



His Pavilions of Grace

Devotion

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock (Psalm 27:5).

A **pavilion!** What an interesting word from this wonderful paean of assurance, Psalm 27. A pavilion is “a covered place, tent, booth, or shelter, where a person or beast may hide or be sheltered.” This word is used only six times in the Authorized Version of the King James Bible. Specifically referencing Psalm 27:5, it may be noted that the use of the word “pavilion” is metaphorical. “It represents the place of divine protection in the day of trouble” (*The New Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, 955-956).

In times of trouble, God has always sheltered and protected His people. During their time of wandering in the desert following their escape from Egypt, the Israelites lived in temporary structures called *sukkot*. The Hebrew word “*sukkot*” (pronounced “sue coat”) means “booths” or “pavilions.” (www.jewfaq.org, accessed 2/18/17) These *sukkot* provided God’s people a place of protection. Later, as recorded in Leviticus 23:34, God commanded His people to remember and to celebrate the times in which He protected them by observing the Festival of Sukkot, or, as is sometimes translated, the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Israelites surely had not **earned** the privilege of being under the shelter of God’s grace. They disobeyed and sinned against Him many times. The Bible tells us, ... *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). So, we, too, do not deserve to be ushered into His Holy presence, for we are **sinner**s and deserve eternal punishment! Romans 6:23 says, *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Through the water of Holy Baptism applied with God’s Word, however, our sins are washed away. Through Word and Sacrament, we enjoy the blessedness of God’s presence with us now. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the only way of salvation and eternal life, is admitted into God’s pavilion of grace through the blood of Jesus who died for us!

Despite God’s repeated promise in His Word that we are saved only through faith in Jesus, some still believe they must be saved through their own works and merit. Perhaps this belief stems from modern society’s work ethic. We are told that if we work hard in school and earn good grades, it will follow that we will enter a fine college, get a great job, and be successful in life. If we work hard, we will be worthy of promotion and honors. Or perhaps some believe that because of their own works and merit they somehow **deserve** salvation. This idea is reinforced in many ways, including through advertising. You may recall the successful 1970’s advertising slogan sponsored by the McDonald’s restaurant chain which said, “You deserve a break today.” The cosmetic company L’Oreal has added to the entitlement culture with a slogan encouraging use of their hair dye as a beautiful model intones, “Because I’m worth it!”

God does not follow the world’s line of thought. God’s truth tells us, *For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9). God’s grace for us is completely unparalleled, unmerited, and unbelievable! It is not by our works that we dwell within the love and

protection of our Lord God and His Son Jesus, but only because of His unfathomable **grace!**

As forgiven sinners, we have the wonderful privilege of living in the pavilion of God's grace. We live in the certainty that our eternal life is secured through faith in Jesus and in His death and resurrection for us. What a precious gift it is to be sheltered by the saving protection of our almighty God forever. Psalm 61:4 reminds us, *I will abide in the tabernacle forever; I will trust in the cover of thy wings.*

Prayer: Praise to You, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the mansions in heaven that await, and for the pavilions of protection You bestow in the here and now! World without end. Amen.

Scripture references are from the KJV.

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Published by Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 2017