

MOVING TOWARDS THE DARKNESS

PART 2

PROTECTION IN THE MIDST OF DARKNESS

Dr. Steve McEvoy

Recently, I had an experience through which the Holy Spirit is speaking to us prophetically. This article "Protected in the Midst of Darkness" is Part 2 of my teaching on Moving Towards the Darkness. I want to share my experience and bring some truth to light from God's Word.

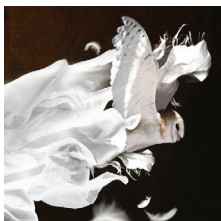
Notice an amazing promise that God has given to us.

Protection is Provided

Psalm Ninety-One says,

- 1. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.**
- 2. I will say to the Lord, 'My Refuge and my fortress, My God in whom I trust'!**
- 3. For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence**
- 4. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.**
- 5. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day.**
- 6. Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon**

Psalm 91:1-5



As we read these verses, we need to consider an important fact. In my teaching "Moving Towards the Darkness, Part 1", I shared that the Holy Spirit is revealing that the prophetic mascot in our

current hour is the Owl (review Part One for this understanding). The Owl is a creature of the night and prevails in darkness. The Holy Spirit has been speaking to the Church that we are being moved out of our comfort zones of church meetings into the dark places that need God's light. For many, this is a massive challenge to their mindset.

While our encounters with God's Presence and gatherings for fellowship with other believers are vital in our ongoing growth, these are designed to equip us to move into our place in the midst of darkness and to fulfill the calling on our lives. The culture of the Church has subconsciously, and at times consciously, taught that "you are a spiritual success when you attend church meetings; everything else is unspiritual or of less importance in God's heart". I battled this mindset for years and it has been very difficult to see it shaken from my life.

The practical revelation of what is promised in Psalm Ninety-One changes immensely when we recognize our call to penetrate the dark places of broken lives and challenging circumstances. In the amazing promises that God has given to His children who find their "**refuge**" in Him, He declares that He will protect them as they penetrate the darkness.

So, what does this mean?

“Dwelling in the shelter” of God, **“abiding in His shadow”** and taking **“refuge”** in



Him does not mean that we are to consistently live in a hidden place seeking His Presence. It is not telling us that we are to live hidden away in His Word privately, or in Bible studies with others, day in and day out.

Think about this practically. If it is your thinking that to be spiritual, you must constantly retreat to a prayer place for hours on end of private fellowship with the Presence of God, then why would you need **“deliverance from the snare of the trapper”**? If hiding in God is simply defined by continuous meetings with other believers, then why would you need His shield from **“terror by night and arrows that fly by day”**?

This emphasis of protection is for the child of God who is living in the midst of darkness and who, at times, may be facing the risk of death. This way of thinking is a major cultural mind shift for the Church. As prophetic Owls, God is pushing His people towards darkness and not away from it. You and I have been uniquely gifted and designed by God to take that uniqueness and make a significant contribution to the world where we live. That world is in the business community, the educational system, the government, the emergency services, and so on. If we are good at something, we must recognize that it is God who made us good at what we do. We are to press in to find out how that gift, strength and ability is designed to make its greatest contribution. Then, into the darkness we go.

God has given us protection for the battles we face as we exist in these dark places. When we believe that the emphasis of God’s calling means being with believers all the time, then the heart of God is being missed. Rather, we are to take what we receive from His Presence, His Word and fellowship with others

and find dark places to deposit those gifts. We are called to be like Jesus. What does that mean? It means that in our commitment to penetrate the darkness, we may be accused, as He was, of actually being a **“friend of sinners”** (Matthew 11:19).

Jesus is our Teacher

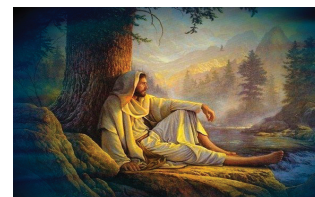
In the book of John, we read Jesus’ words. He said,

4. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

John 15:4

Jesus gave us an amazing key to experience spiritual success. He said, **“Abide in Me”**. Culturally we have turned **“abiding”** to mean that we are to have lengthy prayer sessions, more Bible studies and church meetings. Here is what is amazing about what Jesus said. The word **“abide”** simply means **“to continue, endure or be present”**. This Greek word also carries the meaning **“of a state or condition”**. This is an amazing picture.

When we reflect on Jesus’ life, we see that He would at times draw away and spend private time with the Father (Luke 6:12). There is no question that there were times of private engagement with His Father. But this is not the primary thing that is emphasized in His public ministry. Rather, the emphasis is on what the Father was doing through Him as He impacted the lives of people both temporally and eternally (John 14: 7-10; Acts 10:38). Jesus is teaching us through His life example and His Word. He didn’t tell us to have never-ending Bible Studies or Prayer Meetings. Jesus revealed that the key to spiritual success is our **“continuing”**, **“enduring”** and being **“present”** in our relationship with Him at all times.





In other words, stay connected to Jesus all the time. All spiritual fruit and life comes from Him so it is vital that we stay connected to Him. To a salesman, this

means stay connected to Jesus

as you engage in sales all day long. To a government leader, this means stay connected to Jesus while you lead all day long. To a business owner, this means stay connected to Jesus while you engage your business all day long. To a school teacher this means while you teach your students, stay connected to Jesus all day long. To a police officer, professional athlete, lawyer, receptionist, accountant and on and on, this means stay connected to Jesus all day long. He will lead us, talk to us, and release Himself through us if we see that our gifts place all of us in unique situations. He wants to show up right there in the midst of those situations.

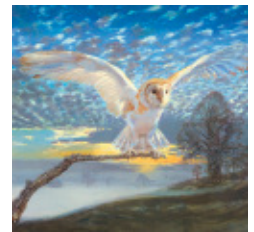
If our mindset is, “I am enduring my vocation to get to more spiritual matters”, it reveals that we are not connected to Jesus in our work and He is shut out of those places. This is a tragedy which holds back the kingdom because we are the ones who bring the kingdom of God into our physical world. Rather than complaining about the darkness in the world around us, we are meant to release God’s kingdom to become an answer to it.

Another aspect of the definition of the word **“abide”** is *“of a state or condition”*. This is powerful. Regardless of the gifts and abilities that we are using, it is our responsibility to *“stay in the state or condition”* of **“abiding”**. We bring Jesus into our vocational world or we shut Him out. Our mindset will determine if He is allowed to enter “in” or if He is forced to stay *“outside”* of what we do.

I recall that, years ago, God provided a business for April and I. We were able to give 20% right off the top and had great leftovers that met our need and

cleared all our debt. Even while this was happening, I was miserable. I loved the income and the joy of giving and was especially happy about getting all our debts cleared. But my mindset resisted this work and I couldn’t wait to get out of that unspiritual place. I hated it because I felt that I was “called” of God and that this certainly was way below God’s call for my life.

One day while I was doing my job, a lady approached me and asked me many questions. Eventually she shared a dream in which she saw a person who would bring answers that she needed to hear. My presence and work that I was doing matched her dream precisely. Once she was assured that I was that person, she opened up. I stopped my work and spent several hours ministering to her from the Word of God. Despite this amazing supernatural manifestation of God, I still couldn’t wait to get out of this unspiritual work and get on with what I thought was my true calling. Here, God was trying to release me into places of darkness where He wanted to meet the needs of others, and I was trying to get out of it to fulfill some special call from Him. How sad it is that our mindset can shut out our ability to participate with the great things that Jesus wants to do through us in our everyday world. Even though God broke through in this situation, I know for a fact that day by day I shut Him out of my daily work experience.



It may seem challenging to think that we have a significant role in seeing Jesus released into our daily life. I remind you of His return to His own home town. He was going all over the country, healing and delivering people from their life struggles. But when He showed up in His own home town, he could only release a minimal amount of the Kingdom of God. The reason why He met only a few needs is astounding.

The Word says,

5. And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands upon a few sick people and healed them.

6. And He wondered at their unbelief.

Mark 6:5-6



This is an incredible revelation. We are being told very clearly that we play a significant part in determining whether or not Jesus is able to manifest in our midst things that are on His heart to bring to pass. He **“could do no**

miracle”. Why? Because of **“their unbelief”**! The people of Jesus’ home town shut down what God Himself was willing to do.

Many believers feel that the workplace is a distraction from the calling of God. Jesus is ready to show up and manifest Himself as we learn to **“abide”** in Him. But we must be willing and be ready to participate in bringing Him into our everyday world. Our wrong mindsets that keep us disconnected from Jesus while we work can singularly be the reason that prevents Him from appearing in our lives the way many of us are yearning to experience. When we don’t recognize God’s calling that places us right where we are, we are unable to bring Him in.

A Wrong Paradigm

Anyone who knows me is aware that, as a child, I had a dream to be a firefighter. Living in the city of Toronto, I knew that there were paid full time career firefighters. I was completely ignorant of the fact that there were also volunteer firefighters outside of the big cities. In my teenage years, I had begun the pursuit of becoming a full time firefighter. Then I experienced an awareness of the call of God and was awakened to my hunger for God and His Kingdom

to have first place in my life. With this experience, a shift in life direction took place. Quickly I succumbed to the pressure and expectation that, for one to be “called”, Bible College was the answer and church ministry was the designed destination.

Definitely, there are aspects in my journey that had the fingerprint of God on them. But my greatest challenge was that I did not know that 1) every one of God’s children are called, and that 2) for most of them, their call would take their gift engagement into worldly locations, not into church meetings. I had no mental weapons to fight with and simply followed the path that others, as well as the overriding church culture, revealed was God’s path for me. This contributed to death in my marriage, personal failure, and a financial mess.

Looking back, I now see how God was sovereignly leading me to take on this challenge, I see how He changed a wineskin (my own mindset), and then how He positioned me to help others along the same path.

God called April and I to relocate from Toronto, Ontario to Nova Scotia. It was here that I was introduced to volunteer firefighting. When I was spoken to about joining as a volunteer, my initial response was (despite the childhood dreams) that this was ridiculous. I thought, “I am called of God, I can’t do this”. My head was so full of lies that it was an immense battle but with great internal anguish, I made the decision to apply.

When I became a firefighter, it was a struggle to accept that this was part of God’s design in me. I went to Fire School and trained at the exact same level as a full time paid firefighter. However, it still felt unspiritual and I believed that it was all about me and not God. Naturally, this meant that I didn’t put my heart into it and certainly did not see this as a



place in which to aggressively bring the kingdom of God. Four or five years into this struggle, April had a dream in which she was alerted that I had died in a house fire accident. Then she saw an angel carrying me out of the house and I was divinely rescued. Not long after that dream, I had an experience in a house fire that was similar to what April saw and I could very easily have been killed. In light of the circumstances, I knew divine protection had taken place and that angels were on assignment protecting my life. I learned a big lesson from this. Now, every time my pager goes off I pray aggressively and release the kingdom of God into the situation that I am about to enter. Whether I am doing this for me or for others involved in the emergency does not matter. My job is to use the skills and passion that He gave me as a means to bring the kingdom of God into real life situations. I fought a huge battle to take the joy of a childhood dream and turn it into a place where I can now aggressively bring the kingdom of God.



- Could it be possible that God was the author of these dreams in my childhood days?
- Could it be possible that God is the author of some of the childhood dreams in your life as well?

It is our wrong thinking that holds us back from fulfilling the dreams that God has placed within each one of our lives.

I could tell you many stories of experiences where I have seen God's kingdom manifest. I could tell you about the young adult thrown from a window during a vehicle accident and how I approached her as she was lying in the middle of the highway and led her to Jesus right there in that challenging situation. I could tell you about the day that my breathing equipment failed as I was entering a burning structure to do a

search for a possible victim. I was quickly replaced while my equipment was repaired. While this was happening, a sudden emergency occurred that put the search crew inside the structure in a dangerous predicament. Instead of being the one in the danger, I was positioned to be praying over them and calling for kingdom intervention while they made a quick escape. I could tell you about the drunk driver who rolled his vehicle multiple times and was found in a manner that should have taken his life. I was the first to attend to him and immediately began to pray and release the mercy and love of God on him. He made a miraculous recovery and was out of the hospital in a few days. There are many more stories I could share about the ways that I have learnt to bring the presence of God's kingdom right into desperate situations.

Now that my mindset has changed, God was able to set me up for a very significant event that I want to share with you. I believe that the experience that happened to me is also meant as a message to all of us, if we are willing and able to hear from the heart of God. God is revealing that He is ready to provide protection if we are willing to go into the dark places that He wants to send us.

An Amazing Illustration

April and I had just crawled into bed and were settling in for a typical night's sleep. It was 11:00 pm on a Saturday evening. Normally we are in bed earlier and I would have been well off to sleep. My pager went off and our Fire Hall was called out by a neighboring Fire Hall to a structure fire. They requested that we provide firefighters trained in BA (this refers to Breathing Apparatus) to respond to the scene. Normally, when we respond in this manner, there would have been 2-3 crews already involved in the initial attack, and we would be ready for backup when their air cylinders



were depleted. While en route we put on our BA and were ready to assume our backup position.



As we arrived, the sirens had alerted the community of the situation, the street was filling with onlookers and smoke was billowing from the house. A neighbour had seen the smoke and contacted 911 and thankfully, no one was home in the house.

However we arrived to a strange situation as we came on scene.

The lead pumper from our neighbour Fire Hall was positioned with the first hose drawn, right up to the front door and the pump operator was preparing to charge the line with water. We were informed that they had no BA trained firefighters on scene to penetrate the burning structure. In my thirteen years of firefighting, I have never seen this happen before. Multiple trucks had rolled up on scene in a populated community, yet there were no firefighters to attack the fire. There is no explanation as to how this happened. As you will see, I believe that this was divine intervention that is part of this story.

Suddenly, our chief directed me and another team member to prepare for the attack. We positioned ourselves at the front door as black smoke billowed out. As we entered the house, we could see nothing and felt a great amount of heat. Our chief identified that we were close to a flashover situation. A flashover occurs when the room and its contents heats up to ignition point and suddenly the inside of a structure is completely engulfed in flames. If we were caught in this situation, it would mean a cause of death for me and my partner. We were alerted to the danger and quickly came out of the house. The situation was too dangerous for us to proceed and a different method of attack had to take place.

With a team working at the back, we began to ventilate the house (releasing the heat from the

structure). During our ventilation procedure, a special Thermal Imaging Camera revealed that the fire was on the right side of the house. My partner and I then penetrated the house a second time. In a structure fire like this one, there is zero visibility. When you are near the fire, the heat intensifies and all you can see is an orange glow in the midst of complete blackness caused by the smoke. As we re-entered the house, I found a doorway to my immediate right. I turned and went through this door; I later found out that this was the dining room. I could see the orange glow straight ahead. We worked our way towards the fire (which we later found out was in the kitchen). As we pushed forward, I was attacking the fire from a distance and pushing toward it to attempt to knock it down. I had come to approximately one foot from the kitchen door and realized that something just didn't feel right. I immediately stopped and turned sideways, holding on tightly to the hose line. I then reached my leg forward and realized that it just dropped into nothing.

With the inability to see anything, reality hit that I was on the edge of a completely collapsed floor. I then realized that the floor underneath me already had a slight slope and I was on the edge of serious danger. The entire kitchen floor had been burned through as the seat of the fire was directly below. If I had of pushed forward just a little bit more, I would have gone head first directly into the basement and right into the seat of the fire. My partner was oblivious as he was behind me and could see nothing as well. He was doing his job of staying close to me and feeding the advancing hose line as we moved deeper into the structure. I quickly hollered to him, "Back up" (it is very difficult to communicate with the BA on in a fire situation) and we pushed back towards our main entrance to the room. I attacked the fire as best I could from a distance and then we vacated the house.



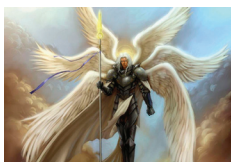
When we left the structure I alerted the neighbouring fire chief of the situation. Again, a different strategy was needed to complete the knock down of the fire. It also meant that as other teams joined us and advanced into the structure, everyone was now alerted to the danger and no one would be put at risk.

Look at more of what is revealed as a promise from God in Psalm Chapter Ninety-One.

The Promise Gets Better

7. ***A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not approach you.***
8. ***You will only look on with your eyes, and see the recompense of the wicked.***
9. ***For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place.***
10. ***No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent.***
11. ***For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.***
12. ***They will bear you up on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone.***

Psalm 91:7-12



If we keep at the forefront of our thinking our calling to Move Towards the Darkness, this is an incredible promise. Will the calling of God on our lives, at times, have risks associated with it? Absolutely! This promise is not to someone who is hiding away and avoiding darkness. This promise is to the one who is penetrating darkness and bringing in God's Kingdom Presence and Light.

Each one of us have been given this promise. There is protection for those who learn to ***“dwell in His shelter”*** and ***“abide in His shadow”***. In fact, the angels of God are ready to respond and engage those who find themselves in danger in the midst of

darkness. It is easy to miss the divine intervention of Heaven because we have been taught to stay in the light, the place where it is safe and comfortable. I am convinced that the greatest miraculous interventions of heaven are coming in the days ahead. Heaven will manifest in awesome ways as believers step further into the dark places with the intention of releasing the kingdom of God into its midst.



We have been looking for God to show up in our church meetings. That is a great place to learn about the Presence of God. However, I am convinced that He wants to show up in the midst of darkness in even greater ways. This requires a change in our thinking concerning the gifts in our lives and realizing that God is calling us to move forward towards the darkness.

Here is my perspective concerning the story that I just shared. The fact that we arrived as a supporting Fire Hall and several of their trucks were already on scene, yet there were no firefighters to do the initial attack is simply - strange. I believe that this was a divine set up. Why? Because God had one of His praying kids available for assignment and angels were released. That might sound presumptuous if you do not have the perspective of the Owl that I spoke about in the first article “Moving Towards the Darkness”. It is God's intent that our contribution in the engagement of our calling could be the “make or break” difference in the life of another. As God's children, we are called to bring life to people. Both spiritual and physical rescue should be part of our calling, just as we see in the ministry of Jesus in the Word.

As I approached the impending danger, do you recall what I described? I could have pressed forward towards the fire that we were attempting to knock down. As I was fixed on the glow in front of me, I could easily have been unaware of the missing floor until I was going head first into the basement.

Anyone could have been seriously injured or even killed in that moment. But, what happened? I stopped because something felt off. That something

is the Holy Spirit and the angels



on assignment to protect us in impending danger. In my journey, I have grown to recognize the voice of God in many different circumstances of life. Church gatherings are great places to hear from God.

But, difficult life circumstances when we need God to show up are even better places to encounter the voice and leading of God. I believe that not only did this save my life, but that God positioned me and my partner to save the lives of others as well. In this I see the mercy of God prevailing and protecting people.

When we are engaging our world with the gifts that God has placed in our lives, He can then align us as His answer to problems that others can't fix. This is the calling on all of us.

For me, this is a massive change of mindset from the years when I struggled to believe whether firefighting could even be part of God's calling on my life. Now, I have a different view. I see that all the gifts in my life are part of my calling to impact the lives of others. This can be eternal impact (the most important aspect of our calling) or temporal impact as we engage and help other people in physical ways. I went to this fire praying and calling for angelic involvement having no idea of the danger that was ahead. I have learnt that this can be life or death for me or for others and I do it every time I respond to a 911 call.

Imagine if every firefighter, paramedic or police officer were connected to Jesus and tangibly brought the kingdom of God into their situations? Lives would be saved and disasters would be averted.

But this principle applies to all of life. Imagine if every believer recognized that what they are good at

and passionate about is right where they are called to bring the Kingdom into manifestation. Our world would be transformed by the Glory of God revealed through His children.

So, here are three questions that I have for you to consider,

- What darkness are you running from that the Holy Spirit is trying to move you towards?
- What gifts in you could bring life to someone else right in the dark place where they currently live?
- What are you avoiding in fear that the provision of God is ready to manifest on your behalf if and only if you proceed forward?

The gifts in our lives are meant to make connection with the world and make a difference in the lives of others. It is our **"abiding"**, or connecting with Jesus as we go into dark situations that enable Him to show up and manifest Himself in those situations. It is possible that we are not seeing the divine intervention that we are yearning for because we are looking in the wrong place for it to show up. If God is pushing us to make vital contact with people and circumstances in dark places, then this is where He is going to show up in our lives. This may make us uncomfortable because we have been trained to withdraw from the world and focus everything on gathering with other believers. The Presence and provision of God is ready and waiting to manifest in the dark places of the world through our lives.

I realize that because of the apostolic calling on my life and as a pioneer, I will face challenges and hazards that will not be normal for everyone. With my firefighter story, I am not suggesting that you are meant to put yourself in harm's way. This danger emerged in the normal course of doing what a firefighter has accepted as his/her job. What I do believe, however, is that this story is meant to illustrate how God's protection is ready to manifest in our lives





as we move towards the darkness of the world's need. I believe that it is a prophetic picture of our call to penetrate the darkness with no ability to see where we are going but confidently believe that God will meet us, lead us and protect us as we proceed in our forward progress. Even though it may seem like He shows up "in the nick of time", He shows up when and where we need Him to be revealed.

Each one of us must learn to **"abide"** in Jesus as we take our steps towards darkness. Fear will be dispelled as our confidence grows in God and the fact that He will engage with us as we penetrate dark places.

Press into the heart of God and ask Him where He is calling you to release the gifts in your life in greater fullness. He is ready to shine His light in the midst of darkness in your world.

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- Through his apostolic teaching ministry, Steve assists leaders in the church in *"helping activate their people in fulfilling the calling of God on their lives"*.
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