**[Faith and Refuge](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=http%3A%2F%2Ffaithencounters.impart.org%2F2024%2F07%2F18%2Ffaith-and-refuge%2F&sr=0&signature=cf4921a3a9f4cc3230b89dbaf8de8ea7&blog_id=127938330&user=d4772d34747c29138d6356de987fff13&_e=eyJlcnJvciI6bnVsbCwiYmxvZ19pZCI6MTI3OTM4MzMwLCJibG9nX2xhbmciOiJlbiIsInNpdGVfaWRfbGFiZWwiOiJ3cGNvbSIsImhhc19mZWF0dXJlZF9pbWFnZSI6IjAiLCJzdWJzY3JpYmVyX2lkIjoiNTY2NTEwODc0IiwiX3VpIjoiZDQ3NzJkMzQ3NDdjMjkxMzhkNjM1NmRlOTg3ZmZmMTMiLCJfdXQiOiJhbm9uIiwiZW1haWxfZG9tYWluIjoieWFob28uY29tIiwicG9zdF9pZCI6MzQ4OSwidXNlcl9lbWFpbCI6InJpY2tfYmxhaXNkZWxsQHlhaG9vLmNvbSIsImRhdGVfc2VudCI6IjIwMjQtMDctMTgiLCJlbWFpbF9pZCI6IjRiYmU5OTc4ODkxMTI0YTcwMGFhZDhjNTVhYmZhODhiIiwiZW1haWxfbmFtZSI6Im5ldy1wb3N0IiwidGVtcGxhdGUiOiJuZXctcG9zdCIsImxpbmtfZGVzYyI6InBvc3QtdXJsIiwiYW5jaG9yX3RleHQiOiJGYWl0aCBhbmRcdTAwYTBSZWZ1Z2UiLCJfZHIiOm51bGwsIl9kbCI6Ilwvd3BcL3YyXC9zaXRlc1wvMTI3OTM4MzMwXC9wb3N0c1wvMzQ4OT9fZW52ZWxvcGU9MSZlbnZpcm9ubWVudC1pZD1wcm9kdWN0aW9uJl9ndXRlbmJlcmdfbm9uY2U9YTBiZjNkNTg5ZiZfbG9jYWxlPXVzZXIiLCJfZW4iOiJ3cGNvbV9lbWFpbF9jbGljayIsIl90cyI6MTcyMTMyODQ2NzY2OCwiYnJvd3Nlcl90eXBlIjoicGhwLWFnZW50IiwiX2F1YSI6IndwY29tLXRyYWNrcy1jbGllbnQtdjAuMyIsIl91bCI6bnVsbCwiYmxvZ190eiI6IjAiLCJ1c2VyX2xhbmciOm51bGx9&_z=z)**

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*God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in trouble. Psalm 46:1. NLT*This past February I got the joy of being invited to go to Disneyland with my daughter, Elizabeth and her family. Through God's amazing and various provisions, the seven of us planned and anticipated this adventure. It just so happened that our planned Disney days took place during some of the heaviest rains Anaheim had experienced in years! The heavens opened and the streets literally became rivers. There are no "refunds for rainy days" at Disneyland. It is go or lose your money! The storms of life are like that too--there is no getting away from them.The other day, I felt overwhelmed as I prayed for some of my friends and family situations. They face challenges for their families that break my heart. It caused a sort of "soul storm" in my emotions. I wanted to run away from those challenges, but in reality, I needed a refuge from them. A place of safety where I could sort through my emotions, rather than hiding from them. Have you ever experienced that? You want to run away. That is when we have a choice. We can either run to God, or run to our hobbies, food, alcohol, or other distractions. As I made the choice (this time!) to run to Him, not only did peace come, but so did faith. As I released this faith in prayer, I knew God not only had their problems but also them. I was able to intercede for them with greater faith. The Hebrew word for "refuge" in this verse is *machseh.* It means a shelter, refuge, protection, or fortress. It also includes the idea of a hope and a place of trust; and the obvious: a shelter from storms. When we run to Him as a refuge, hope must come. Are you struggling with any storms or troubles in your life? Do you feel battered and bruised? God is waiting for you to go to Him. It is always available, but if we don't access it, we won't have it.Sometimes, as I seek His refuge, I just sit in His Presence. I might turn on worship music or sit in silence, slowly focusing on Him, not the storms. Gradually, as I sit there I feel strengthened because He is not just a God who provides refuge, He is a God who wants to strengthen us to not just hide from our troubles, but learn how to face them victoriously.After the sitting and "catching my breath" phase, I then begin to share with Him about the situation. It is not to give Him the information--for, of course He already knows it, but often as I share clarity comes. I begin to be able to sort out the difference between my feelings and the facts of the situation. Many times this is when the thread of solution begins to open up. Psalm 62:8 encourages us: *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.* We find David, in Psalm 142:2-3 declaring *I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles. When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn.* He found it solace in sharing with the Lord all his thoughts--including his complaints. If you have never verbalized your thoughts and feelings out loud, try it. It may sound silly to say, but it makes a difference, especially hearing your own words and thoughts. Praying audibly is a valuable tool for your tool belt.This is a reminder that we all can have access to His refuge. Don't try to live through your storms without a shelter. Go to Him. Ask Him for His strength, insight and wisdom in dealing with every trouble you are facing. Jesus left us some encouraging and comforting but tough words to hear in John 16: *Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? But the time is coming--indeed it's here now--when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me along. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world. John 16:31-33. NLT.* I think the sooner we learn how to *abide in the shelter of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1)* and not be surprised that we have many trials and sorrows, the sooner we receive His strength and help with those trials and sorrows. When we abide in His refuge, He often reminds us to put on His armor, to cast our cares or to remember we can do all things through Christ who does in fact strengthen us! I have never lived in "tornado alley", but I imagine those folks prepare, and prepare well, because they know storms are inevitable. We can learn to prepare for the troubles we face as well. Remember, you are not alone. He is with you. Are you prepared?*Father, thank you for your provision from our storms and trials. We can take heart that we can overcome the with Your strength and help. Teach us to turn quickly to you in our times of distress, instead of living outside the protection You have provided for us, In Jesus' Name, amen.* |