

The God Who is There—Psalm 46

I. Introduction

- a. In light of the troubles many of our church family and neighbors faced this past week, I thought it was fitting to set aside our passage in Hebrews and hear a word from Psalm 46 today.
- b. The difficulties of this life are too numerous to name but they are there nonetheless. How we face them or how we avoid them matters. We can respond any number of ways to the troubles we encounter. We were not looking for trouble but it found us. Now we must seek to deal with it in a way that pleases God and helps us.
- c. Let's see how we should respond to troubles of this world.

II. Main Point

- a. The main point of this psalm is God is with us.

III. Outline of the three stanzas

- a. Vv. 1-3 God is our refuge and strength
- b. Vv. 4-7 He makes glad the City of God
- c. Vv. 8-11 Peace and Rest are Coming

IV. Exposition

- a. Point one—God is our refuge and strength. Therefore, we will not fear.
 - i. The sons of Korah wrote this psalm to be sung by those in need and those who are anticipating need. Not only that it was intended to be sung by a community of needy people. That's partly what a church is.
 1. The psalmist says God is our refuge. We will not fear. The Lord is with us. He is our fortress.
 2. We've been discussing what it means to be the church. The last two weeks we have discussed the church being the people of God and the body of Christ.
 - a. In discussing the body of Christ which is made up of many members (the hand, foot, eye, hear, etc.) we understand the image very clearly.
 - b. If a member of the body of Christ weeps, we all weep. If a member of the body rejoices, we all rejoice.
 - i. I was sick this past week, and I can tell you my whole body was sick. In fact, in many ways my sickness caused my family lots of trouble. That's what happens when your lives are bound together. That's the way it should be.
 - c. Life is messy. We can avoid it or we can help. We can decide to not get involved or we could be part of the solution.
 - d. This week, our people need our love and support. We do not need profound words but be there for them. Hug them. Weep with them in their pain and rejoice with them in their memories of past joys.

- ii. This psalm begins by stating where one can find a safe shelter and the might by which to defend that shelter. Of course, this is no structure. It is God, himself. He is the refuge. He is the strength. He will defend you. Nothing will happen to you outside of his sovereign will.
1. One commentator wrote, “Our true security is in God, not in God *plus* anything else” (Kidner, p. 192).
 2. I think when I hear this, I think of the image of a structure I need to flee to. It is a sanctuary that is untouched by the outside.
 3. I think of it as a place like a tower of a castle. The image of thick walls that cannot be penetrated by the problems I am fleeing from.
 4. It a haven of rest and a place of peace from the chaos of this world.
 5. That’s what I want but that’s not possible in this life even when I take refuge in the Lord. It is a reality that is coming someday. But for now I must be content to be cared for and strengthened to in the Lord and endure to the end.
- iii. The second phrase is an explanation of the first. In other words, what the psalmist means when he says God is a refuge and strength is that he is a very present help in trouble.
1. This phrase is so encouraging because of the availability of God. He is a present help. That means he is always available. It has this idea of “his readiness to be found” (Kidner, p. 192).
 - a. That means, that image of fortress that I just described is always nearby. It’s always with me. God is always there. The fortress moves with me. The refuge stays nears. The strength needed in weakness is at hand.
 2. I would also point out that the trouble is not even defined! You might even take comfort day by day in this by bringing all your troubles to him.
 - a. I want to think about these day to day troubles we encounter because how we deal with them will often determine how we deal with our greatest trouble—sin.
 - b. The imagery of a fortress is fitting because I think all of us are very good at building walls of protection around ourselves. We rightly do not like the pain this troubles causes us.
 - c. But let me give you a little warning. The walls that you build to keep out the trouble often keep out the good too. When you build the wall, you end up keeping everything out and there you are left alone to yourself.
 - d. I suppose, if we were strong enough we wouldn’t have built the wall to begin with. But we aren’t strong. We ought not look around at our troubles and think, I can do this. Others have. Why can’t I?
 - i. You can’t do this without the Lord and his grace.
 - ii. Instead of building your own walls, hide yourself in the Lord where there is infinite goodness.
 - iii. Be protected in him and receive all the goodness too.

- e. We all build different kinds of walls. For me, I tend to pull away and watch a YouTube video about farming.
 - i. Others give themselves to more work and lots of people around.
 - ii. Some think that having thick skin is the way. But thick skin does not feel anything—good or bad which will likely lead to a hard heart.
 - iii. However you construct your wall, it will not work. Only find your help in Christ by faith. The unseen fortress of his love goes wherever you go. Just trust that it's there.
- iv. In this particular text, the psalmist concludes that since God is our refuge and strength, a very present help, then based on that we will not fear.
 - 1. However, there are some very fearful things in this world. In these verses, nature is the source. Notice the repeated phrases beginning with 'though.'
 - a. Though the earth gives way
 - b. Though the mountains move into the sea
 - c. Though the waters roar and foam
 - d. Though the mountains tremble at its swelling
 - e. Can you imagine being in the middle of an earthquake. I've heard it described as land moving like waves of water. The ground falls in and sometimes it piles up. Mountain sliding off into the ocean. The water begins to rage and foam. Even, the normal rising of the tide can be fearful. Those waves are so powerful.
 - i. Yet, we will not fear...not because we need to just pull ourselves together and bear it, but because God is a refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble.
 - f. It seems this is a picture of the last undoing of the earth. In that great and terrible day, the only safe place to be hidden is in Christ.
 - i. The world is being uncreated as it gives way to the new heavens and new earth. God shakes the earth and anything that is not attached to him by faith in Christ will fall.
 - ii. But if you are in union with Jesus who cannot be shaken, you will not be shaken loose either.
 - v. Application: Does this mean we will not fear? I don't think it means that at all. Rather, it means when fears come, turn to the Lord for help. Do not let the fears of this world be greater than your fear of God. Does fear rule you? Or does fear of God comfort you? If you do not fear God, you will fear everything. If you fear God, you can fear nothing else.
- b. We've seen the basis of not fearing is the fact that God is our refuge and strength. Now let's look at stanza two where "He makes glad the City of God, for he is in her midst."
 - i. First, let's look at the city of God. **Psalm 46:4** ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

1. This takes us back to Psalm 1 where blessed is the man who meditates on the word of God day and night is described as a tree beside streams of water.
 2. Life comes from the life giving river of God himself.
- ii. When troubles and fears arise, it's comforting to know that God will make us glad. I can't help but think this river is the river of life that flows from the throne of God. He is the source of life. This city is none other than the city that is to come. The very dwelling of God...the holy habitation of the Most High.
1. **Revelation 22:1** ¶ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.
- iii. With the earth giving way and the mountains moving into the sea and the nations raging and the kingdoms tottering, it's so encouraging to hear the psalmist say that the city of God will NOT be moved!
1. **Psalm 46:5** ⁵ God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.
 2. The reason it doesn't move is because God cannot be moved. If he cannot be moved and we are in God, then we will not be moved.
 3. Though the night seems long and dark, God will help her when morning dawns!
 - a. **Exodus 14:27** So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared.
 - b. In the song *The Sands of Time are Sinking*, the first line goes like this: The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of Heaven breaks;
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes;
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.
 4. The City is sure because God is sure. If you've built your house on the sand it will be moved. But if you've built your house on the Rock, it cannot be moved.
 5. What does it look like when the nations rage and the kingdoms totter against the city of God? He simply speaks!
 - a. **Psalm 46:6** ⁶ The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.
 - b. God spoke the world into being and he can speak the world out of existence. Do not think any amount of prepping will withstand his judgment.

- i. The only safe place to be is as the song says,
On Him almighty vengeance fell
Which would have sunk this world to Hell
He bore it for a sinful race
To make Himself our hiding place
 - ii. Be hidden in Christ. He's the only safe place.
 - c. We've seen that God is our refuge and that he will make the city of God glad one day. Now let's see our final point: Peace and rest are coming. Remember and know what God has done because he promises he will be exalted.
 - i. First, remembering...**Psalm 46:8** ⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.
 - ii. The example of remembering what God has done in the past is always a means of enduring the present troubles.
 - iii. The psalmist commands that we come and behold...see...witness...remember what God has done in the past for his people..."he has brought desolations on the earth."
 - d. Not only "has he brought them" but he will bring them on that day!
 - e. **Isaiah 13:9** Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its all evil from it.
 - f. He makes wars to cease. He literally makes wars to Sabbath—to rest.
 - i. He breaks the bow and shatters the spears. He burns the chariots with fire.
 - g. God has no competitor. It's not even like me playing LeBron James in a one on one basketball game. God has no equal.
 - i. Be glad God is with you. Be glad he is your fortress.
- V. Finally, **Psalm 46:10** "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"
 - a. There's a scene at the end of the movie, Return of the King that reminds me of this. They are fighting Sauron and his army and they are out matched. They are surrounded by an unimaginable hoard. And all of sudden, the power of evil is broken and evil starts falling apart and running away.
 - i. The king and his little army stand their and do nothing as the earth gives way and swallows up all their enemies. Sauron's tower falls. Evil is vanquished. And there standing untouched are those who stood still and watched!
 - b. Think about this. What is your life? What do you want to make of it? What is your goal? You may look back and see regret. May it stir you to turn around and seek first the Kingdom of God.
 - c. This life is but a vapor, James says. Let's say you are a believer. But let's also ask if I were to die today, what would I be remember for? What kind of legacy would you leave?

- d. My goals are to love the Lord with all my heart to the very end. To love my wife as Christ loved the church to the very end. To raise three kids that love Christ more than anything in the world. To lead a church to love Christ more than anything in the world. To spread the fame of Christ all over the world. Why?
 - i. Because of what he promises will be so. **Psalm 46:10** I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"
- e. You might think how is this possible?
 - i. **Psalm 46:11** ¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
 - ii. The God who is there.
 - iii. Five times this psalm says that God is with us.
 - 1. ...a very present help...is in her midst...will help her when morning dawns...is with us...is with us!
 - 2. Trust that the Lord is with you.

VI. Conclusion

- a. The most deadly trouble is the evil in our hearts. When my mom said that I was in trouble, it meant that consequences were coming because of my sin.
 - i. We are all in trouble. Nothing will suffice to protect us if we have not been forgiven and counted righteous in Christ. We need a hiding place and that hiding place is Jesus.
 - ii. If you will repent and believe in Christ, you can find peace with God and eternal rest in him.
 - iii. And if you join yourself to him, you have the promises of this psalm to stand on.
- b. Indeed, God is the God who is there!