

Psalm 46

MPS **During great trouble, turn your eyes from your circumstances to your God**

INTRO

- We celebrate a baptism today
- We are going through some Psalms for summer and today is Psalm 46.
- Psalm 46 like Psalm 27 (we looked at 2 weeks ago) is what's called a Psalm of confidence.
- We're not sure of the exact time in which it was written, but we are sure the problem ... there was great trouble.
- In times of great trouble, this Psalmist is placing his confidence in our Lord.

PRAYER

OPEN

- Psalm 46, has been called Martin Luther Psalm.
- Martin Luther, if you don't know, was one of the leaders that a Protestant Reformation.
- Some call this the Luther Psalm because it was the basis for his famous hymn "A mighty fortress is our God." And that particular song was also known as the Battle Cry of the Protestant Reformation.
- He wrote this hymn in 1527 - about 10 years after he nailed the 95 thesis to the door of the Church in Wittenberg. In 1527 Luther was going through a lot.
 - He had, for example, a cute buzzing in his ear that made him think that he was dying.
 - He was facing great discouragement.
 - He had heart and intestinal problems.
 - And there was a deadly plague that had entered Germany and spread to his town.
 - And he and his wife, Katie opened up their home when many were fleeing, and they basically made it a hospital. Some people died, right there in their home.
 - And Psalm 46, became a great source of strength to his soul.
- But not only to Luther, but also to the church as a whole throughout history – and even now to you and me. This is the church's Psalm
- Though we're not sure of the time in which it was written, we do know the settings in which it was written, Great Trouble. AND We also know the subject of the Psalm – God.

(vs 1) God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

- The Bible is ABOUT God and it is FOR us.
- So, we see the Psalmist turning His attention from his circumstances and placing his confidence in God alone.

(vs 8) Come, behold the works of the LORD

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- We can divide this Psalm into 3 parts – each part ending with the word Selah. (after vs 3, 7, and 11)
- Selah means to pause, meditate, think deeply about what was just said, or in the case of the Psalms, what was just sung.
- It's like the instrumental parts of songs – you just sang lyrics, now there is time in the song where just the music plays as we reflect on what we have sung.

1. God is present in our worst-case scenarios

Vs 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. Selah*

- These verses have an eschatological overtone; they describe creation unmade.
- Already but not yet kingdom – there will come an end to the face of the earth as we know it and God will usher in the New Heavens and New Earth.

Jim Hamilton calls pericope this creation unmade.

- But in the 'not yet' stage, sometimes life feels like good things being unmade.
- What great joy we have in creation of good things: relationships, marriage, children, the genesis of anything that is good – opportunity, biz, career, etc.
- When the creation of good things become unmade, it can look like the worst case scenario.
 - a. God is present to protect (refuge)
 - i. There are so many things God has protected us from that we will never know.

- ii. He often swoops in like the wings of an eagle to protect and secure us.
- b. God is present to give strength
- i. Sometimes, He allows for the good things to be unmade – worst case scenarios. HE HAS A PLAN
 - ii. He gives us strength in those times
 - iii. Keller quote: “God will only give you what you would have asked for if you knew everything he knows”

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2. God is our source of gladness when we are under attack.

Vs 4-7 *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*

- The book of Revelation alludes to this City

Revelation 21:9–11 (ESV) *9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*

- A River:
 - Was vital to ancient people – they provided water
 - Water to quench thirst
 - Water to cook with, to bathe with, to refresh
 - Rivers flow – symbolizing carrying things – cargo, supplies, people
 - Rivers provide fish for food, so rivers nourish
 - Rivers were a source of life!
 - Rivers are a source of beauty,
 - Rivers give a calming feeling with its flowing waters

Revelation 22:1–5 (ESV) *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 2 through 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. 3 No 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. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

- The refuge and fortress is twofold –
 - a. one, our one on one relationship with him and
 - b. two our church is a refuge.

This is the application part – it is HOW we turn our eyes from our circumstances to our God.

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3. God is our fortress forevermore

Vs 8-11 *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*

- Behold – be in awe, gaze, can’t keep your eyes off of...
- Verse 9 is all about Armageddon – God will judge his and our enemies.
- Be still and know that I am God is for
 - a. The enemies of God
 - b. The people of God

He is our fortress – our refuge forever more.

- In the meantime:
 - the enemies that are far away from you, he breaks their bow,
 - the enemies that are close to you, he shatters their spear,
 - the enemies that want to pursue you, he burns their chariots,
- Though you may suffer worse-case scenarios, though it may feel like the ground beneath you gives way, He is your refuge and fortress – no enemy can take you from HIS hand!

CONCLUSION:

- During tough times, Luther used to say to his associate, “come Philip, let us sing the 46th Psalm.”

- God is present in our worse-case scenarios, God is our source of gladness when we are under attack, God is our fortress forevermore.
- Meditating on Psalm 46 – selah-ing is a way that -

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. What does it look like for you to be refreshed by the 'river of God' in your personal life?
2. What does it look like for you to be refreshed by the 'river of God' through your church?