

## Psalms 46 (Ps Wendy Ching)

### **God Is Our Refuge and Strength**

**46 1** 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* **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* **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* (*Selah is usually found at the end of a verse in Psalms/ Habakkuk → probably as a musical direction*)

#### Intro:

- This Psalm can only be written by someone who was facing insurmountable earth-shaking challenges, probably exceeding what we are facing today
- Only God could sustain his (the psalmist) sanity
- The psalmist is not trying to seek answers as to why there's so much trouble and why God didn't prevent anything; instead he turns his eyes to God.

#### Body:

1. V1: *God is our refuge*
  - a. Even when we are all alone, God is still there with us
  - b. When we awaken in the night with fear, God is still our ever-present help
2. V1: *a very present help (ever-present help) in trouble*
  - a. When we are filled with worries, He is there when we need Him the most
  - b. "ever-present help" = exceeding great help among us (in Hebrew)
    - i. The help is NOT just sufficient, it is **exceeding** (in great abundance, in great measure)
  - c. God offers Himself as a safe place to hide (He does not just point to a place of refuge, He **is** the refuge)
    - i. In offering us Himself, He is telling us that when there is no safe place for us to hide, we can find our hiding place (to rest, to regroup) in Him
3. V1: *God is our...strength*
  - a. When we are depleted of our own strength, He gives us new strength
  - b. His grace for us is renewed every morning. Likewise, His strength for us is renewed day by day (whenever we need it)
  - c. His help and strength is in exceeding abundance among us
4. V2: *Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way*
  - a. Is it possible to not fear when the world is collapsing around us?
    - i. Natural response: fear (it is impossible to control fear)

- ii. Psalmist's meaning: he is not saying that he does not feel fear/ is perfectly calm (it is impossible). Instead, he is making a choice to rely on the understanding, the knowledge, the assurance, the promise of God → allowing the peace of God to take precedence over the fear itself
  - b. Covid19: taking away the stability, income, future
    - i. Everyone's focus is on the news (social media)
    - ii. It is wise to keep up to date with advisories and circulars, yet we must not forget to focus on the Lord → the events of this world will not help us to calm down, only the understanding, assurance and presence of God in our midst can give us the peace we need
5. V4: *There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God*
- a. River: represents life
    - i. In God's dwelling place, God offers us water of life which sustains us
    - ii. Life-giving water → when we don't have enough, God will help us
6. V5: *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns*
- a. Help will come in the break of day, and we will not fall
  - b. The time will come when we see God's help will come at the right time when we need it the most
  - c. His presence for His people is especially real when life is being shaken
  - d. God wants us to know that we will survive → in the midst of unrest, distress and trouble, God promises us that He is the Lord Almighty
    - i. Lord Almighty: God of angel armies (God is in control of all the power and forces that will help us survive + He is there to fight for us)
7. V7: *The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress*
- a. "God of Jacob"
    - i. Jacob was someone who schemes all his life + was schemed
    - ii. He realised that his brother was going to kill him so he made plans and preparations to ensure his life but he came to a point where he realised that his plans may not work
    - iii. That is when he came and wrestled with God all night for help
      - 1. Wrestled out his anxiety, fear
      - 2. God touched him and told him to rest
    - iv. Jacob became lame → can no longer depend on himself, no choice but to depend on God
  - b. There will come a point when we feel we can no longer defend ourselves adequately (even after doing all that we can)
    - i. Who can protect us in such a time?
      - 1. Nobody. Hence it is the time to surrender our lives and put it in God's hands
    - ii. In such a time when human life is so fragile, we have the assurance that our life is not limited to this earth, in fact our life is eternal (the end of life on earth is not the end of life)
8. V10: *"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"*
- a. Life is like a stampede and we are caught in it

- i. Tendency: in order to survive, we need to run faster
  - ii. God's word: no, you need to **intentionally** slow down in My presence
- b. In times like this, we are forced to slow down
  - i. It is not necessarily a bad thing to stay home, slow down
  - ii. When we are rushing through life, we often forget what's essential/truly important in life (things that can make you say: "even if I were to lose everything, as long as I have this, it is enough")
    - 1. A life without regrets
    - 2. A life that helps others to see the presence & beauty of God
- c. God is also challenging us to not fear but to once again think about what we are pursuing, what we spend most of our time on, what is worth fighting for
  - i. Be still and answer these questions as we look to God in prayer so that we can set our priorities right
- d. This pandemic helps us to understand that we do not live forever
  - i. Gives us new perspectives (eg. things we deem to be of high importance, may not be essential after all)

Questions to ponder:

- How are we living our lives?
- Where are we going?
- Is God happy with us?