

THE HIDING PLACE

Ps. 32:7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

This year is the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing the Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg church which set alight the Protestant Reformation. He wrote over forty hymns, and he said about music, “Next to theology I give to music the highest place and honour. Music is the art of the prophets, the only art that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us”. ... Another German, J.S. Bach was one of the greatest classical composers, and he wrote, “The object of all music should be the glory of God and pleasant recreation”.

God loves music, and He has included it as part of worship. He introduced the birth of His Son with music ... Lk. 2:13 a multitude of the heavenly host praising God ... 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. The Lord expressed the same imagery to Job, Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Indeed, throughout the Old and New Testaments, there are many instances of praise through music ... such as the Song of Moses (Ex. 15), the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), the Song of David’s victory (I Sam. 18), the Song of Solomon, the Lamentations, the Psalms ... and in the New Testament, Paul instructed the church in Ephesus, Eph. 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, and also the church in Colosse, Col. 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord ... and there is also that great Song of the Redeemed John heard in Heaven, Rev. 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. ... As A.W. Tozer wrote, “Because we were created to worship, worship is the normal employment of moral beings”.

Pearl and I were in a meeting recently and the Pastor was leading the people in worship. As part of that worship, we sang a beautiful hymn. They did not have any musical accompaniment available that day, but nevertheless he encouraged them, “It doesn’t matter whether you sing like a cat or a canary ... the Lord loves to hear you praise Him!” ... And it’s true. ... There are many ways to praise God, - hymns are not the only way, - but they are a means He enjoys, and which He has ordained His saints should engage in when they meet together.

By the way, worship is more than singing, - some people think music equals worship and worship equals music, but that is not the full picture ... Worship does not actually need music, as J Oswald Sanders explained, “Worship is the adoring contemplation of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ and in His Word”. ... That means you can worship God *anywhere*, and you can even worship Him in silence ... you can worship Him in the simple reading of His Word. ... And from the very moment we come into His presence is when our worship ought to begin ... in our fellowship together, in our singing, in our praying, in our reading and study of the Scriptures, as we gather around the Table ... indeed, throughout every aspect of our coming together in His Name ... It is *all* worship, and He has promised, **Mt. 18:20** *where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Hymns, though, are a memorable way we relate to the goodness and glory of God. From childhood, we have been taught such choruses and hymns as Deep and wide, Wide, wide is the ocean, He’s got the whole world in His hands, Trust and obey ... Jesus bids us shine, All things bright and beautiful, Jesus wants me for a sunbeam, Jesus loves me. ... And they have remained with us.

On holidays Pearl and I visited the home of Corrie Ten Boom in Haarlem, just outside Amsterdam (<http://tenboom.com/en/>). Along with her father and other family members she helped many Jews escape the Nazi holocaust during World War II. Unfortunately, she was betrayed, arrested, and incarcerated in Ravensbruck concentration camp, exclusively for women, to the north of Berlin. You can read about her life-story in the book, *The Hiding Place*. On one occasion, - just a week before the Ravensbruck camp was liberated by the Allies, - she was on a list to be taken and gassed to death. However, one of the Germans made a clerical error, - her name was ‘accidentally’ omitted, - and she was mistakenly released. She wrote about it, “God does not have problems. Only plans”. ... And she spent the rest of her life travelling the world speaking of her confidence in the Lord.

Last Sunday evening we were taken to Ps. 32, and, - having recently visited Corrie Ten Boom’s home, - verse seven particularly caught my attention, **Ps. 32:7** *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* ... And a number of hymns came into my mind in connection with *the hiding place*.

We could find many hiding places in the Scriptures, but the first hiding place is mentioned in the third chapter of Genesis, **Gen. 3:8** *And they heard the voice of*

the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife *hid themselves* from the presence of the LORD God *amongst the trees* of the garden. Adam and Eve had sinned by allowing themselves to ‘be taken in’ by the serpent’s deception, against God’s instructions. As they listened, they wanted more out of life than being servants of God for they aspired after being their own masters (Gen. 3:1-5).

Yes, we can blame the serpent for deceiving them, but Adam and Eve ought to have remained resolute in their obedience to God ... and they did not have to be told they had done wrong, for when God confronted them, they immediately knew they had done wrong, ⁶ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. ⁷ And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons ... ¹⁰ And he [*Adam*] said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I *hid myself*.

That is the first mention of a *hiding place* in the Bible. Our first parents tried to hide from God, but it was impossible for He found them. ... God is everywhere, and He knows all things, and He sees all things, so nothing can be hidden from Him ... and when His voice echoed across His creation, these two sinners could not conceal themselves. They tried to camouflage their nakedness and their sin by making for themselves their own coverings, but nothing was sufficient to hide their nakedness until God sacrificed an animal to make them coats of skins, and clothed them (Gen. 3:21).

There is no hiding from God. Many people try to close Him out of their minds and shut Him out of their lives, as if He does not exist. Many of them even go so far as to claim there is no God ... they don’t *want* there to *be* a God ... and yet, they cannot get away from the niggings of ‘what if there *is* a God?! ... They tear apart His laws. They reject what He has ordained concerning sexuality, and marriage, and murder, and stealing, and all the rest of His ways ... and they organise their society upon their own deviant principles which will inevitably bring about its destruction. ... Isn’t it the truth that everything a man builds doesn’t last? It can’t because he is using materials which are not eternal.

There is coming a day when there will be no hiding place for those who reject God by replacing Him with their inadequate alternatives. On His way to the cross, Jesus told the crowds, **Lk. 23:29** *behold, the days are coming, in the which they*

shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.³⁰ Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. ... There will be no *hiding place*!

Turn to Rev. 16, ¹ And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. ² And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image ... This chapter speaks of a time in the future when God will judge this unbelieving world ... a world which has rejected His Son. And no matter what catastrophes God will pour out upon them, they will not believe! In fact, they ⁹ blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. There will be no repentance ... they will increasingly curse His Name, and they will not accept God's offer of salvation.

Turn also to II Peter 3, ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. ... This isn't 'global warming' or a nuclear war or some other kind of manmade phenomenon ... *that* is not what the world has to worry about! ... Instead, what the world *does* have to worry about is the coming judgment of God, when there will be no place to hide ... *no hiding place*! And that is the dynamism which lies behind the question, **Heb. 2:3** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

Again, in the early chapters of Genesis, when the storm came, and the rains did not cease for forty days and forty nights, there was only one 'hiding place', and that was the ark God instructed Noah to build. That was the only place of salvation. There was nowhere else safe for only the eight in God's care were saved, and Jesus warned, **Lk. 17:26** as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. ²⁷ They did eat [*they were gluttons, filling their own bellies*], they drank [*they partied and got caught up in frivolities*], they married wives [*family life was decimated*], they were given in marriage [*they desecrated the whole concept of marriage*], until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. ... They had nowhere to run ... nowhere to hide, and they perished.

No *hiding place* ... If Jesus was to come back today, and if you do not know Him as your Saviour, you will have no hiding place. ... Where would you run to? Where would you hide? ... You ask me, why *should* I run, and why *should*

I hide? I'm not a bad person. I've never murdered, or raped, or stolen. ... Yes, but neither had our first parents murdered, or raped, or stolen ... "*All*" they had done was disobey God, and that was enough for God to be angry with them, and put them out of His presence in the Garden, and introduce death. He had given them beautiful surroundings in which to live, absolute harmony with Himself and all His creation ... but they threw it away, choosing instead to try to become their own masters. ... Granted, you have never committed any of the 'great' sins, but the very fact you have not allowed Jesus Christ to become your Saviour is, in itself, rebellion against God. It is like what the accusers of Jesus said, **Lk. 19:14** *We will not have this man to reign over us.*

Sin is 'shaking our fists' defiantly in the face of God. It is rebellion against Him, and we have been born rebels for **Ps. 51:5** *in sin did my mother conceive me.* We don't have to be taught how to become sinners, because we are born sinners ... born outside of the relationship with God as our Heavenly Father. And that is how committing sin comes so naturally.

And, even as Christians, every day of our lives sin battles through 'foul-means-and-fair' to bring us under its subjection ... *But*, there is a *hiding place*, as Paul wrote, **Rom. 7:24** *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* ²⁵ *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* ... *He* is our only hiding place,

Hiding in Thee, hiding in Thee,
 Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee.
 How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe,
 I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe,
 How often, when trials like sea-billows roll,
 Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul.

... That hymn was written by William Cushing in 1876, and he wrote, "It must be said of this hymn that it was the outgrowth of many tears, many heart-conflicts and soul yearnings, of which the world can know nothing. The history of many battles is behind it". ... "Hiding in Thee ... Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee" ...

Is Jesus Christ your hiding place? Do you know Him as your Saviour and your Lord, and do you run to Him as your tower of strength when fear grips you, and you have nowhere else to go? Another hymn says,

A wonderful Saviour is Jesus my Lord,
 A wonderful Saviour to me;
 He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock ...

And covers me there with His hand.

That is what the psalmist is claiming, **Ps. 32:7** *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. ...* When the trials of life come, where do you turn? ... Many people turn to things which draw them deeper into defeat and despair, - an overdose of tablets, drowning in alcohol consumption, cursing and swearing at the world ... these things serve no other purpose than drawing you in deeper! ... There is nothing around you in the pit that will help to get you out, ... you are struggling in the miry clay and you are sinking further down. ... A young man phoned me one evening, and told me he was at the Forth Bridge and he was going to jump over; he had withdrawn £1000 which he had spent on prostitutes in Edinburgh ... even before he was going to jump into the river *he was sinking!* ... When you are sinking, - the psalmist says, - *don't look down, but look up!*

It is only when you look up and you cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" ... It is only then that God reaches down and lifts you out of that horrible pit, and away from the filthy, dirty, miry clay, and He sets your feet upon the rock ... the Rock of our salvation Who is the Lord Jesus Christ. ... He is the only *hiding place*.

When you trust in Him as your Saviour, He becomes your Lord and your Master, - that is how it works ... - and He leads you, for here is how His Word explains it, **Prov. 3:5** *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* And no less than Jesus explains how safe and secure you are, for He declared, **Jn. 10:28** *I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. ... He is our *hiding place!**

Jesus, my heart's dear Refuge,
 Jesus has died for me;
 Firm on the Rock of Ages
 Ever my trust shall be.
 Here let me wait with patience,
 Wait till the night is o'er,
 Wait till I see the morning Break on the golden shore.

It is a fact of life that as long as we are in this world we must contend with its issues. Sin is the consequence of death, and since we all have been born under sin, we all must die (Heb. 9:27) ... but even in death, **Ps. 32:7** *Thou [God] art my*

hiding place. Death for the Christian is defeated because it cannot come and whisk us away from our God because the moment we become absent from this body ... in that very same instant, our spirit is immediately present with the Lord *forever* (II Cor. 5:8). ... Death cannot rob us of God!

And as long as we are in this world we have to put up with its constraints and its pressures. Our bodies don't get any younger, - we cannot do what we used to do as quickly as we used to. We have aches and pains in places we never knew we had ... and the body wears out, Paul wrote though, **II Cor. 4:16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. **17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; **18** While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. ... I don't want to take cancer ... I don't want to suffer a stroke or a heart attack ... I don't want to have the illnesses associated with getting older ... but the factual truth is our bodies are running down, and they won't last forever. ... But I do know that I won't need this body forever, for here is how Paul explains it, **I Cor. 15:51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. **55** O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? **56** The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ... and it is the same as Job explained thousands of years earlier, **Job 19:26** And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: **27** Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold ... **25** For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

Often, the loveliest conversations are with those believers who are lying on their death bed, coming to the end of this life's journey. They don't be full of self-pity or regrets for what have never done or never owned in life ... Instead, - and you can see it in their faces and hear it in their voices, - they are looking forward to seeing God, and being with Him forever, for they know that very soon they will be "safe in the arms of Jesus". Fanny Crosby wrote that hymn, and another of the many hymns that blind woman wrote says this,

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
All its joys are but a name;

But His love abideth ever,
Through eternal years the same.

And in the last verse, she wrote,

Take the world, but give me Jesus.
In His cross my trust shall be,
Till, with clearer, brighter vision,
Face to face my Lord I see.

... And that brings to mind another hymn,

Face to face with Christ, my Saviour,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ Who died for me?
Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkened veil between,
But a blessèd day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

The psalmist who wrote this Psalm 32 was born into a simple family in Bethlehem, and tended sheep for the early part of his life, - the youngest brother, - who warded off the lion and the bear ... the boy who defeated Goliath ... who, - when he became king, - had an adulterous affair which produced a little baby who died within a week ... This same King David had many sons, one of which, - Absalom, - tried to kill him ... Indeed, the psalmist faced trial after trial and heartache after heartache ... Through it all, though, what 'kept him together'? ... He explains it very simply as he testified to God's saving grace and keeping power, **Ps. 32:7** *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* I trust *that is* the confidence each of us have in our God today. Amen.

Thou art my hiding place, O Lord,
In Thee I put my trust;
Encouraged by Thy holy Word,
A feeble child of dust;
I have no argument beside,
I urge no other plea;
And 'tis enough my Saviour died,
My Saviour died for me.

When storms of fierce temptation beat,
 And furious foes assail,
 My refuge is the mercy seat,
 My hope within the veil.
 From strife of tongues and bitter words
 My spirit flies to Thee:
 Joy to my heart the thought affords,
 My Saviour died for me.

'Mid trials heavy to be borne,
 When mortal strength is vain,
 A heart with grief and anguish torn,
 A body racked with pain,
 Ah! what could the sufferer rest,
 Bid every murmur flee,
 But this, the witness in my breast
 That Jesus died for me?

And when Thine awful voice commands
 This body to decay,
 And life, in its last lingering sands,
 Is ebbing fast away,
 Then, though it be in accents weak,
 And faint and tremblingly,
 O give me strength in death to speak,
 My Saviour died for me.
 (Thomas Raffles 1788-1863)