

THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

By: Julian Hobdy

Today is Wednesday, October 9, and as we continue to explore the reality of Christ as our cornerstone and firm foundation, I want to explore five pillars of life with Christ this week: Trust, Growth, Refuge, Alignment, and Unity. Today, we will talk about Refuge.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, as I come to You today, I seek a greater understanding of Your role as my Rock and my Fortress. Open my eyes to the refuge You provide and give me the confidence to stand firm in the salvation You offer. Be my shield and my protector in every season of life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. Psalm 62:5-6

REFLECTION

In late August of 1939, a tornado ripped through unknown small town in Kansas. In its wake, an unsuspecting farm girl was taken away from her family. All she knew was displaced, and she met one tragedy after another. If you've got your thinking cap on, you might have guessed that this is the cinematic cult classic, the Wizard of Oz.

Undoubtedly, one of the most iconic and beloved pieces of cinema, the Wizard of Oz gave us wonderful images, beautiful music, and unforgettable ideas that have permeated the American lexicon and cultural memory. Perhaps the most memorable idea can be recounted in just five words. "There's no place like home."

We love this story for a number of reasons, but perhaps most of all because deep down we know the truth of that statement. When you find home, you find more than a house and rooms. You find a resting place. You find a secure place. You find protection and recovery from the rigors of the battle of the day.

In this Psalm, David is reflecting something similar about finding no greater place of rest and security like the presence of God. He says that God is a fortress. In another translation, the word used is "refuge," and I think that's a better translation. Here's why. Fortress and refuge evoke similar ideas. They are walled-off places that provide protection, defense and security for those within. There is a difference though. A fortress has more to do with the density of the walls, but a refuge is a place that is reprieve or respite from the battle.

The word here that is being translated in some instances as fortress and in others refuge refers to a secure retreat in a high place that is well fortified. And that picture is profound. Not

only is this place in God well-fortified to keep out the enemies, but it also brings you above the battle. In that place, not only are you secure, but you can find rest—unending, unshaken, unbothered rest.

On the First15 on Monday, I suggested to you the following idea:

The imagery of God as a "Rock eternal" reflects the ancient Near Eastern understanding of rocks as symbols of strength, permanence, and refuge. In Israel's arid landscape, a rock was often a source of shade and protection.

Christ as cornerstone not only presents to us a firm foundation, but as one hymn writer put it, "Jesus is a rock in a weary land, a shelter in the time of storm."

Ask: Where are the current battlefronts in my life? How can I invite or allow Jesus to be my refuge—a place where I can find protection and rest?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, you are my hiding place. You come and fill my heart with songs of deliverance whenever I am afraid. Because You are my rock, my rest, my redeemer and my restoration, I will trust in You. Help me on today to stop and enjoy the gift of rest you offer me as I take refuge in You. Amen.