

## Sheltering in Place

**The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him** (Psalm 28:7).

**Scripture:** Psalm 28

**Song:** “A Shelter in the Time of Storm”

As a Tennessee native, I can attest to the unpredictability of our seasonal weather patterns. In a given week, we might experience snow on Sunday, summer temps on Wednesday, and tornado outbreaks come Friday. Tennessee is a target for nocturnal tornadoes. Our atmosphere is an unpredictable recipe for disaster due to its ability to produce squall lines that carry intense winds. Tornado shelters are essential when it comes time to keeping safe here.

In today’s passage, David is enduring an unpredictable atmosphere. War breaks out here and there, while the wicked are persistent in their attempts to deceive or kill him. He despises the actions of the wicked and fears falling into the pit along with them. He calls out to the Lord, asking for strength and refuge because the Lord will shelter his heart at any time, in any place.

Each morning on the news, the weather report is followed by stories of wickedness. Our world is unstable, but we have nothing to fear. We can continue to praise God as He provides refuge for our troubled spirits and secures shelter for our frightened hearts.

**Father,** You provide sanctuary during the stormy seasons of my life. You are my refuge, strength, and shelter during the storm. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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November 11–17. **Kellie M. Everett** lives in Tennessee with her husband and children. She is a stay-at-home mom, author, and youth director.

## The Best Example

**Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:1-2).**

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-20

**Song:** "All the Way My Savior Leads Me"

My spiritual fire burns brighter after a week of camp with my church group. Our campground is tucked away within a lovely forest, and the breathtaking landscape provides a calming refuge from the outside world. One time, we kicked off class there with a leadership-focused icebreaker game. Students sat in a circle and secretly chose another camper to imitate. Then at the count of three, each student began mimicking their chosen subject. The way the game works is that there are multiple leaders at first, but eventually everyone is sitting the same way and copying the same movements because one person emerges as leader.

Jesus is our only leader, our ultimate example. In today's passage, the apostle Paul reminded the church in Ephesus that Jesus laid down His life so that they could inherit the kingdom of God. Paul encouraged them to follow Jesus by walking in the way of love.

When we only look to others for guidance, we are likely to fall victim to the wrong leader or to leadership failure. But by focusing on Jesus and the way of the cross, we will not be led astray. We can trust Christ's example as He guides us along the path of righteousness.

**Father,** teach me to focus on You and Your way of love. I trust You to lead the way. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Five-Star Faith

**God of Israel, may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me** (Psalm 69:6).

**Scripture:** Psalm 69:1-6, 30-36

**Song:** “Nothing but the Blood of Jesus”

Online shopping has grown steadily over the past 20 years. When making purchases, shoppers often rely on customer reviews, checking to see how products and services have been rated on a scale from one to five stars. A one-star review is equivalent to a negative experience, while five stars suggest a worthwhile purchase. Even with a slew of five-star ratings, a single terrible review can sway a decision.

In today's passage, David feels like he is sinking situationally, as if he's drowning in water up to his neck. Enemies are out to destroy him, and he is concerned that his trials will bring dishonor to God's name and shame to God's people. David did not want his life to negatively impact Israel's reputation. As David calls out to the Lord, he understands that God will provide what is needed for him and for all those who love His name.

Even as redeemed children of God, we may feel concerned that our past transgressions or our current struggles may negatively impact our witness for Christ. We may fear that our times of stumbling and distress will reflect poorly on the body of Christ. But the Lord tells us that our sins have been washed away, and we can trust His plan to redeem our past, strengthen our faith, and bring glory to His name.

**Father**, be exalted in my life and in the life of each one who belongs to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

## God Will Sort It Out

**God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day** (Psalm 7:11, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** Psalm 7:1-2, 6-17

**Song:** “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”

Growing up, I always looked forward to reading the Sunday funnies. Newspaper cartoon strips were enjoyable throughout the week, but the characters appeared livelier on Sunday mornings when published in color. Charlie Brown’s smile always looked friendlier. Linus seemed to hold his blanket more enthusiastically. You felt you could actually smell the must on Pig-Pen. And Snoopy appeared to jump out of the pages from atop his doghouse. However, whether in black-and-white or vibrantly colored, Lucy was consistently frustrating when she moved the football as Charlie Brown attempted to kick it. It was always heartbreaking to see him land on his back with a big *WHOMP!* Her actions were so unfair!

In today’s psalm, David is troubled by the unrighteous and all their wicked mischief. In his moment of discouragement, however, David does not lose hope. He understands that God is able to sort it all out—rightly judging the wicked and the upright alike—according to His perfect wisdom and knowledge.

As our daily news outlets report one unsettling story after another, we may be tempted to despair. Or when life seems unfair, we may feel like giving up hope. However, we can steady ourselves daily by remembering that God is in control, and His perfect judgment will ultimately prevail in every life and situation.

**Father**, even though the world seems out of control, I trust that You are truly in control and will prevail in righteous judgment. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Endurance for Another Day

**We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3).**

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 1

**Song:** “You Are My All in All”

My eight-year-old son has become a black belt in Taekwondo overnight . . . or so he thinks! After only one session, he was certain he was ready for the next level. During a subsequent session, the instructor placed a rope ladder on the ground and asked students to make their way across without touching the rope. My son thought it would be easy, but his facial expression changed after his first try. On his fourth attempt, however, he scrunched his face with all his might and made it across without issue. With endurance, determination, and a scrunched face, I’m certain he’ll receive a black belt in no time!

In today’s passage, the apostle Paul compliments the church in Thessalonica, recognizing their evangelical persistence. When presented with multiple opportunities to share the gospel, they acted immediately. They introduced God to the community and surrounding areas with faith, love, hope, and endurance.

God has placed important spiritual gifts within each of us who belong to Him. These gifts make us able to serve Him faithfully wherever He sends us. Armed with faith, love, and endurance, we too will continue to persist in sharing the good news.

**Father**, as I serve from within the spiritual gifts You provide, use me to draw others to You and bring glory to Your holy name. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Surpassing Peace

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).**

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:4-9

**Song:** “It Is Well with My Soul”

*Peace in the Midst of the Storm* is a painting by Jack E. Dawson. As the title suggests, the work is a visual definition of peace. It depicts a network of raging waterfalls crashing down, causing unsettling turbulence in the water below. But if you look closely, you can see a bird’s nest tucked within the cleft of a rock. A dove sits on the nest, perfectly safe from the waters all around and from the danger below.

In today’s passage, the apostle Paul provides this simple instruction regarding anxiety: pray continually! The Lord’s wisdom is perfect, and His power is beyond human understanding. Paul instructs the church at Philippi to take their every request to the Lord in prayer because He is able to provide peace in all our turmoil.

We spend too many hours worrying over finances, relationships, and a number of other stressful situations when we are called to bring these concerns to the Lord and lean upon Him. Our human nature seeks to solve life’s problems on our own, but we cannot. We need prayerful faith in God’s ability to work all things out for our good.

**Father**, thank You for Your unfailing presence in my life. I will trust that there is nothing to fear because I am always safe in the cleft of Your love. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## A Heart to Help Us

**The Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations** (Psalm 100:5).

**Scripture:** Psalm 100

**Song:** “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

I called her “Kitty Cat.” She waited patiently by our front door each morning, sweetly meowing for food and water. Our stray visitor was feral and wouldn’t allow anyone to pet her, but she was friendly enough to chat with me while I swept the porch. We had no luck tricking her into a cage, but I figured one day she would trust me enough to let me pick her up. Then I could get veterinary care for her and bless her with a new home. Our routine lasted six months until Kitty Cat showed up with a small scratch on her forehead and finally let me pet her. I thought I’d be able to catch her the next time she came by, but she didn’t show up. I never saw her again. Still, my desire to save her remained.

The psalmist praises the Lord, singing and rejoicing with love and humility, honored to worship before the throne of his creator. Then he praises God for His enduring faithfulness. The psalm writer understood God’s kind intentions and unfailing love.

When we become frightened and overwhelmed, we may feel like keeping our distance from God, or we may even want to run away from Him. But our creator loves us and wants to care for us, and He will never cease in His desire to save us.

**Father,** I praise You for Your love and for Your determination to save me. In Jesus’ name, amen.