

“Be Still and Know”

Psalm 46:1-11

INTRO:

Martin Luther, the Reformer, wrote a hymn and composed the music about 1527 that is drawn from the first stanza of **Psalm 46**. He wrote, *“A mighty fortress is our God, /a bulwark 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.”*

With Martin Luther’s hymn in mind, I want to survey **Psalm 46**. This song has three stanzas.

I. God’s Help (v. 1-3)

II God’s Provision (v. 4-7)

III. God’s Person (v. 8-11)

I. God’s Help (v. 1-3)

A. Our Psalm begins triumphally proclaiming God’s help in difficult times. **(Psalm 46:1)**
“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

For twenty first century Americans this sentiment is not welcome, but we all admit we secretly need it. We tend to want to think we need no refuge, no crutch to get us through life. Yet, depression being the fastest growing diagnosis in America contradicts this assertion. The many times the Bible tells us God is our refuge also demonstrates how much we need Him to be our hiding place in the midst of trouble. God is our hiding place and He is our might so we can endure.

B. Because God is our hiding place, our strength and our ever present help in trouble, we cannot fear in fearful circumstances. **(Psalm 46:2–3)**

“Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.”

I have only been in minor tremors, but I understand from talking to folks who are veterans of quakes that nothing is scarier that when the earth moves under your feet. When we should be terrified, because we know God and have experienced His power and stability before, we can answer fear with logic.

C. The problem is we are like the disciples acted in the storm in **Matthew 8:26**.

“[The Lord Jesus] said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?’ Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.”

We often say this after the Lord has stilled the storm. We need to know the Lord God so well that in the midst of the thunder and lightning we can trust and not be afraid. Stop and think for a while about that.

II God’s Provision (v. 4-7)

A. The Psalmist moves his hymn from God’s help to God’s provision. The God who delivers us from the crises of life also continually supplies His people. **(Psalm 46:4–5)**

“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.”

B. There is no river in Jerusalem. Some identify this stream with the channel Hezekiah built to allow Jerusalem to withstand a siege. I think the picture is that of the River that flows from the throne of God. God provides all that His people need in this world. There are two different names for God here. The Most High God, which speaks of no god or being greater. He is the one who forms and maintains all the heavens and the earth. Second, He is described as Elohim, the powerful One, He who can do all things.

C. God will sustain and establish His people. If we are saved, we are His people. When others would destroy us; **(Psalm 46:6)**

“The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted.”

III. God’s Person (v. 8-11)

A. Our God is our helper in trouble. He is our provider in life and ready defender. Finally, the psalmist wants us to recognize who our God is. **(Psalm 46:8–9)**

“Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.”

A third name for our God appears here. He is the Most High God. He is Elohim the all-powerful One. Thirdly here, He is also Yahweh, the ever faithful, promise keeping, covenant keeping God. He has faithfully destroyed many powerful kingdoms and armies. He has made the earth quake beneath His enemies.

B. How can we have this great comfort and assurance? How can we His people know that He will do this for us? **(Psalm 46:10)**

“Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

There are no short cuts. We must cease trying to cope with our fears ourselves and come to really know the God who will win in the end. We must take time to get to know this God. We must know Him as our Savior. We must know Him as the only living God who rules over heaven and earth. We must know Him as the God who is all-powerful and ever faithful. We can only know God in this way if we spend time walking with Him in His Word.

C. If we do this, **cease from fighting** and get to really know Him. Then the refrain of **verses 7 and 11** can be true of each of us.

“The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.”

This is the last name of God we must understand here. He is LORD Sabaoth, LORD of hosts or LORD of the armies. He is the ever faithful, promise keeping God who is King over all the armies of heaven and earth. He is with us!

The God of Jacob transformed failing Jacob and used him. This God is our strength.

Get to know Him and we will be able to not be afraid when our boat is in the midst of the storms of life. He will bring us safely all the way home.