

# From fear to trust

## *Finding a safe refuge in the epidemic*

We live days of anxiety and uncertainty. The whole world is in fear. Suddenly we have become aware of the fragility of life. What will happen tomorrow? The strength in which contemporary Man believed they were safe has turned into weakness, there are cracks in the pillars and we feel vulnerable. People look for a message of serenity and tranquility.

A crisis situation like the one we are experiencing shakes our philosophy of life and weakens our self-sufficiency. This forces us to seek refuge in secure values. In financial areas, people draw on gold when the stock market crashes. What is the equivalent of “gold” in our life? **Where can we put our trust?** This is the key question.

Christians believe that the secure value par excellence, “the gold” to turn to, is faith, faith in Christ. The apostle Peter wrote «your faith is of greater worth than gold» (1 Peter 1:7). And we believe so because the Christian faith responds to the deepest needs of the human being. It gives us three great columns that support us:

- Need for **identity**: Who am I? Where do I come from?
- Need for **purpose**: What is life? What am I here for?
- Need for **hope**: What happens after death?

The Bible, God's “open letter” to humankind, teaches us the path that leads to trust in times of crisis. One of the most encouraging texts in this regard is Psalm 91, also called the “**Triumphal Hymn of Trust**”. It has breathed encouragement and peace into millions of believers in the midst of trial.

It was probably **written in the midst of an epidemic of pestilence**. The circumstances were similar to those we are experiencing today. Its message, therefore, is very relevant to our current epidemic situation.

Its message is summed up in one sentence: **trust triumphs over fear**. The psalmist presents to us the “journey” from anxiety-fear to confidence in three steps. They are actually the same steps we find in a love relationship:

- Knowing God
- Loving God
- Trusting in God

By knowing, we meet and by meeting we love. So it is with faith. The Christian faith is a love relationship that begins with a personal encounter with Jesus, «the image (*portrait*) of the invisible God» (Colossians 1:15), and is sustained by trust. Let's look at these steps:

## 1. Knowing God

God is the great unknown. Many people reject God without knowing the least about Him; in reality what they reject is their idea of God, a God fruit of their imagination. **Knowing who God really is is an essential step on the journey towards trust.** For this reason the psalm begins with a dazzling description of the character of God:

*«He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty  
I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.» (Psalm 91:1-2)*

Up to four different names are mentioned in the opening two verses to explain who and how God is. What a formidable entrance gate to trust! According to the psalmist, God is the Most High, the Almighty, the Lord and the Sublime God.

**Awareness of God's greatness is the foundation of our trust.** We could paraphrase a popular proverb and say “*tell me what your God is like and I will tell you what your trust is like*”. Upon meeting Him, the psalmist discovers in God *his Shelter, his Shadow, his Hope and his Fortress.*

## 2. Loving God

Second, by knowing, we love and a personal relationship is established. Notice how the psalmist refers to God as **MY** God, **my** hope and **my** castle. The adjective “my” opens up a unique perspective and changes many things: the God of the psalmist is **a personal, close God, who intervenes in his life and cares** about his fears and needs.

There we have one of the most distinctive features of the Christian faith: God is not only the Almighty, the creator of the Universe, but also the intimate Father, the Abba (“dad”) who loves me and guards me. This is our great privilege: God takes care of us, as a Father does with his son, because in Christ we are made adoptive children of God. **For the Christian, God is not a distant “He”, but a near “You”.** For this reason the psalmist describes this experience with a beautiful metaphor:

*«He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge.» (Psalm 91:4)*

### 3. Trusting in God

After discovering who and how God is and putting His love in Him (Psalm 91:14), the psalmist exclaims: «My God in whom trust» (Psalm 91:2). Love and trust feed each other: trust is a response to love and love, in turn, is expressed by trusting.

The Christian trusts in the protection of God expressed in three ways:

- **God knows**
- **God controls**
- **God cares** (for me)

Chance does not exist in the believer's life. **Our life is not at the mercy of a virus, but in the hands of the Almighty God.** We believe that **nothing happens outside of God's control.** Therefore the psalmist exclaims with confidence:

*«For He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence, His faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear... nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday... no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.» (Psalm 91:3-6, 10)*

Jesus himself confirmed this reality with words full of sensitivity:

*«Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.» (Matthew 10:29-31, see also Luke 12:6-7)*

As a magnificent summary, it is God himself who speaks at the end of the psalm and assumes the commitment to fulfill his promises:

*«Because he loves me, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.» (Psalm 91:14-15)*

In conclusion, **faith in Christ is not a vaccine against all evil, but a guarantee of total security**, the security that «if God is for us, who can be against us?» (Romans 8:31). In other words, faith does not guarantee the absence of trial, but it does guarantee victory over trial.

**There is no place for triumphalism, but there is certainly triumph.** It is the triumph that the resurrection of Christ assured us with his victory over evil and death. It is the same Christ who tells us today:

*«And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.»  
(Matthew 28:20)*

Therein lies the certainty of our faith and the trust that overcomes all fear.

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The web **Christian Thought** gives information about the literary work of Dr. Pablo Martínez and his father Rev. José M. Martínez. Through this work the Christian thought of the authors flows covering a wide range of subjects; theological, psychological and ethical issues are considered from a biblical perspective with a relevant and practical application to current problems.

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