**God Can Be Our Refuge (Oak Ridge, TN; December 13, 2020)**

**Why do animals like hanging out on our property?**

* They know they are safe; No hunters are present; There is usually some sort of food for them; We do not usually harass them; They learn they are welcome most of the time

**Refuge: Webster’s Definition**

* Shelter or protection from danger or distress
* A place that provides shelter or protection
* Other words; sanctuary, safe haven, retreat, preserve

**Yellowstone has lots of animals. Why?**

**The Lord can be our Refuge! He is the only true Refuge!** (**Deuteronomy 33:27; 2 Samuel 22:3; Psalm 9:9; 46:1-3; 91:1-2, 4, 9; 142:3-5**)

**IN THE LORD, OUR REFUGE CAN BRING US PEACE**

1. In our Physical Families (**Romans 12:18, 1 Timothy 2:1-2**); Families should be the quiet place that gives us a bit of peace in the midst of a world full of trials and turmoil.

2. In our Spiritual Family (**Ruth 2:12; Psalm 28:8-9; Hebrews 10:24-25, 13:20-21**). When we assemble, we are in an oasis in a world of ungodliness and evil. Here we can enjoy a few moments of escape from the stresses of this world. We need this refuge to motivate and energize us.

3. When we find ourselves feeling Alone or are Troubled (**2 Corinthians 7:5-7, Philippians 4:6-7, 2 Timothy 4:16-18**).

4. Special gatherings with our brethren (**Mark 3:13-19**). For the past two years I have been able to play basketball with a bunch of great young Christians. We play in a recreation league in Forsyth County. We call ourselves “The Dunkers”. The season is 10 games long. I have to train for weeks in advance in order to be able to play. Many times I train in very cold weather and when my mind and body don’t want to cooperate. Then on game weeks, I have to work extra hours so I can drive 3.5 hours south to the gym to shoot around on Thursday afternoons. Then play in our games Thursday nights. And then drive back 3.5 hours to finish working on Fridays. Why do I do it? Yup, I love basketball. But I can play basketball in my back yard. It’s because I seek the refuge of being with young men I count as spiritual sons, where we can be together, having fun playing a game we love without the cursing and the worldliness that you deal with when playing basketball in the world. We pray together after the games, many times with the other team. It is a wonderful refuge for a few minutes that is worth all the training and the things I have to do. And it strengthens me and those on the team. We’ve developed friendships that have helped us in life, have shared Bible study thoughts for classes and sermons, we have shared ideas on reaching out to the lost, and we all have a special bond to one another. And they have asked me to play with them again this year, starting mid-January.

5. Heaven (**Revelation 7:13-17, 14:13**); the Eternal Refuge: Imagine a place with no worries, no sorrows, no temptation, no pain, so sad goodbyes, no decay, and no death?

***Let us make God our Refuge in our familie, full of peace and love! Let us make God our Refuge in our Oak Ridge church where there is encouragement, support, patience, mercy, and truth. Let us remember we have a Refuge, even when we are alone and troubles. Let us treasure the time we have to spend with brethren. Let us keep our Goal to one day be in the Eternal Refuge of Heaven!* But without God, we have No Refuge! Here on earth or one day in Heaven.**

Those who are not Christians, do you need a refuge from the evil all around you in the world? Do you need a safe place from the stresses of this life? A place where you can be protected and given a path to eternal peace? You need to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Believe Him, confess that He is the Son of God in your life, repent of your sins, and be baptized to wash all your sins away. Then you can be protected in the refuge of Jesus Christ, His church, His Kingdom, His Spiritual Nation! Close with **Psalm 23**