

Wil Owens
God is Our Fear-ending Fortress; Psalm 46
GPBC
3.1.20

Introduction – The Bible has an answer for the stresses and frustrations of life. The Bible has an answer for our doubts, worries, fears, and anxieties. The Bible has an answer for the troubles and trials that we face. The Bible has an answer for the discouragement and depression we experience. The Bible has an answer for the hardships, pressures, and persecutions that we endure. In fact, the Bible not only has an answer for each and every one of these issues in life, the Bible has the answer. And the answer is God.

V1 – God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

V7 – The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

V11 – The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

God is the answer for every setback, strain, and struggle! We would all affirm that to be absolutely true, however, when faced with the strains and struggles of life, we tend to think of God not as present but distant – not as our help but rather as uncaring – not as our fortress but rather against us.

The issue we wrestle with is not affirming what the Bible says about God but rather affirming that what the Bible says about God is absolutely true and applicable and real for us. We believe the Bible is inspired but do we believe that it is sufficient? We believe it is true but do we believe it is applicable? The issue isn't that we don't believe the Bible. The issue is in believing the Bible is true for me in the very circumstance that I face today. That's precisely where the fight of faith takes place. Let's see how Psalm 46 may help us apply God's Word to our hearts and lives.

- I. With God as Our Fortress, We Need Not Fear (vv1-3)
 - a. The opening verse of Psalm 46 is an affirmation of God's certainty and sufficiency for whatever dark, despairing, difficult, or discouraging trouble we face. In fact, He is more than certain and more than sufficient for our every trouble.
 - i. God is our refuge and strength. This is the cry of God's people. If we belong to God, if we are in Christ, a refuge and strength is what our God is for us. Our refuge is not in a bottle or in a pill. Our strength is not in a hardened

determination to get our way no matter the fallout. Our refuge and our strength is God – there is no safer refuge and there is no greater strength.

ii. He is also a very present help in trouble.

1. God doesn't step away from you in times of trouble, He steps near you in times of trouble – that's why the text says "a VERY present help in trouble."
2. Remember in John 16 Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit so that in essence God is always present with us. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer at the time of conversion, so God is not only present with us, He is very present with us. And now remember what Jesus calls the Holy Spirit over and over in John 14-16 – the Helper.
3. Isn't that sweet? Believer, listen to me, if you are in Christ v1 is a direct promise from God to you! V1 is an absolute, unqualified, propositional, objective truth statement about God!

- b. Now the point of vv2-3 is to picture for us the most troubling and fearful of circumstances that we could possibly imagine. Read. The picture here is that the world around us and underneath our very feet is upturning and coming undone. And yet, in the most fearful of circumstances that you can imagine, we need not fear because it is absolutely true that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble – even the worst imaginable trouble.
- c. Let me ask you now, what troubles you the most? What causes you the most fear? What depresses you often? What easily upsets you? What keeps you up at night? Gives you a panic attack? Causes you to be frantic? Whatever circumstance you are thinking about right now, God is your refuge and strength, and He is a very present help for that particular fearful situation. That's who He is for you – that's He's very nature and disposition toward you.

II. We Need Not Fear Because God is an Immoveable Fortress (vv4-7)

- a. Vv4-5 picture the sure and certain tranquility of the presence of God. The earth may come undone, but no matter how this world or our lives may be tossed to and fro in a sea of uncertainty, God is not moved – the upheaval of this life and this world doesn't budge Him an inch from His sovereign and joyful presence.

- i. Notice that His sovereignty is unquestioned – the holy habitation of the Most High because God is in her midst, she shall not be moved.
 - ii. Notice that His sovereignty is joyful – there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God. Rev 22:1 – “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.” Those who drink of the water of life are made glad.
 - iii. But notice also this presence of God where His sovereignty is unquestioned and joyful and immoveable is precisely the presence of God that is with us in Christ – a very present help in trouble. That’s precisely the point of Psalm 46 to juxtapose the joyful, immoveable presence of God with the upheaval, fearful circumstances of this world. Just as God is not moved by fear or upheaval, if you are in Christ, God’s presence is present with you – you shall not be moved either! Why? Because God is in your midst.
 - iv. Notice the end of v5 – God will help her – who is her? – the people of God – you! He is a very present help.
- b. Now vv6-7 summarize the point of vv1-5 that no matter how tumultuous or fearful our circumstances may be, God is our sure and sufficient help. Read.
 - i. V6 – Have we seen nations rage and kingdoms totter lately? And yet all God has to do is simply speak and every nation and every kingdom gives way to His will.
 - ii. V7 – The Lord of hosts – the One who commands the armies of heaven – the One who is over every nation and every kingdom – the One who is all-powerful – the Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob, the God of the ages, the God of His people, the One, true living God – that’s who is our fortress!
 - iii. Selah – stop and let that sink in!

III. We Need Not Fear Because God is an Unconquerable Fortress (vv8-11)

- a. Consider the works of the Lord (vv8-9). In other words, to bolster and reaffirm and reassure our faith in who God is and who God is for us, “Come, behold the works of the Lord.” He places and removes kings. He forms and dissolves nations. He decides who are the victors of war. And He does all of this to the end that He

will be glorified throughout the earth. Unquestioned, immoveable, unconquerable sovereignty that makes His people glad.

- b. And after we consider the works of the Lord to bolster our faith and assurance in Him that He is our fortress, then we should consider the words of the Lord. The works of the Lord in vv8-9 and the words of the Lord in v10.
- c. Listen, listen. Quiet your soul and listen. Whatever storm or trial or trouble or distress you are in today – listen, listen.
- d. Psalm 46:10 – Be still – no matter your fear, no matter how upsetting your life, no matter if the mountains are being uprooted and cast into the sea – Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!
- e. No matter what is happening around us and no matter what is happening to us and no matter what turmoil or fear is rising in us – God, the one true, living, sovereign God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- f. The psalm closes with v11. The God who is unquestioned, immoveable, and unconquerable – the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah.

Conclusion – I want you think right now of the thing that causes you to fear? What is it that causes you to be depressed? What is it that causes you to stress, that causes you to shrink back, that causes you to doubt? What is your greatest fear? What is your greatest trouble? I want you to place that right in front of your mind. Do you see it? Do you have it? Now keep it there and we're going to place the Word of God over that fear and see God as our fear-ending fortress!

We are going to read vv1 and 11 except we are going to take the truth of the Bible and embrace it and apply it as Gods truth to us personally. We're going to replace the 3rd person pronouns with 1st person pronouns.

V1 – God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in my trouble.

V11 – The Lord of hosts is with me; the God of Jacob is my fortress.