

# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 91.1-2, 9-16 [Worship]

1 You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, 2 will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

9 Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, 10 no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. 11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

12 On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. 14 Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. 15 When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. 16 With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

### Consider:

[Words]

The first two Sundays in Lent summon us to focus on the God who answers us as the only secure source of well-being in the world. The worldly implication of this summons is that life in faith contradicts the way the world is organized, and calls us to an alternative life of fearless discipline.

This week's texts constitute a meditation on a primal human question: "Who will make us safe?" The answer, in biblical context, is not a surprise: the only security is trust in God.

- Deuteronomy 26 is a classic affirmation concerning the God who saves, provides, and protects. This God is powerfully and totally committed to God's treasured people.

- Psalm 91 is a poetic affirmation about the protective God for the journey. The psalmist names the many threats on the journey of life, and then points to God's protective angels who keep us safe from snakes, lions, and every threat.

- Paul affirms "salvation" for all who trust in Christ, for this God is "Lord of all" and "generous to all who call on him" (Romans 10:12). There is no qualifying condition. We need only shun other helps and trust completely.

The narrative of Luke offers a challenge to this threefold affirmation. The tempter seeks to talk Jesus out of his security and his vocation by offering other fake modes of well-being. In Luke 4:10 the tempter quotes from our psalm as a way of seduction. But Jesus refuses the offer. (In the reprise of the same story in Matthew 4:11, the angels of Psalm 91 minister to Jesus, just as promised.)



Lent is a time to sort out and refuse the other offers and to embrace the only reliable gift of well-being. Imagine choosing the Lord of the gospel rather than money, control, and power—the usual seductions in our society. **Walter Bruggemann**

[Scripture]

## Romans 10.8b-13

8b "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. 11 The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. 13 For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Also, read **Luke 4.1-13**