

## Psalm 46

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

What does that mean to us?

Let's unpack the terminology a bit.

Refuge - The place of safety

Strength - the ability to deal with whatever issue is before us

Ever present - constant presence.

For us this means that we have somewhere we can go that we feel safe. We are given the strength through the Holy Spirit to deal with issues before us and that presence of the Holy Spirit is constant, not only in times of issue but all the time.

This is the launching point for the rest of the Psalm and really the rest of the Psalm unpacks this idea.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

The result of knowing this information gives us a confidence. For whatever happens.

Here the issues are natural.

Earthquake, floods etc. We could include bush fires, covid 19 as well.

Those natural catastrophes are not the point - the point is the not fearing.

Interestingly, I had a look at the word translated as fear.

Not only does it have the connotation of fear and being afraid that we understand but also being in awe of something or revering something.

The idea is that we will not be intimidated by that issue.

The psalm mentions natural disasters, throughout the crisis we have been experiencing people on the front line, that is doctors, nurses, police, ambulance drivers etc have put themselves in fearful situations but acted without it stopping their work. It didn't stop them from doing the task even with the fear.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

<sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

The waters are no longer a storm but a river. Strangely enough, Jerusalem doesn't have a river- at all, just a trickle stream. But this stream is life giving water, provided by God.

Again it is God providing.

The picture is one of God providing whatever is needed for life as well as safety.

Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

The Lord almighty, or as the KJV says the lord of Hosts. Notice the BIG capital letters that denotes that the word is the personal and name of God and is the big

God concept., and that big God concept is embellished by the almighty or the hosts.

The idea here is God is on our side. The big God, the God almighty. THE GOD

The mention of the term God of Jacob identifies with the relationship to the historical God of the Israelites, the God who did miracles. The allied forces in Ww1 claimed this allegiance. Problem was, so did the Germans. I wonder how God felt about all that.

Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

This is an interesting part of the passage. We are told to look at what God has done. Both historically and presently. I think here we need to not only think of wars and crisis but also what God has done in and with us as individuals, as a church, as a

denomination as a country, this list could go on- What has God done? Think about that for a second.

We pray and he does things. Has the rain we have received been natural occurrence or an answer to prayer? Really, what do you think? In September we were told that there was little chance of drought averting rain. It's not over but the rain was according to the Bureau of meteorology is a bit of a surprise. God provided? So is God in control? Does God answer prayer? Well that is what we have seen.

What about the way the covid situation is for us in Australia? Just politicians being clever or an answer to prayer?

See what God has done! (Just to quote Psalm 46 a bit) We need to develop the art of seeing what God has done. We would

call it testimony and in a few weeks we will give people a chance to testify about how God has sustained them through the isolation. 2<sup>nd</sup> of August that is planned for.

He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

This is a stop and think phrase. Stop and notice God is God. Notice he is worth exalting, worshiping and praising. Was this valid for those men in battle? Yes, knowing God in the face of death places the meaning of life somewhere different. God will be exalted even in the tragedy of war, or natural disaster. God still is God within each life experience - sickness, health, good and bad, better for worse, (sounds like a marriage!) He will be exalted, praised and worshiped in whatever circumstance. We can worship praise and exalt Him in whatever circumstance.

Now, this passage was my bible reading on the Monday of the first week of lock down. Be still and know that I am God. The problem is, I haven't. I have just worked flat out. I wasn't still. Things had to be done. I hope others have but I didn't but I need to find that time and space for stillness, we need to find that place for stillness in our everyday lives. If you have developed that stillness art keep it, if you haven't developed it – work on it. God says – be still.

Now, we finish with a powerful statement,

The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress

God is with us! God is our fortress.

God's presence and safety. The Psalmist thinks that's what we need to know.

