

God is our Fortress - Psalms 46 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

As a kid, I remember hearing Andre Crouch sing the amazing song *To God be the Glory*. I remember seeing him on the Billy Graham crusade sitting at a piano and belting out in strong voice singing in a bluesy tune, "How can I say thanks for all the things you have done for me, things do underserved, yet you gave to prove your love for me." The song goes on to say, "All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe it all to Thee." For Crouch, this song was so much more than a set of lyrics. You can Google his story, but let's just say that God rescued him from a difficult life with lots of failures. The song was a testimony song, a declaration of God's goodness from the lips of a person who had personally encountered the glorious grace and goodness of God through deep trials. Psalm 46 too is a testimony song, written out of an awful moment in Israel's history, yet God rescued His people and demonstrated His covenant love for them.

Testimony songs help us both remember and look forward. Some who sing Psalm 46 sing it because they have been through the storm and personally know the truths found in the poem. Others might sing it not fully knowing how to process it but singing in hope that when the storms come they can find safety in God. Yet, it is the reality that we sing these together that gives them their beauty, as the one who has already found hope in God as a refuge, strength, and very present help in trouble can sing in faith alongside the person who still doubts and fears and needs to hear these words as they enter a season of life that where the mountains are being moved, the seas are roaring, and the earth is giving way.

The basic truth of this Psalm is simple, yet glorious. For those who know Christ, who trust in God, who cling to Him and nothing else, He will be their safety in the midst of the worst situations. In the ancient world major cities had walls that formed a protective barrier to advancing armies and wandering marauders. Even if you lived in the country you would flee to the city when trouble was coming and hide behind the walls. Yet, the walls often were not sufficient, especially as the armies of mighty empires closed in. They would cut off food and water, and then do all they could to breach the wall and then take all that is dear. This Psalm pictures God as a city who is a refuge, a fortress that will be a place of safety in times of trouble. But this fortress is unlike any other, it cannot be breached, cannot be defeated, cannot be overthrown.

So the Psalm asks us a simple question, what is our place of safety in hope in times of trouble, hardship, and suffering. Notice the Psalm does not promise that the storm will not come, the earthquake won't happen, the tsunami will stay at sea. Rather, it says we will not fear when these things happen when God is our refuge. This is important to understanding the Psalm. Why do we fear when trials come? Why can't we sleep and we get that pit in our stomach? It is a natural human reaction to fear the storm, but our fear generally comes because we believe these things have the potential to take from us the things that we value the most. We find our safety and security in all kinds of things, but we know these troubles can take those things from us. We can lose our financial security, our home, health, and even our own lives. If these things are our refuge the walls can fall and they can all be taken away. On the other hand, if our safety and hope is in Christ, He cannot be moved, He cannot be shaken. In fact, this is one of the interesting points in the Psalm. The same Hebrew word is used in v. 2 (moved in ESV), v. 5 (moved), and v. 6 (totter). The word means to stagger, "go about wobbling, start falling." Notice then what the Psalm tells us. The mountains may stagger, may fall into the sea. Nations will roar and rage but they too will stumble and fall. But our God, who is in the middle of

His city cannot be moved, he does not stumble and wobble, He fights for His people. The Psalm is a testimony that Christ Himself is our safety and when God is all we have we will realize that God is all we need.

So the Psalmist tells us we are to be still and know that He is God. This is not freezing like a deer in the headlights, rather it is to stand back and trust alone in God. When storms come we can fight the storm, seeking to find our own path to rescue, or we can trust in God, His goodness, providence, and power. The storm may take our idols and the things we trusted in before, yet, as we hold on to Jesus we will find His goodness and power. Then we too will join the throng of people who sing this song not in hopes that God will save but as a testimony that God is your refuge, your strength, your present help in time of trouble.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Psalm 130	Psalm 131	Psalm 132	Psalm 133	Psalm 134	Psalm 135	Psalm 136

Reading from this past week: Psalm 46

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 146

Family Worship

Song - *A Mighty Fortress*

<https://youtu.be/oNeP7bGaggg>

Gospel Project

Story: Ananias & Sapphira

Story Point: Ananias & Sapphira lied about their gift to the church.

Big Picture Question: What is the church?

Answer: The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

Scripture: Acts 4-5

New City Catechism

Question #2: What is God?

Answer: God is the creator of everyone and everything.

Verse: Psalm 86:8-10, 15

Scripture

Psalm 46

- What is a refuge or fortress. Why is the Psalmist equating God as our refuge and what does that mean for us?
- Does God promise that we won't have storms and hard times? What does this Psalm declare to us about those times?
- What does the song mean when it tells us to "Be still and know that I am God?" Why are the next two lines important to understand God's purpose for our lives?

Prayer

*Pray for healing in our country, and that people would turn to Jesus during this hard time.

*Praise God for being our refuge an strength, a very present help in time of trouble.