

PSALM 46

OUR CALM AMID CHAOS

A Bible Study at Faith Lutheran

When we look around us, it might at times seem like the world is in a state of chaos. Wars rage, economies crash, and morals are thrown out the window. Even the busyness of our own lives can overwhelm us: work, kids, activities, deadlines, accidents, sickness, death, etc... It's easy for us to feel that everything is on the verge of falling apart. When faced by the chaos around us, Psalm 46 reminds us where to find calm and peace. Surrounded by the uproar of the world, the believer can live in peace surrounded by the fortress of God's loving presence.

THE BOOK

The Psalter, or book of Psalms, is a collection of the songs of the people of Israel written over a period of centuries, from the time of Moses until after the return from Babylon. There are 150 psalms in the book that cover nearly every aspect of Christian life and worship. This book is especially suited for use in your personal devotional life.

THE AUTHOR

The Sons of Korah. In Numbers 16, we learn that Korah himself was a wicked man who rebelled against God and Moses. Korah's much later descendents, however, were Levites who had important positions in the religious life of the Israelites. Psalms 42-49, 84-85, and 87-88 were written by the Sons of Korah.

THE HYMN – "A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD"

1) A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need
That has us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.

2) With might of ours can naught be done;
Soon were our loss effected.
But for us fights the valiant one
Whom God himself elected.
You ask, "Who is this?"
Jesus Christ it is,
The almighty Lord.
And there's no other God;
He holds the field forever.

THE POINT

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

THE CHARACTERISTICS

Note the unique names given to God: the "Most High" (4), the "LORD Almighty" (7,11), and the "God of Jacob" (7,11).

FURTHER READING

Read one example of God's deliverance of the people of Israel in Isaiah 36-37.

Read above the true, everlasting, heavenly peace waiting for believers in Revelation 22.

3) Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpower us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done!
One little word can fell him.

4) The Word they still shall let remain,
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With his good gifts and Spirit.
And do what they will –
Hate, steal, hurt, or kill –
Though all may be gone,
Our victory is won;
The kingdom's ours forever!

Introduction:

1. What comes to mind with each picture? Can you guess what the pictures have in common? Which picture better describes your life?

Read verses 1:

2. What is a refuge? What does it mean for your life that God is your refuge *and* strength?
3. The word for “trouble” means “narrow/tight places.” What narrow places squeeze you in?
4. Agree/Disagree: I find it easy to remember that God is my “ever-present help.”

Read verses 2-3:

5. Utter chaos: Is this figurative language? What waves and mountains are churning around us? When will this happen for real? (Luke 21:25-28)
6. Agree/Disagree: “If you understand the truth of the first verse, your attitude cannot be anything other than complete fearlessness.”
7. What is *Selah*?

Read verses 4-5:

8. Sudden calm and peace: Where/what is the city of God? Where/what is the river? (Revelation 22:1-6) What makes this city so special?
9. Why is it appropriate to call God “Most High”?
10. How does God’s presence give you peace amidst family troubles? job loss? sickness?
11. What is the significance of “at break of day”?

Read verses 5-6:

12. Compare the use of the word “fall” in verses 3,5,6.
13. Compare the use of the word “roar” in verse 3,6. When have nations roared, above all against God?
14. What melts the earth? What is God’s/our weapon?
15. What comfort do God’s names “LORD Almighty” and “God of Jacob” bring us?
16. Describe the picture of a fortress.

Read verses 8-11:

17. Does verse 9 encourage anti-war movements? (Matthew 24:6) When is the “war to end all wars”? (Joel 3:9-16)
18. In the midst of chaos, God says: “Be still.” What does that mean for unbelievers? For you and me?
19. How/When is God exalted?

Conclusion:

20. What examples of God’s great deliverances can you recall from the Bible?

21. Can we expect to be delivered in that same way from the troubles we face on this earth? Where does true calm and peace come from?

Notes