

The Father as Fortress

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Psalm 18:1-3, 1 John 4:10

THE BIG IDEA:

Seeing God as our refuge and Christ as our protector encourages fathers to be a fortress for their families.

Intro: Offensive Line

1. Throughout Scripture, God is presented as our refuge. Psalm 18:1-3

a. Adam and Eve

- i. Genesis 3 -The LORD God said to the serpent,
“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”
(Genesis 3:14-15 ESV)

And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

(Genesis 3:21 ESV)

b. Noah

- i. The flood and the ark - Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. (Genesis 6:11-14 ESV)

c. Abraham

- i. After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, **I am your shield**; your reward shall be very great.” (Genesis 15:1 ESV)

d. Moses/Israelites

- i. Moses as a child
- ii. Plagues in Egypt – especially Passover where the blood of the lamb would protect the children of Israel from the destroyer
- iii. Red Sea - Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. (Exodus 14:19-20 ESV)

e. David

- i. 47 references to refuge in Psalms
- ii. Psalm 5 - But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy,
and spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may exult in you.
For you bless the righteous, O LORD;
you cover him with favor as with a shield.
(Psalm 5:11-12 ESV)
- iii. Psalm 23 - Even though I walk through the valley of the s
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. (Psalm 23:4-5 ESV)

- f. Other metaphors –
 - i. a secure height
 - ii. a retreat
 - iii. a stronghold
 - iv. a hiding place
 - v. a shadow
 - vi. a rock
 - vii. a crag
 - viii. a shield
 - ix. wings

“In summary, “refuge” is a foundational metaphor...in the Psalter. Its associations are wide-ranging and profound ... The object of deep longing, refuge is emblematic of the person who places complete trust in God. It highlights, Moreover, the royal role of God, of the King who is intent on making the world a refuge and provides protection to those in distress.”
William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor*

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON, LIKE GOD

2. Throughout Scripture, Christ is presented as our protector.

- a. We are protected from the world. John 16:33
 - i. Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
 - ii. “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” Galatians 6:14
- b. We are protected from the evil one. 2 Thessalonians 3:3
 - i. But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

- ii. “And they have conquered him[Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” Rev 12:11
- c. We are protected from sin. Romans 6
- i. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. (**Romans 6:6-7 ESV**)
 - ii. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (**Romans 6:14 ESV**)
 - iii. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Romans 6:23 ESV**)

IN CHRIST WE SEE A PROTECTIVE PRINCE OF HEAVEN WHO PROVIDES REFUGE FROM THE WORLD BECAUSE HE HAS OVERCOME IT, WHO SHIELDS US FROM THE EVIL FORCES OF THE WORLD BECAUSE HE IS TRIUMPHANT OVER THEM, AND WHO HAS SAVED US FROM THE POWER OF SIN THROUGH HIS SACRIFICIAL WORK ON THE CROSS.

3. Fathers are called to be a fortress for their families
- a. Imagery of God
 - i. Scripture says that **Adam and Eve were created in the image of God**, by which it means primarily that they were made with the capacity to imitate the holiness of God
 - ii. However, they rebelled against their Creator and **they lost the capacity to imitate God’s holiness.**
 - iii. **The image of God in them was not wiped out, but it no longer could be seen perfectly.**
 - iv. **Humanity is a mirror designed to reflect the image of its Creator,**
 - v. Jonathan Edwards in *Religious Affections* connects the ideas of imaging God and reflecting God as in a mirror:
The light of the Sun of righteousness does not only shine upon them, but is so communicated to them that they shine also, and become little images of that Sun which shines upon them...

b. Pursuing Christlikeness

- i. Golden chain of salvation: For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30 ESV)
- ii. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the man of Heaven [Jesus]. (1 Corinthians 15:49 ESV)

WE ARE TO BE IMAGERS OF GOD. WE DO THIS THROUGH PURSUING CHRISTLIKENESS. AS FATHERS, WE NEED TO REFLECT GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON'S PROTECTIVE CARE TO OUR FAMILIES, BECOMING A FORTRESS AS IT WERE.

c. protecting them from:

THIS IS ONLY IN A DERIVATIVE WAY

i. The world - Be present

1. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
(Matthew 3:16; Matthew 3:17 ESV)
2. Be present to be felt and heard
3. Cell phone and Luke

ii. The evil one – Be prayerful

1. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12 ESV)
2. Many are here today due to the prayers of our parents

iii. Sin – Be proactive

1. Protect them from your own sin

- a. Ephesians 6:4 - Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger
- b. Colossians 3:21 - Fathers, do not provoke your children
- c. Arwen while I listened to sermon and Judah forgetting his equipment

2. Be quick to repent

- a. Adele – “Nobody here cares what you think”

3. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:8-9 ESV)

4. The most glorious instance of protection is seen in Christ's propitiation of God's wrath. 1John 4:10

- a. From *Safety, Fullness, and Sweet Refreshment in Christ*: The fears and dangers to which men are subject, are of two kinds; temporal and eternal. Men are frequently in distress from fear of temporal evils. We live in an evil world, where we are liable to an abundance of sorrows and calamities. A great part of our lives is spent in sorrowing for present or past evils, and in fearing those which are future ... But Christ is a refuge in all trouble; there is a foundation for rational support and peace in him, whatever threatens us. He, whose heart is fixed, trusting in Christ, need not be afraid of any evil tidings. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Christ is round about them that fear him."

But it is the other kind of fear and danger to which we have a principal respect; the fear and danger of God's wrath. The fears of a terrified conscience, the fearful expectation of the dire fruits of sin, and the resentment of an angry God, these are infinitely the most dreadful. If men are in danger of those things, and are not asleep, they will be more terrified than with the fears of any

outward evil. Men are in a most deplorable condition, as they are by nature exposed to God's wrath; and if they are sensible how dismal their case is, will be in dreadful fears and dismal expectations.

- b. Though the concept of the wrath of God is not in vogue these days, the Bible is clear; those who do not find refuge in Christ will be exposed to the wrath of God.
- c. In his *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem has this to say about God's wrath: It may surprise us to find how frequently the Bible talks about the wrath of God. Yet if God loves all that is right and good, and all that conforms to his moral character, then it should not be surprising that he would hate everything that is opposed to his moral character. God's wrath directed against sin is therefore closely related to God's holiness and justice. God's wrath may be defined as follows: God's wrath means that he intensely hates all sin.”
- d. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10 ESV)
 - i. Propitiation: to appease or pacify anger, to make favourable
 - ii. Theological Def'n: a sacrifice that makes God favourable towards us by removing sin
 - iii. J. I. Packer: “Between us sinners and the thunderclouds of divine wrath stands the cross of the Lord Jesus. If we are Christ's, through faith, then we are justified through his cross, and the wrath will never touch us, neither here nor hereafter.”

FATHERS, CONSIDER GOD IN THE METAPHORS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WHO IS PORTRAYED AS A SHIELD, A ROCK, A FORTRESS, A STRONGHOLD, A VERY REFUGE FOR HIS PEOPLE. CONSIDER CHRIST WHO IS OUR PROTECTION FROM THE WORLD, FROM SATAN, AND FROM OUR SIN. AND IN LIGHT OF THESE GLORIOUS TRUTHS, BE ENCOURAGED AND EQUIPPED TO BE A FORTRESS FOR YOUR FAMILY FROM THE THREE ENEMIES OF THEIR SOULS; THE WORLD, THE DEVIL, AND SIN. FINALLY, REVEL IN THE GLORY OF A GRACIOUS SAVIOUR WHO APPEASED THE LOVING AND JUST WRATH OF GOD TOWARDS US. RELISH IN THE REMOVAL OF YOUR SIN AND THE JUSTIFICATION YOU RECEIVE IN YOUR REDEEMER.