

# What Are You Afraid of? Part 2

## Finding Safety in a Dangerous World<sup>1</sup>

### Psalms 1-4

#### The Secret of a Successful life, Psalm 1

Where does your wisdom come from? Who influences your life?

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; <sup>2</sup> **but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.** <sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. <sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; <sup>6</sup> **for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.**

#### The Prideful Road to Perdition, Psalm 2

Worldly wisdom on display! A dangerous kind of foolishness.

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. <sup>5</sup> Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, <sup>6</sup> “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” <sup>7</sup> I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. <sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. <sup>9</sup> **You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.**”

A Very Serious Warning! One More Opportunity!

<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. <sup>11</sup> Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. **Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**

#### The only safe place in a dangerous world, Psalms 3 & 4

**Psalm 3 A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.**

<sup>1</sup> O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; <sup>2</sup> many are saying of my soul, “There is no salvation for him in God.” **Selah** <sup>3</sup> But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. <sup>4</sup> I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. **Selah** <sup>5</sup> **I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.** <sup>6</sup> I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. <sup>7</sup> Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. <sup>8</sup> **Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people! Selah**

**Psalm 4 To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.**

<sup>1</sup> Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! <sup>2</sup> O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? **Selah** <sup>3</sup> But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. <sup>4</sup> Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. **Selah** <sup>5</sup> Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are many who say, “Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!” <sup>7</sup> You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. <sup>8</sup> **In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.**

Who Are You Going to Trust? And, How Will You Get there?

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<sup>1</sup> Message prepared by and shared with the congregation of West Salem Baptist Church by Dr. Paul Null, Sunday, July 21, 2019. Citations from Scripture are from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

## What Good Is Worry?<sup>2</sup>

*When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.* Psalm 56:3

I don't think it's possible to eliminate every shred of worry from our lives. Maybe someone on planet Earth has found a way to stop worrying forever, but I have yet to meet the person. Having said this, I think it is both advisable and possible to reduce the amount of worry we feel.

Let's look at why worry is problematic. First, worry transports you away from reality and into your imagination. Though your anxiety may have sprouted from something concrete, it quickly leads to a make-believe world in which the dragons and demons you face will seem far bigger, fiercer, and more numerous than they are.

Second, God deals in reality. Worrying catapults you into a future that may never happen, but it is in the present that you need God's grace.

Third, though worry can instigate a search for solutions, chronic worrying rarely, if ever, results in anything helpful. (Ask yourself whether you have ever felt glad that you worried and fretted about something.)

Fourth, as Chuck Swindoll points out, "We worry when we subtract God's presence from our crises." It's hard to feel peaceful if you think God is absent just when you need him most.

You can probably come up with your own list of reasons why worry is problematic. Perhaps our goal should not be to eliminate every atom of worry from our lives but to use it for a good purpose. In that case, worry could function like an alarm clock, warning us that we need to pray about something or do something in order to address a problem. Just as we wouldn't let an alarm clock keep ringing once it's done the job of prying us out of bed, we shouldn't let the worry alarm keep sounding once it's woken us to the need to take our concerns to the Lord. Instead of letting worry become a way of life, let's think of anxious feelings as a call to prayer and action, based on the wisdom God gives.

*Lord, help me to notice anxious thoughts the minute I start thinking them. As I do, help me to turn to you for help and perspective, trusting you will give it in your good time.*

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<sup>2</sup> From *Becoming a Woman of Peace*, the devotional for July 17, 2019.