



By Sue Edgeler

I'm sure like me, you have been saddened to see the recent images on our televisions of families trying to escape from conflict in Ukraine, leaving behind everything they hold dear and all they are familiar with, to find safety and a refuge away from danger.

Psalm 9v9 reminds us that **"The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."**

The word 'refuge' appears over 100 times in the scriptures with 43 of these being in the Psalms. I'm reminded of the time I was traveling along a motorway when suddenly the red warning light came on. I needed to get off the road into a place of safety, a refuge, and await rescue from those equipped to safely help.

In the book of Numbers, we read of God's provision of 6 cities of refuge for any falsely accused of murder or those who had accidentally killed someone, until a trial could take place. They were only safe while they remained inside the city.

Our refuge as followers of Jesus is to be found in a person not a place. In **Ps 91v2** we read **"He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I will trust him."** He is the only one who can give us security, protection and peace.

When our lives go along as usual, we don't stop to consider how vulnerable we are. Then a crisis erupts; the loss of a loved one, an unexpected health diagnosis, a marriage breakdown and out of nowhere everything we have taken for granted changes.

We need to know the reality of **God as our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble, Ps 46v1**. God is our strength so there is nothing we can do by our own effort or ability to change our circumstances. We are not exempt from life's trials, but God is our help and sustainer.

He is the one who neither slumbers nor sleeps, the one who knit us together in our mother's womb, the one who holds all things together by the power of his word and the one who has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. He is the one who is our refuge, our place of safety, our security, our safe haven and protector.

When life becomes too much or when the expectations of others weigh us down, let's find refuge in the Eternal God and be assured of his everlasting arms enfolding and upholding us.