grant me success, but I will cheat to get it?

Surely the Lord will give me happiness, but I will sustain toxic relationships?

Psalm 91 is written to those who believe in God. To those who trust in God – whoever dwells in the shelter of the most high. It's written from the psalmist to the readers or listeners of the psalm. The sense of verse 1 is 'I tested this, I've been here before so I can assure you it's true.' You can trust in God as a refuge, shelter, fortress and he will be with us because he loves us. The psalm talks about the nature of a relationship of the people of God and God. Knowing God is not an insurance policy. It is not an angel in our

pocket, it is not a lucky rabbit foot, or magic eye, it's not a talisman or spell to cast to get us out of trouble. Knowing God is about abiding in a relationship with him and trusting him, even when the arrows fly, even when our home is destroyed, and pestilence is all around.

In Luke we see Jesus committed to God and his mission. And we see the devil committed to his own agenda. He tries to tempt Jesus into putting Psalm 91 to the test, to put God's power to the test. He tempts Jesus to take a promise of God into the control of his own actions. The devil is trying to put an individual act over the sovereign power of God.

Just like real love doesn't need proof, the real love that is shared between us and God is one of nurture. He covers us with his wings, under his wings we find safety and refuge. He nurtures us like an eagle with her chicks.

I heard a radio programme this week – the News Quiz on Radio 4, they were mocking those who pray for Ukraine 'as prayers are less than 80% effective'. I turned it off. Prayer is not a magic formula. We don't go to God with a shopping list and expect to get everything in some sort of divine supermarket. Prayer is about a relationship with God where we are trusting in God, trusting in his refuge while we are *in* trouble. The terror of night is present, the plagues exist and yet the faithful are restored by God under the shadow of his wings.

You see the thing the devil really gets wrong is that Jesus is worried about hurting his foot. He can't believe that Jesus is agreeing to the plan, the plan of the cross. We are not saved from trouble, we are saved in them. Christ does not save us painlessly, but enters into the deepest suffering of separation from God and death on the cross. We are saved through and in suffering. God rescues us through the

suffering and death of Jesus, not before them or from them. God's one purpose is to save us. To give us hope and new life in and through the suffering of Christ. And it is that one purpose that no-one will stop, not even the devil himself.

The call of Psalm 91 is for each of us to dwell, trust and rest in God's care, under his wings. From this place of nurture and love, God gives us confidence to face the night and the day and every struggle that we face. This is a precious relationship, meeting in God through prayer, studying of his word and listening to him. It is an intimate relationship where we are cared for and loved by God. It's not something to be tested on a survey, stone or speed limit.

Song: In the shadow of his wings

Communion

Prayers for the world

Lord, we pray today for all those who feel exposed and vulnerable:
for those who have been exposed to the harshest of life's elements;
for those who have known serious illness, loss and grief.
We pray for an overshadowing of your mercy upon them.
For all who are vulnerable to the terrors of this world;
who tremble in the day and cry out in the night:
we pray that they may come to know you as their fortress and refuge.
Be with them in trouble, Lord, rescue them and honour them;
with long life satisfy them, and show them your salvation.
Amen.

Notices: BMS Ukraine Appeal, give via
bmsworldmission.org or call 01235 517641
Mon-Fri

Song: Great is Thy faithfulness,

Blessing

In all these things we are more than
conquerors through him who loved
us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death
nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[k] neither
the present nor the future, nor any
powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor
anything else in all creation, will be able to
separate us from the love of God that is in
Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8.37-39