

SummerInThePsalms #14– Psalm 46 – Be Still And Know

This is Labor Day Weekend. Our Psalm for the day provides two unique insights for us to process concerning our Labor –

1. **There is a time when we, by God’s direction and relying on His grace, work with all of our might, knowing there is a purpose and that it will make a difference.** Sometimes, we have no idea just how much a difference God has in store as He leads us to work. We’ll find in our text an astounding feat of labor and the impact it had. Our question:

- ***Am I doing what I know God has told me to do?***

2. **There is a time for us to be still.** To cease from our work and rest in Him and His work.

- Have we done that and begun our eternal journey **by trusting the finished work of Jesus on the cross?**
- **Do we still our busy lives to open our minds and hearts to His Presence?**

There is **a time for bot**, as we’ll be reminded of this morning. Even more, we are summoned to a hidden secret, waiting to be discovered by each of us, in Him!

The Psalm was addressed not just to the sons of Korah but to **the chief musician** with other details. This special composition was directed to the highest level of attention and excellence. **The message was not to be missed!**

Possible Composers -

- King Hezekiah, 14th King of Judah
- The Prophet - Isaiah

Context:

For us to more fully understand the content, we need to know the context.

The predominant consensus is that **the time frame** during which this Psalm was written was **the fall of Israel in 722 BC and the following siege of Jerusalem.**

- Around **726 BC**, shortly before the end of the northern kingdom in 722 BC, Hezekiah, godly king of Judah, had invited the king and people of Israel, the northern kingdom of 10 tribes, to turn back to God, and particularly to join them in Jerusalem for observance of Passover. 2 Chronicles 30:10 recorded the response of Israel – they ***“laughed them to scorn, and mocked them”***

- Four years later, in **722, the northern kingdom was wiped out by the Assyrians**. The people were destroyed, deported, and assimilated, never again to exist as a nation. Perhaps you heard of the “10 lost tribes”. They weren’t lost. They were judged and destroyed.
- Then, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, turned his attention to Jerusalem. At first, Hezekiah tried to buy him off. Time passed – and it became clear that **the might of Assyria would be turned to the task of destroying Jerusalem**.
 - The Assyrians blasphemed openly the God of Hezekiah and the people of God
 - They spoke **openly and loudly in the language of the Jews** so that the people were be afraid, and divided
 - They moved closer and closer, taking some cities and capturing people.
 - Then, Jerusalem, Hezekiah, and the people of God were **in the cross hairs**.

Our Psalm is written during this difficult, dangerous time.

Note: The next Psalm – Psalm 47 – is written after the promises and assurances to those in the midst of the siege in Psalm 46.

- One angel visited the camp of the Assyrians and killed 185,000 of their soldiers one night.
- Sennacherib returned home in disgrace and was killed by two of his sons...
- The Psalmist – “Clap your hands, all ye people!” 47:1

But... they didn’t know that then!

Even without our knowing any of the background and references with which the original recipients were so familiar, Psalm 46 is a powerful, personal revelation of God and His truth to anyone, anywhere, in any situation.

However, when we understand the context, which for them was breath to breath, day to day, life and death, everything pops! **Their whole world is in the references and revelations, and adds color and even deeper understanding.**

Three sections – Vs. 1-3, Vs. 4-7, and Vs. 8-11 – each ending with “Selah”...

I. The Bold Introduction. Vs. 1-3

A. The abrupt proclamation! Vs. 1

No intro. No leading up to it. The Psalmist dives right in.

"God" –

The Bible begins with, ***"In the beginning God created..."*** (Genesis 1:1). The word is "Elohim" – "Three in one mighty creator God" from whom all things came.

Jesus, according to John 1:3 – "all things were made by Him".

The Psalmist immediately begins with the God before and greater than the all things He created, and the things which might be or seem greater than them.

"our" – ***Relationship is essential.***

The enemy scoffed at the idea of God. Sennacherib taunted, *"...no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall YOUR God deliver you out of my hand?"* (2 Chronicles 3:15)

- **Not everyone knew God and could call Him "our God". Can you?**
- Jesus warned as He closed His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7, of those who didn't know Him. ***"I never knew you..."*** Chilling, fearful words. **Do you?**

There is only one way:

God did the impossible and at Calvary made a way so that
"whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16)

Have you trusted Him as your Savior?

Will you?

"Refuge": Place of protection

"Strength"

"very present help" –

- **“present”** – the word the vast majority of the time – 400 or so times – is translated **“find”**; In our case, In our text - **“findable”**
- **“Very”** - not just close, **“very findable”**
We don’t have to go looking for God and what we need; He is very near – very findable when trouble comes and panic threatens.

B. “Therefore” – Cause and effect –

- **“We will not fear”**
A simple statement but difficult decision
A choice. Rather than looking to the threats and dangers, we will fear serve its purpose in our hearts and lead us to safety. To Him!

C. “though”

- **“earth be removed”**
- **“mountains be carried into the midst of the sea”**
- **“waters roar and be troubled”**
- **“mountains shake”**

Hezekiah and the people:

- The reports. The unthinkable horrors. The thundering threats.
- The overwhelming numbers. The heart stopping facts – nothing and no one had been able to stop them!
- They were overwhelmed. So little and helpless. No match.

Today –

- Circumstances?
- Sickness?
- Struggles?
- Injustice or unfairness?.
- **Unimaginable nightmares that have become real.**

When the unthinkable comes calling...

When our worst nightmares become living color. Brutal Reality.

II. The Powerful Illustration.

While the enemy was camped outside and threatening, waiting for them to collapse,

- **There was something the enemy did not know.**
- **Something they had that their enemies did not!**

A. “There is a river” - A Reminder of their secret!

The Historical Metaphor:

When it became obvious that the Assyrians would not be satisfied with the destruction of the northern tribes, and bribes, Hezekiah went to work. Anticipating the siege, and obviously blessed by God with insight, he ordered the construction of a water conduit, a water channel or tunnel. It is described in the **2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:3–4.**

The tunnel was rediscovered in the 19th century, **cut in solid rock under Mt. Zion and the city walls, extending 1780 feet from Gihon Spring to the pool of Siloam.** It was called the Siloam tunnel.

On the tunnel wall, near its exit, was found a Hebrew inscription commemorating the completion of the tunnel, and noting the surveying skill of its engineers, who constructed it simultaneously from both ends, meeting in the center.

Hidden from the enemy was a fresh flow of life-giving water!

The Psalmist made the simple leap from the amazing, life giving “river of life” to the greater truth: The amazing river of life was a gurgling reminder

- **God Himself was there.**
- **As they sipped water from the cool springs, they were reminded that the God - who had provided for them right under the threats of their enemies - was in the midst taking care of them!**

****A hundred or so years later, God would reprimand them through the prophet Jeremiah – “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:13)**

B. Our River of Life:

Jesus to the woman at the well in John 4 –

13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

*14. But **whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.***

Later, in John 7 –

*37. Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.***

*38. **He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.***

We who know Jesus have a river of abundant life flowing right from the depth of our spirits, at any most able to

- Give us life! Wash away the debris and clutter as it flows!
- Refresh us! Sustain us!

There is a river! He is our river! He shall not be moved! He is ever present and will help us in our darkest, most difficult hours!

III. The Personal Invitation. Vs. 8-11.

God invites us to... (Actually – Imperatives! _He instructs us....

A. vs. 8 - “Come, behold...”

The Works

The Lessons of History

B. vs. 9

“Be still”

Cease from our feeble efforts.

Stop our wallering, our desperate attempts, our panic driven pursuits to find answers.

*****“The just shall live by faith”: Sometimes faith looks like dropping your sword and lifting your hands in surrender.**

Be still is not a suggestion — it’s a command to surrender the fight WE were never meant to win on our own.

***"Know"* – Eternal knowledge waiting for us to experience.**

So, what can we be sure of – KNOW - in a world

- That is constantly changing,
- That is discovering "new principles and truths" at exponential pace,
- That offers the sum total of human knowledge on any given subject at your fingertips, and yet never seems to arrive at final answers?

1. *"I am God"* – The person of God

- He never changes.
- He is never outdated. In fact, He is before time, always on time, and waiting for us in our future!

2. *"I will be exalted..."* – The plan of God is sure! Prophecy. Promise.

3. *"with us"* – His presence! The Savior – LORD – of hosts is with us!

The Assyrians could surround the city, but they could not stop the river.

The world can press in on us, but it cannot cut off the flow of God's life within!

Though our world collapses...

though everything we stand on trembles...

though the roar sometimes seems all we can hear...

THERE IS A RIVER!

God is our refuge.

We may not control what roars outside, but you can drink from the river inside!

- If this awesome God is not YOUR God today, He can be!
- If He is... Be still... Know... and live drawing and drinking from His river of life!...