

#2 Strong In The Storm

8-12-26

Psalms 46 - The Refuge Who Stands

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online.
- B. Slide1-5 Community Outreach. FHC Meetings. Women's R&R. Divorce Care. Employment Opportunity.
- C. Slide6 Prayer: *our Refuge, our River, Our Ruler.*

II. Intro:

- A. Ask: Ever Visit a **Fortress**? Where? Most impressed with? (Nimrod's Fortress)
- B. Series: Strong in the Storm [Finding Confidence in God *through* the Psalms]
- C. Series Theme: **Storms** are inevitable. **Fear** is understandable. **But God's presence is greater than our circumstances.**
 - 1. These 4 psalms reveal that our confidence is not found in escaping life's storms, **but** in *walking through them* with **the God** who is our **Shepherd, Refuge, Shelter, and Keeper.**
- D. Slide7a Tonight we tackle Psalm 46 - God being, *The Refuge Who Stands.*
 - 1. It emphasizes **God's immovability** *rather than* simply **His protection.**
 - 2. Ps. 46 pairs with *today's cultural climate* where everything seems **unstable.**
 - a) It also confronts one of theology's most persistent questions: *Where is God when genuine trouble strikes?* [The psalm's answer centers on *a refuge* that fundamentally **transcends** what we typically expect *from shelter*].
- E. Slide7b Big Idea: *Our security is found not in stable circumstances but in the unshakable presence of God.* [God remains **unshaken** when everything else *shakes*]
- F. Have you ever noticed how much of our lives is spent trying to create **stability**?
 - 1. We **buy** insurance. We **build** savings accounts. We **lock** our doors. We **schedule** our calendars months in advance. We try to **eliminate uncertainty** because we long for security.

2. Yet the older we get, the more we discover that life is anything but *predictable*. Jobs disappear. Relationships change. Bodies wear out. Economies fluctuate. Nations rise and fall. The things we thought were *solid* suddenly begin to *shake*.

a) Psalm 46 was written for moments like these. It doesn't promise a life *without* earthquakes. *Instead*, it reminds us that when everything around us is *shaking*, there is *One* who *never does*. - The Psalm *isn't* about *escaping* trouble. It's about *finding a refuge* in the middle of it.

G. The superscription tells us this Psalm was written by *the Sons of Korah*.

1. Their ancestor *Korah* led one of the **greatest rebellions** against *God* in the wilderness (Num.16). Yet Num.26:11 quietly tells us, "*But the sons of Korah did not die*". - Generations later, those descendants became **worship leaders** in Israel. Their very existence is a testimony to *God's grace* (as is our worship team, ha!). They knew firsthand that *God was a refuge*, *not* because life had been easy, *but* because *God* had remained faithful.

H. (the timing of this we are *not sure*? Some think 2 Chron.20) But the Psalmist paints a vivid picture of *a world falling apart* while *God's people remain confident* because *God Himself is with them*. [Jehoshaphat king of Judah story?]

I. Slide8a Martin Luther favorite Psalm was **Ps.46**. During the *dark and dangerous and enormous pressures* of the **Protestant Reformation**, when it seemed as though everything was *unraveling*, he often turned to *this Psalm* and eventually wrote the great hymn, ***A Mighty Fortress Is Our God***. [Luther would turn to his colleague *Philipp Melancthon* and say, "*Come, Philipp, let's sing the 46th Psalm*"]

1. Once a sympathetic friend **sheltered Luther in a castle for his safety**, he experienced afresh ***the protection & comfort of a mighty God***. This experience of refuge directly shaped his understanding of Ps.46's promise.

2. It became *the battle hymn of the Reformation*. The hymn was sung at Luther's funeral; *and* the first line is engraved on his tombstone.

3. Luther understood what the Sons of Korah understood centuries before him: *Our security has never rested in favorable circumstances but in the God who rules over them.*
4. Slide8b Luther explained his purpose for the hymn: *"We sing this psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends His church and His word against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and sin."*

III. Slide9a I. OUR REFUGE (1-3) [3 points: *our Refuge, our River, Our Ruler*]

- A. 1 *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* 2 *Therefore we will not fear though the earth give 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.* Selah
- B. The Psalm opens with one of the greatest declarations in all of Scripture: *God is our refuge* (He'll *hide* us) *and strength* (He'll *help* us), *a very present help in trouble*.
 1. Notice, It doesn't begin with **the storm**. It begins **with God**. That is always the order of biblical faith. *Our understanding of God determines how we interpret everything else.*
- C. Notice, that the verse **doesn't** simply say *God gives refuge*. It says *He is our refuge*. He **doesn't** merely *provide strength*. *He is our strength*.
 1. Ultimately, God's greatest gift **isn't** something He gives us - it is **Himself**.
 2. **The safest place in all the universe is not a location; it is the presence of God.**
- D. The phrase *a very present help* is especially beautiful/powerful.
 1. **It means** He is abundantly available, immediately present, *never absent, never distracted, never late*. (an abundantly available help in tight places).
 2. The promise is **not** that we will avoid trouble. ***The promise is that God is already there when trouble comes.** [listen: Long before we ever arrive in the storm, **He** has already taken His place *within it*].

E. (2,3) The Psalmist immediately paints an almost unimaginable picture. *"Though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea..."*.

1. In the ancient world, **mountains** represented permanence and stability. **Seas** represented chaos. Imagine the most impossible event imaginable - *the mountains themselves collapsing into the ocean*. (1960's, 70's a lot of talk about CA falling into the Pacific). The point is simple: even if everything we have always depended upon - falls apart, we do not have to fear because God has not moved.

a) That truth speaks directly into our lives. Most of us don't fear mountains falling into the sea. We fear *doctor's reports, unexpected phone calls, financial uncertainty, broken relationships, and uncertain futures*. Yet every one of those moments asks the same question: *Is my confidence resting in my circumstances, or in my God?*

F. Slide9b St. Augustine argued that God's **Refuge** becomes available **only when** individuals recognize there is **no refuge** in themselves or the world - making struggle against God ultimately fruitless.

1. Slide9c This reframes what "**refuge**" means entirely. God constitutes a refuge that **does not weaken the sheltered**, not because He shields us from the world's excesses, but because He reorients us away from self-protection and *its delusions*. (weaken the sheltered - eg. helicopter parents)

IV. Slide10a 2. OUR RIVER (4-7)

A. 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.* Selah (Ps: pic. river Jordan, doesn't go thru Jer)

B. Suddenly the imagery changes. The roaring seas disappear and another body of water comes into view. *There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God* (4)

1. This image would have surprised the original readers because **Jerusalem** actually had no great river running through it **like** Babylon or Egypt did.
 - a) The city's security never rested in **natural resources**, it rested entirely in **God's presence**.
 2. The river becomes a picture of God's life-giving presence among His people. Throughout Scripture, rivers symbolize God's blessing.
 - a) A river flowed through **Eden**. **Ezekiel** saw a river flowing from the Temple bringing life wherever it went. **Jesus** later promised that rivers of living water would flow from those who believed in Him through the Holy Spirit. Finally, **Revelation** ends with the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God. *From Genesis to Revelation, God Himself is the source of life, joy, and refreshment.*
- C. (5) Explains why the city stands: *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.*
1. Notice the **contrast**: *The mountains move, the nations move, kingdoms move, but* the city of God does not move because **God Himself** is in its midst. *Slide10b Our stability has never depended on the absence of trouble. It has always depended on the presence of God.*
- D. Then comes the refrain that anchors the Psalm: *The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress* (7).
- [Message: **Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, GOD-of-Angel-Armies protects us**]
1. *The LORD of hosts* reminds us that **the Commander of heaven's armies stands with** His people. Every **angelic host** is *under His authority*.
 2. **Yet** the Psalm calls Him *the God of Jacob*. What an encouraging title!
 - a) God doesn't identify Himself with Jacob *because Jacob was impressive*. Jacob was *flawed, fearful, and often faithless*. Yet God willingly attached His **Name** to him. That means the same God stands with ordinary, struggling people ... like us.

V. Slide11a **3. OUR RULER (8-11)**

- A. 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.* 10 *“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”* 11 *The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.* Selah
- B. The final section of the Psalm lifts our eyes from **our personal struggles** to **God's rule over all history**. *Come, behold the works of the LORD* (8).
1. We are invited to step back and remember that history belongs to Him. *He breaks the bow. He shatters the spear. He burns the chariots with fire.*
 2. The weapons humanity trusts are **no match** for the **Sov Power of God**.
- C. Then comes one of the most quoted verses in the Bible: *Be still, and know that I am God* (10).
1. Often read as as **an invitation to quiet our hearts before God**, and that is certainly an *appropriate application*. **But** in the context of Ps.46, **God is speaking to the raging nations**.
 2. **Slide11b** The phrase literally means, *"Stop striving. Lay down your weapons. Cease your rebellion.* [or, Drop your weapons and understand that I am your security]. God is announcing that **He alone** rules history **and** that **every nation** will ultimately acknowledge His authority.
- D. The Psalm closes by repeating its great refrain: *The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress*.
1. **Notice** that the answer to every fear is exactly the same as it was in vs.7 *God's presence has not changed*.
 2. The **circumstances** may still be difficult, **but the Lord** remains exactly where He has always been - **with His people**.

VI. Slide12a **CHRIST CONNECTION**

- A. Psalm 46 ultimately points us to Jesus Christ. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated that He possesses authority over everything that causes us **fear**.

1. He stood in a storm-tossed boat and simply spoke, and the wind and waves obeyed Him. He walked into the chaos of sickness and disease and brought healing. He confronted demons, death, and the grave itself, and every one of them submitted to His authority.

B. Slide12b (1st 2 stanza's) **A mighty fortress is our God**, a **bulwark**/*defensive wall* never failing; our **helper** He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.

For still **our ancient foe** doth seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

C. Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the Right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing. **Dost ask who That may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth**, His name, from age to age the same, and He **must** win the battle.

D. CONCLUSION

E. **Our refuge** is not a place. It is a **Person**. So, **our security** is not found in a trouble-free life, it is found in **the God who walks with us through every storm**.

1. The earth may shake. Nations may rage. Circumstances may change. But our God still stands. And because He stands, so can we.

F. The question is not whether **your life** will **experience earthquakes and shake up's**. **It will!** The question is where your **foundation** rests.

1. **If** your **security** depends on circumstances, *your peace will rise and fall with every headline and every political appointee*. **If** your security rests in **Christ**, you can **stand** even while everything around you **shakes**.

a) God is **still** our **refuge**. God is **still** our **strength**. God is **still** our **very present help in trouble**. **And** because **He stands**, **we can too**.

G. **Prayer:** *God we humbly bow before You, our Refuge, our River, Our Ruler!*
(sing this to your soul!)

H. Keywords: Refuge. Fortress.