

WHAT WE CAN EXPECT FROM GOD

You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. (Psalm 91:5-6, NIV)

WHEN RORY MCILROY WAS INTERVIEWED after the close of The Players Championship, a question arose about the quickness of Saturday's greens, when he three-putted five times. Were they really all that different than what the players will see at Oakmont during June's U.S. Open?

McIlroy conceded that it was true. They would be much the same at Oakmont. The trouble, he said, was that they had no warning at TPC Sawgrass. Suddenly the greens were crusty, slick, and daunting. His lament was of the common variety: *If only we had known.*

The truer trouble is that we do not know. Not from one day to the next. Not from round to round, not from meeting to meeting, not even from dinner to breakfast.

The beauty of Psalm 91 and others like it is that they do not deny the realities of life. Our personal realities may not include arrows and pestilence, per se, but when cars break down and bills exceed our paycheck, when the phone rings in the night and not at all during the day, we come face to face with the unexpected. *If only we had known.*

But we do not know. And many times over we will not.

This is our concern. It is not our destiny. When right side up becomes upside down, we have the choice to panic or to pray, to bail or believe.

You see, the great unknowns of Psalm 91 are met by the great God who is seen there in all his glory. He is presented as our refuge and fortress, our saving commander of angels. For the unexpecteds of life, there is the God who fulfills every expectation we have of one who would be God. He is not distant or limited or inactive. Instead, he is available, reliable, and utterly capable to meet our most disturbing needs.

What do we do to open the heart of this God? The end Psalm 91 tells us. We love him. He answers the call of those who point their hearts toward his. It's a promise to stand by us as our deliverer. Let's claim it.

Opening questions What were the most unsettling conditions under which you've ever played a round of golf? • What would you list among your most challenging personal realities?

READING Psalm 91:1-16

Dwelling with God (v. 1, vv.9-10)

What do you think it means to dwell with God (or "in his shelter")?

The observed work of God (vv. 7-8)

When have you witnessed God do the work you thought you might have to do on your own?

Intervention of angels (vv. 11-12)

How often do you consider the role of angels in your life? How does it help you to know that God commands the angels on your behalf?

Love for God (vv. 14-16)

How might you make your love for God evident to him? What comfort is it to have promises of his care as you point your heart toward his?
