

Confidence in Troubled Times

Psalm 46

***Welcome to all Streaming Live; “Virus-Free; Gospel-Rich;”** Last Sunday over 725 unique locations...

Over the years you’ve heard: **“We interrupt this Broadcast...”** Maybe you’ve been watching TV or listening to the radio, when the program is interrupted with **important news breaking into the world.**

*A **NY Times best selling book (“We interrupt this Broadcast”),** records **46 events in America** so significant they **interrupted the air waves with shocking news.**

(Pearl Harbor; Kennedy assass; Elvis dies; and (39 years ago this month) Reagan shot.)

*Most of these “interruptions” have one thing in common: **Bad news broke in on good times.**

***Beginning today, we are “interrupting our series in Isaiah” to address the urgency of our times.**

*If you are **brand new with us,** we have preached **22 sermons in Isaiah: “God’s unfolding Plan”**

*But the days unfolding in front of us are so **unsettling,** there is an urgency to interrupt our plans, and offer **relevant words of biblical hope to our community.**

***Monday morning,** I woke up around 5am with a Bible verse rolling around in my head.

“We will not fear, though the earth gives way.”

*I didn’t know **where the verse was;** I hadn’t **read it recently;** But the Lord **kept pestering me.**

***Dog owners: Has your dog ever been so hungry that it won’t stop begging until you feed him? In the same way, God would not leave me alone until I paid attention.**

*I got out of bed, Googled it, and found the reference...**Psalm 46.**

It’s a chapter that begins: **God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble**

It’s a chapter that ends: **“Be still and know that I am God.”**

*That day I realized that **God was interrupting** our series **with a critical message for our day.**

*More than **FOOD/T.P. or anything else,** the **#1 THING** our homes need to **STOCK UP on: Confidence.**

- *Gal 5:10 “I have **confidence** in the Lord.”*
- *2 Thess 3:4 “we have **confidence** in the Lord.”*
- *1 John 3:21 “we have **confidence** before God.”*
- *Prov 3:26 “the Lord will be your **confidence.**”*

*And so **“we interrupt Isaiah”** with **Psalms of Confidence.**

*When the world has **breaking news,** it’s usually **“BAD news breaking in on good times.”**

*These Psalms are the opposite; they offer **“GOOD news breaking in on bad times.”**

The Good news of Ps. 46 that breaks into our world: *“God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble; and therefore we need not fear **troubled times**: God is with us.”*

1. God is our refuge, (v.1-3)

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear **though** the earth gives way, **though** the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, 3 **though** its waters roar and foam, **though** the mountains tremble at its swelling.*

*This was the **verse God woke me up with Monday morning.**

*Over and over, God assures His people in the Psalms: He is a **refuge**. He is a **safe place**.

***Happen what may**, God provides safety; security; stability; & strength.

*He is **not distant**, as some suppose Him to be; God is a **VERY PRESENT help in trouble!**

*It means he is **close at hand; immediately available; directly at our aid**.

*With all the talk of **social distancing**, remember: **God is NEVER distant from you.**

*And, the confidence we have: He is our refuge, **even if the “worst of the worst” happens.**

***The Psalm gives a series of 4 metaphors that picture the instability of the world. “Thoughts”**

***Though...Earth ‘gives way’** – Falls apart, **like the DOW.**

***Though...Mountains be moved** – Things thought stable are dismantled, **like economy.**

***Though...Waters roar** – Tumultuous times that threaten to sink us.

***Though...Mountains tremble** – Everything we once thought reliable, is shaken.

*From a **worldly perspective** this is happening: ***everything that can be shaken, is being shaken.***

*From a **biblical perspective**: We have good news: God is a **very present help in trouble**;

*Those who take refuge in Him, **need not fear, THOUGH the earth gives way.**

*We have the confidence of **“a kingdom that cannot be shaken”** (Heb 12:28)

*At the beginning of **2020, we said this was a year of getting FOCUSED on things of God.**

*Who would’ve thought that it would take such a global shaking to get us focused.

***Get Practical:**

***Dog Ear the corner of Psalm 46. Bookmark it. Read it every morning this week before news.**

***Throughout the day, when we hear more bad news, INTERRUPT the broadcast with:**

Fox News: *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help; we will not fear though”*

Dow: *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help; we will not fear though”*

Virus: *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help; we will not fear though”*

2. ...even as the world totters - (v.4-7)

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. 6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. 7 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

*As the world is shaken, it generally causes **2 emotional responses in the world: Anger & Fear**

*v.6 says the “nations rage” (ANGER); and the “kingdoms totter” (FEAR)

***Is it not amazing how rapidly the world has tottered?**

*When I woke up Monday morning, **another word rattled in my mind: “Dismantled”**

*I find it remarkable that everything our culture **values and trusts is being dismantled.**

***Wealth & Savings – dismantled.** (*“The week that ERASED \$3.6 Trillion...” WSJ*)

***Careers & Employment – dismantled.**

***Sports – dismantled.** (*March Madness...has become March Sadness*)

***Entertainment & Leisure – dismantled.** (*Everything we once did for fun.*)

***Food & Alcohol – dismantled.** (*Closing of restaurants and bars*)

***Social Connection – dismantled.** (*The increase of social isolation*)

***Vacations & Dreams – dismantled.** (*The loss of hopes.*)

*But with all that’s cancelled, I have Good News! **The promises of God are NOT CANCELLED.**

*Even as the world **responds with Anger & Fear**, the Psalm offers an **alternative way to respond:**

*It’s the **response of joy; hope; and confidence in WHO God is, and WHAT God has promised**

- *“God is in the midst...”*
- *“She shall not be moved...”*
- *“God will help her when morning dawns.”*
- *“The Lord of hosts is with us...”*
- *“God...is our fortress.”*

*That is CONFIDENCE in troubled times! **Here is what I’m discovering talking to New Hope people.**

*Folks from New Hope may have **concern for the world**, but there is **overwhelming confidence that God is with us...and He is using current events for His glory.**

***I saw one New Hope man downtown TC this week who said:**

“This is going to be a catalyst for people to reassess and reprioritize what matters.”

***Do you have FAITH IN TROUBLED TIMES? Is your joy secure?**

*This is how my wife is reacting to the world. She is so excited about what God is doing...

*One of my kids said to her this week: ***“How can you be so calm?”***

*The reason believers can be confident & full of joy in troubled times:

***God’s promises do NOT fluctuate with the DOW.**

***He is *in our midst*; He will *help us*; He is *with us*; He is *our fortress*.**

And because of that another Psalm says: *“I shall not be shaken.” (Ps. 62)

***Most of you know the children’s nursery rhyme: “Humpty Dumpty”**

“Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall; Humpty Dumpty had a great fall; all the king’s horses and all the king’s men, couldn’t put Humpty together again.”

***Christian author Ellis Potter** notes that for the Christian, one important line is missing:

*“...couldn’t put Humpty together again...**BUT THE KING COULD!**” AND THE KING DID.*

***With all the tottering going on in the world, don’t miss what God is up to:**

- Hearts are turning toward Him, with revival and renewal.
- People are bringing broken, shattered dreams to the only One who can fix it.
- Fear and instability is driving us to the one place that cannot be shaken: The Living God.
- And more than ever, we are reminded that Christ is the only “solid rock” who never totters and “all other ground is sinking sand.”

***I wonder: What else needs to be shaken or tottered so that God can accomplish His purposes?**

3. - Be still! (v.8-11)

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

*This is a typical **Evening News Broadcast** of war and trouble and desolation on earth.

*The Psalmist wants us to **interpret WORLD events with this perspective: *What is God up to?***

*v.8 wants us to consider that even in **unsettled times**, God is on the throne doing His work!

*v.9 wants to remind us that God has **power to reverse the troubles of earth** in a moment.

***As World Events are being considered, God interrupts the broadcast with BREAKING NEWS.**

10 “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

***It’s the only time God speaks in Ps. 46...and He has a message of confidence for believers.**

“Be still”: Settle your emotions; Be calm; Stop pacing or wringing your hands; Don’t unravel...

“And know”: There is a truth to be embraced that will ease anxiety; calm fears; & restore hope.

“I am God. I will be exalted among the nations”: God is still in charge. With everything being shaken, God is not shaken. He is accomplishing His work around the globe, for His glory.

*I remain convinced that the **times live in will cause the church to FLOURISH, not FLOUNDER.**

*I am convinced the **shaking of our world will prove to be the best thing for the church, not the worst.**

*It will **rekindle a passion among the churched; renew faith among dechurched; and remind the unchurched how FRAIL we are and how FAITHFUL God is.**

*With **God's voice breaking into troubled times, the Psalmist ends the chapter with this confidence:**

11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

*This is why we have confidence in troubled times. **God has not cancelled His presence.**

***Your Dentist** may be cancelled; God is not. **Your gym may be closed;** but God is still present.

Action Steps:

- **Interrupt Bad News.**

*Keep your Bible open to Psalm 46 this week; Read it every morning; Read it to kids at bedtime.

*Mute the TV during commercials, and read Psalm 46 during evening news.

*With all the bad news filling air waves, interrupt your brain waves with a reminder of Good News.

- **Avoid Spiritual Distancing.**

*With all the talk of "social distancing" for health, it's time to close the gap on spiritual distancing.

*Maybe you have been 'spiritual distancing' for far too long, and God has not been a priority in life.

*This is a perfect opportunity to reprioritize the life of faith; to return to God for strength & help.

- **Encourage Your Neighbor**

*Now is a time to love your neighbor. With all the isolation, to check in and encourage and pray.

*Do you know your **6 closest neighbors?** What could you do to **offer help?**

- **Be Still. Know. God.**

*He offers a relationship of peace through His Son Jesus. A refuge in times of trouble. A Savior.

*And come what may, the best news is the Hope of Resurrection. A Savior who conquers death.

*Remind yourselves this week...though the earth gives way, we will not fear. God is with us.