**Our Hiding Place**

Ever play hide and seek? What a fun game when we were young! Someone counts and you sneak away to find the best hiding place of all. But when your hiding place is really good, you have to wait, because it might be awhile before anyone finds you!

As I read from Psalm 32:7 “For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.” I was struck by the Psalmist’s understanding of God as hiding place. This is even more amazing considering in the first six verses the Psalmist confesses how he had once been hiding from God because of things in his life he wasn’t ready make known. Once he offered these things to God, his life was full of joy! How wonderful it felt to have the bad stuff forgiven. How good it is to live in complete honesty, he writes. And yet…there is still a need for a hiding place.

From what or whom is the Psalmist hiding? From what or whom are we hiding? What do we wish would go away?! It could be any number of miserable situations – medical, financial, relational, familial, or occupational. We may have cleared up our relationship with God but the rest of our lives and the lives of those around us – not so much.

I love the next words of our Psalmist for it is God who speaks to the Psalmist: ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.’ This might be good news unless we would rather hold the reins! God is trying to gently tell the Psalmist and us that we need God’s leadership. We have not always done the best at figuring out the rest of life out on our own! God knows how we are but when we lean into God, when we look to God first instead of jumping at our own ideas first, God will guide us and watch over us. This does not mean nothing bad will ever happen to you or me. The Psalmist continues: ‘Many sorrows come to the wicked but unfailing love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.’

‘The wicked are defined as those who don’t trust in the Lord, therefore they don’t obey him. The Psalmist and maybe some of us may have been one of those people. When the Psalmist refused to confess his sin; he felt sorrow and said: “my strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.” When we are overwhelmed by the challenges of this life and we become angry, frustrated, hopeless or tempted to give up, it is then that we need to run to God and not away from God.

For when the Psalmist came close to God and offered up the reality of his life, he realized that instead of hiding from God, he was invited to make *God* his hiding place. In God he found a safe place to admit all the stuff he’d been hiding and he found a cleansing that allowed him to have protection in the midst of some of the worst of life simply because of the love and joy of knowing God. This probably sounds too good to be true but this is God who we see in Jesus and God is better than any good or true we know on earth! God can take all that we confess and surround us with unfailing love. What can beat unfailing love? Jesus showed us on the cross that nothing can beat unfailing love – instead death was overcome by God’s unfailing love and grace.

The Psalmist concludes “So rejoice in the Lord and be glad all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure.”

We can have these pure hearts and this joy when we find our hiding place in God. For more about hearts that are pure and how we can be close to God join us Sunday March 19th at 11am for lively worship with communion and a fellowship meal following worship at Gerrardstown Presbyterian Church, 372 Dominion Rd., Gerrardstown, WV. The sermon topic is *Blessed Are the Pure in Heart for They Shall See God.*