

Our Refuge

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Date: 09 June 2019

[0:00] Psalm 46, God, our refuge. What are you afraid of? What are you fighting? I'd like to give some words of hope of how you can get through times of trouble.

! God preached a sermon on this psalm as how to handle stress with great finesse.

You could describe this psalm as showing how we can be safe in the refuge. How we can be safe in time of storm. If you are in any trouble, if you have fear or a fight on your hands, these words are for you.

God's words for you. And some think whenever trouble strikes that God is far, far away. But that is not the case. His word tells us that when trouble strikes, it's just the opposite.

God is in trouble with you. And as you enter the danger zone, and let's face it, life is like one big danger zone.

[1:20] What happens when you get born? Within one minute of being born, you cry. Otherwise, there could be a problem. And it's a good thing that you cry when you get born because it clears your lungs and all the amniotic fluid and such, and you start to breathe.

You start to... Your lungs start to operate. A baby cries to test out their lungs for the first time. Well, it's not quite the first time, apparently, because babies actually practice the motion of crying before they are born.

They actually practice how to cry. And they instinctively then know this simple action will cause their lungs to expand and to function. And the Bible tells us about trouble.

We're born, as it were. A man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. Job 5 verse 7. You know, when you get that pile of logs in a pile and you light the match and boof, sparks fly upwards. When the heat is on and you stoke and poke that burning fire, as sure as eggs, the sparks will fly upwards. As sure as rain falls downwards, sparks fly upwards.

[2:44] And as surely, too, life has its share of troubles. Life is at times filled with trouble. It can be, can't it?

Let's face it. What kind of trouble? Relationship trouble? Financial trouble? Health trouble? Grief troubles? Life can be full of troubles of many kinds.

But the good news is this. Psalm 46 has the answer for us for what we can be assured of in time of trouble. And two big things hang onto here in Psalm 46 verse 1.

Our refuge, our strength. Our refuge, our strength. God's refuge is for us. He is our hiding place, our shelter.

God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble.

[3:48] What words? What words? How can we capture the depth of these words? He is our refuge, our hiding place, our shelter.

Refuge. Refuge. It's got a sense of a shield of protection. A place of safety we can run to. God's strength is for us, too.

He is our stronghold. God is able to strengthen us. In all of our weakness, God is our strength. And where do we find God?

In trouble. He's not far, far away. He's there, right there, in the fire. In the flame. Through the waters. He will be with you. In trouble. When the pressure is on. God is real. Here for you. And this song starts off talking of our trouble.

[4:52] What is the best thing to do in the day of trouble? To know that God is your refuge. God is your strength. God is your very present help.

In Psalm 50, verse 15, the psalmist cries, And call upon me in the day of trouble. The Lord tells us, call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee.

And thou shalt glorify me. The good news is that where God is, is where trouble is. That is where we find his ever-present help.

His very present help. Very present. In our trouble. In other words, he's an exceeding great help. Very present. It's got a very strong emphasis here.

It's exceeding great. His help. God is here. God is available. Whatever your situation of life. We might have those times of great trouble. Of tragedy.

[5:54] Of heartache. Of storm. God is a stronghold. A stronghold for us. As Nahum 1.7 says, The Lord is good.

God is stronghold. A stronghold. A stronghold. In the day of trouble. And he knoweth them that trust in him. God is strong.

God is a stronghold. A mighty fortress is our God. How strong is our God? As strong as a stronghold.

As a fortress. When you see these majestic buildings, there's not so many of them in Australia because there's not so many fortresses, as it were, in Australia.

But we know in other lands, in Europe, even in China, in the Middle East, there's these strongholds, there's these ancient fortresses, these gigantic castles, still standing strong, hardly crumbling.

[7:01] They're still firm and secure. The Lord is good. A stronghold in the day of trouble.

He is all-powerful, our God, our great and mighty, almighty God. All-powerful God. And we can find our shelter in that stronghold who is our God.

God is our refuge and our strength. A very present help in trouble. It goes on, verse 2. Therefore will not, we fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea. Therefore, because of all that, because God is our refuge and strength, a very present help, in trouble. Therefore, will not, we fear.

The picture here is of a life turned upside down. Imagine an earth, the earth being removed, the mountains being carried into the midst of the sea. It's a picture here of great turmoil, of testing, of upheaval, a time that would provoke fear.

[8:14] You see these pictures of people fleeing from tsunamis. There's videos of it. And it's shocking. It's fearsome.

I was just watching one of a tornado striking. It was all just, the trees blowing and then suddenly, bang, the roof falls in and people are screaming and shouting.

Therefore, will not, we fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea. A time that would provoke fear, yet we can, therefore, will not, we fear.

That can be our stand. What are you afraid of? There's memories, there's experiences that make us fearful where that little noise in the night, oh, what could that be?

Have you ever had a break in? We have. We came home one day and someone had been there. The window was open, the fly screen torn away.

[9:29] Someone had entered in and taken property. Our security was threatened. We invested in security screens after that.

What is it that we fear? We can have experiences of trauma, of sad times, of loss, of hurt and we can be fearful. But we can be assured, it says for you, God is our refuge and strength.

Because God is our refuge and strength, therefore, therefore, will not we fear. Because God is with us in trouble, therefore, will not we fear.

We have security in God. God is your security. You have that assurance, that certainty, that safety, whatever be tied.

Though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, through times of upheaval, times of disturbance, times of stress and pressure.

[10:30] We can be going through an earthquake, it's telling us here, yet our heart will not quake. Therefore, will not we fear. God is our refuge and strength.

In time of turmoil, God is. One thing we will not do is fear. God is with us, therefore, will not we fear. We will declare it. As the psalmist cried in Psalm 56, verse 3, what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

He can take our fear away and replace it with faith. The opposite of fear is faith. Trust him, flee to the refuge. Verse 3 of Psalm 46, it goes on, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though

the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Selah. God is a very present help in trouble. It's telling us the waters roaring, it's telling us of raging, of trouble, of mountains shaking.

[11:35] I don't know what it would have been like in Christchurch when the earthquake hit or other such places. You see the stories of times of other lands, of other towns and cities where the place is shaken, literally shaken.

God's a very present help in trouble. Surely, most assuredly, he will save you. Now there's three sections in Psalm 46 and this ends the first section.

Selah. Selah. Surely, most assuredly, he will save you. There's a sense here of, there's a certainty about it.

This is full stop. This is assured. I like to almost use the Aussie vernacular, fair dinkum. This is guaranteed for sure, absolute.

You can count on this. God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 91 has similar words in it. It says, I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress.

[12:41] My God in him will I trust. Words of faith, of declaration. Surely, he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence.

Now, I don't know what the noisome pestilence is, but it sounds like something I don't want to hang around. I don't want to hang around that, the noisome pestilence. It just sounds pretty frightful.

He shall deliver thee from that. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler. Surely, he shall, surely, he shall deliver thee.

In Psalm 46, it's saying, even though this or that or the other happens, though the earth be removed, God is not moved. Though the mountains be shaken, God is not shaken.

Though all may fall, God stands. God is. And though chaos comes your way, you might say, preacher, I'm feeling it right now.

[13:43] I'm in chaos. Yet we have a calm within, a calm. Selah, says the psalmist. It's got the sense of this is firm, this is certain, this is unshaken, this is well-trying truth, this is everlasting.

Therefore, will not we fear. I want to assure you today, if you're feeling a time of trouble, Psalm 46, words you can turn to and find hope and God's assurance, God's overshadowing care for you, over you and under you.

You know, he's got, he's just comprehensive assurance, isn't it? Comprehensive. The eternal God is thy refuge, is that shelter and underneath are the everlasting arms.

He's not only over you, he's underneath you, he's holding you up and Selah, this is guaranteed. You can take this to the bank. You might dare to say, fair dinkum, this is guaranteed.

I can really be sure of this, this is truth, this is the truth of God, the promises of God. Selah, amen. You have a place of refuge and you need not worry.

[15:00] Though fear and troubles come, as they will, God is and he is there, a very present help in trouble. There was a preacher out hunting with a friend and his name was Dr. Hobbs and the sky was dark and you could hear the rumbling in the distance and it was getting ever closer.

The lightning strikes were hitting the ground and I can identify with that. We had a lightning strike our house not long ago and did some damage.

The lightning struck, bang, and these two were out there in the wilderness and they knew that they had to get some shelter and Dr. Hobbs, he'd hunted there before.

He knew the terrain, he knew the place and he said, follow me and they hurried away down this winding path. The thunder and the lightning were getting more and more intense.

The wind was higher and the friend was getting more and more nervous as the approaching storm drew close. Then Dr. Hobbs said, in here and they lunged into a cave barely making it just before the storm unleashed all its fury and Dr. Hobbs said, I wasn't worried friend because I knew where to find refuge.

[16:20] Therefore, will not we fear? God is our refuge and strength. We know where to find refuge in Christ, in his covering, his arms underneath, his refuge over us.

Therefore, will not we fear? We know where to find refuge. It goes on, verse 4, there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high. Friends, there is a river. There is a river. It's telling of a constantly flowing river. It's got the sense of not a river that stops and starts.

Now, just last week, Julie and I spent some time by the river, as it were. The great Murray, the Murray River.

Here's a picture of one of our holiday snaps. The River Murray. Now, this river that we speak of in Psalm 46 is not like the River Murray because there's a lot of people worried about the River Murray, isn't there?

[17:26] It's going to be drying up. It's getting, it's sinking, sinking, and it's people worried about the Murray. You don't have to worry about this river. Amen? There is a river, a river, an ever-flowing, a constantly-flowing river.

There is a river, it tells us, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. God is our never-ending source. This river shall never run dry.

That's the sense of this word river. It's an ever-flowing river. This is a refreshing river. And we find a gladness here at the river, it tells us. God is our fountain. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.

The city of God, Jerusalem. Jerusalem. Jerusalem has a living spring beneath the city. The location where the temple stood.

Hezekiah diverted an ancient spring into a reservoir that now feeds this spring underneath the city of Jerusalem, providing an unending supply that will continue even during time of siege.

[18:40] So when Jerusalem is potentially under siege, the occupants within the walls will have the never-failing spring hidden within its walls, this secret river.

And our Lord tells us likewise that we have a fountain. It tells us of the Holy Spirit being as a fountain. In John 7, 38 through 39, our Lord Jesus tells us, he says, he that believeth on me, as the scriptures have said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

And this spaking of the Spirit, we have a fountain of living water. There is a river that streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.

There is a river for you, dear believer, this fountain of the living water, welling up within the believer, the Spirit of God. He is our unending supply, constant supply, and the enemy cannot stop it.

Just as the enemy could not stop the unending fountain, the spring within the city of God, of Jerusalem. And what does this river bring? Gladness to our soul.

[20:00] We can know a gladness deep down within. We can know his streams of mercy. We can know God's supply, never ending, never failing. God will not fail you. Our God is an ever flowing river and there is a river.

He is our source, our supply. We don't count on other resources. We have his never failing river, the rivers of living water.

water. And there's a gladness in this place of holiness too. It tells us there is a river where the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. It tells us here of that river is found as it were in the place of holiness. As it says, the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

To consider this, that this never failing resource, the rivers of living water, verse 39 says, this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, this never failing river, this deep overflowing spiritual joy and gladness and life that we have, this deep resounding joy, it's not found in our circumstance because don't forget, in trouble, not about what is happening to us, it's who is in us.

[21:41] There is a river, there's a joy, that's found in Christ, not in circumstance or happenstance but in God's infilling and indwelling and this one who we serve, it tells us he is the Most High, the Most High.

There is no higher authority, he is the Most High. His authority is the highest authority and on his authority according to the authority of his word I can tell you this morning there is a river, the streams wear off, shall make glad the city of God.

God is your sustainer, your supply, your refreshing, your resource, your source, your sufficiency, your life and he tells you that this river will flow as it were in that spiritual sense that there's a fullness in Christ, there's a fullness of joy in knowing our Saviour, there's a sure and glad assurance therefore for you.

Verse 5 it goes on, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved, God shall help her and that right early. God is in the midst of the city of God, God is in the midst of you, his people, his church, the holy assembly, God is in the midst of you and you shall not be moved.

It says God shall help, even in the midst of all chaos, in storms, in setbacks, in frustrations, in stress of life, the earth, the mountains, the waters, they can be moved but God is not moved, you shall not be moved.

[23:38] You have a blessed stability in God because God is in the midst and it tells you our help is in God. We know his intervention, his great help.

Verse 6 it says, the heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted. What we just read, we've heard about the earth being removed, the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, the waters roaring, the mountains shaking, the heathens raging, the kingdoms moving, the earth melting.

He uttered his voice. There's a whole lot of ruckus. Life's like that, isn't it? Turn on the news, it's all bad news. There's a whole lot of noise, a whole lot of trouble, trouble after trouble going on.

But we hear above the noise, the most high, we hear the voice that he utters, his still small voice, he's still speaking to people today.

Now people say, I've got a word from the Lord for you. You can say, give me the chapter and verse. That's what we need. Not some airy-fairy word from the Lord, but chapter and verse.

[24:57] What does the book say? What does he say? Give me a scripture for that. God's word, that's what we need. That higher authority, the highest authority, the most high authority, God uttered his voice, his word speaks to us.

You might say, preacher, God's just not talking to me. Have a read of it. Take the book. God will speak to you then. don't have the thought, God's not talking to me.

He's got it here. Open the pages. Hear his voice. Will we stand by biblical convictions in a world that rejects his voice?

People don't want to hear the voice. You know, as we've been doing some door knocking, can we tell you the gospel? Oh, not interested. One day they will stand in judgment.

for that rejection. He uttered his voice. Pay attention. Hear his voice. We'd better listen up. God is speaking to us.

[26:07] God's not talking to me. Read his word. He utters his voice. He still utters his voice today.

Do we still fear when he says therefore will not we fear? Do we still fear when he shouts out to your doubting heart his word?

His word? His word? Hear his voice, believe on his word. What does his word say? Fear thou not for I am with thee.

will for I am with thee. Do we still fear when he says therefore will not we fear? Let's not disobey or doubt his voice.

He utters his voice, fear thou not for I am with thee. Be not dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee.

[27:12] Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. He uttereth his voice.

Listen up. Believe him. Obey his voice. Hear the voice of Jesus today. And sometimes it's pretty much like Brother Neil Ridings was saying earlier.

It's what the word says that matters. I can only embellish it to a degree. But it's the word. It's the word. It's the word that we need.

Sometimes our fears are because we feel like God is far away. We can feel like we're all on our own. We can feel all alone. Friend, there's no reason for you to feel lonely because he says I will. I am with thee. You are not alone. Never alone. You have a sure saviour, a sure refuge, a hiding place from the storm.

[28:15] It says the Lord of hosts is with us. In other words, he is on our side. He is our defender. God is with us. If God be for us, who can be against us?

It's almost said with a bit of a chuckle, I think. If God be for us and we know he is, who could be against us? He is our defender.

The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. And in saying the Lord of hosts is with us, it's saying he is on our side.

Now get a load of this truth that he is the Lord of hosts. He is the God of armies. He is the commander in chief. He is higher than a five star general.

He is the commander of the forces of heaven and earth. He marshals the hosts of heaven of the angels of God and he will fight your battles. If you feel like you're fearful, if you feel like you're fighting, know the Lord of hosts is with you.

[29:21] The Lord of armies. God's power, God's protection, God's God.

God's God of Baal, Of Nimrod, of the heathen, some idol, some pagan God. This is the God of Jacob.

Now when we're doing our door knocking this one lady said I'm a pagan. She doesn't well I don't know what hope she's got. I know what hope she's not got.

And another one said I've got a goddess. Did the goddess lay down her life for you? The God of Jacob sent Jesus Christ to die for you to rise to be your saviour if you trust him.

He is the God of Jacob the God of Jacob he's proven what he's done for the people of Jacob what he's done for Israel he can do for you. Amen. Do you believe that?

[30:39] He is the God of Jacob not just any old God he's the God of Jacob and he is our refuge and then it tells us further verse Psalm 32 verse 7 is a like verse talking about trouble thou art my hiding place thou shalt preserve me from trouble thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance friends you've got a hiding place think of back in world war times when the air raid siren goes off you know what does it sound like and you've got to take shelter take shelter I know in some countries they literally have bomb shelters don't they or tsunami shelters in Japan there's places you've got to run to the shelter run to the hiding place today find the hiding place thou shalt preserve me from trouble we have God's presence God's protection

God's power the Lord of hosts and he will fight for you verse 8 it goes on come behold the works of the Lord what desolation he hath made in the earth the psalmist says come unto him and Jesus our Lord says come he still invites us to come unto him hear him behold him behold the works of the Lord notice what God has done can you cast your mind's eye back to where God has brought you from God wow I'm glad I'm not there anymore amen I'm glad so glad he saved me from sin from being lost blind newborn born again new life a new heart a new start what God is doing and what God will yet do wow I have not seen nor have the ear heard neither have entered into the heart the mind what

God has prepared what God has prepared for those who love him yet future open your eyes of faith and see behold the works of the Lord God's works do we stop and consider what God has wrought his saving his blessing his sustaining his leading his keeping God's awesome wonders!

Our mind can't fathom and the greatest work is the saving of your soul the works of the Lord consider that and friends you might think well my salvation is a bit iffy God says it's not iffy says it's certain in Philippians 1 verse 6 it says being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ from go to woe it's his salvation from alpha to omega from beginning to end his salvation what he's begun he will perform and if you're saved he will keep you saved the critical truth is be sure you are saved he has begun a good work and he will see it through and verse 9 of psalm 46 it says he maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth he breaketh the bow and he cutteth the spear in sunder he burneth the chariot in the fire here it's talking a picture here of the!

a spear being cut in two of a chariot of war burning in a fire these are the spoils of war being burned by the victor and it's showing for us God our protector our victor our conqueror our mighty God and it's showing his power it's evident he overrules the weapons of men there is a fight going on but God will break the bow he will cut the spear into he will burn the chariot in the fire those who oppose

you those who hinder you in your walk with God God will break their bow that bow won't work anymore to fire their arrows at you those spears that they throw at you won't work anymore because they're broken and those who charge at you with their war chariots will find their chariot is burnt!

[35:22] and failing the overcoming believer the power of the enemy broken our Lord has overcome the power of the enemy for you you might say preacher I'm still struggling what are you fighting addictions temptations hateful words sad memories hurts whatever your battle our Lord says he's broken the bow he's cutting the spear in thunder he's burning the chariot in the fire God will defend you he will protect you he will overrule he will vanquish the enemy he is the prince of peace picture here as he's going to make wars to cease he brings peace you can know truly know God's peace he is our peace the word tells us and he will overcome the adversary for you whatever is against you how can we get the!

know that he is breaking the bow he's cutting the spear he's burning the chariot how can we overcome verse 10 tells us furthermore be still and know that I am God be still and know that I am God this word for us it's really where God starts to speak in the first person here through the psalm that's in this verse here be still and know that I am God I've heard it put a confession that we can make that we can personally say of ourselves be still and know that I am not God he is sometimes we try to be the God be still and know that you are not God he is he says I am God and it says I will be exalted among the he then I will be exalted in the earth apparently where it says be still here it's got the sense of take your hands off sometimes we still want to be the you know it's like some say let

Jesus be your co-pilot that's wrong don't let Jesus be your co-pilot let him be the pilot take your hands off the steering wheel now don't literally do that on the way home today but there's the sense where we've got to take our hands off be still it's got the sense of take your hands off let God take control let him take charge leave your life in his hands stand still and see the salvation of God be still rest in him rest in his promises don't be anxious be still it's got a sense of be calm be quiet when we're quiet we can hear the still small voice of the little children making noises and that's a blessing too isn't it be still and listen to God know that he says to you I am God know God and who he is what he is doing in your life submit to God what he commands it tells you here he says I will be exalted I will be exalted he says now there's some people that might say I'm a pagan or didn't you see the pentagram on my door they're pretty brazen with it but it says one day every knee shall bow every tongue shall confess those that say I'm a pagan will say Jesus Christ is Lord one day they will one day they will bow the knee they'll put their faces to the ground it might be too late for them but I will be exalted our Lord says so let's exalt him now amen let's exalt him now as his saved people what glory what reason you have to praise what reason to exalt to extol to magnify your great Lord because he is God and sometimes we just need to be still and just listen to what he wants you to hear and a closing that says verse 11 again a repeated verse the Lord of hosts is with us the God of Jacob is our refuge he is the great captain the great captain of the host isn't he the great captain of our salvation and we can know God's abiding presence with us he's always with us that should make us think shouldn't it he's always with you and so if you have the sense that God is with you it makes you think differently about your actions doesn't it because you can't escape his eyes he's always watching you and he's over sighting you he's got the oversight of you he's watching you because he loves you he's got that constant surveillance you know

[40:37] I like to think really we're under 24 surveillance aren't we because God is with us and when the storms assail he's still with you when doubt and fears come he's still with you when you feel like you're fighting and losing he's still with you God is our refuge when the road is rough he's still with you and when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death even he is still with us there therefore will not we fear there's no need for fear or doubt no need for heartache unhealed because he can touch your life and he'll cover over you and underneath you are his everlasting arms and I like to say some people think well no man's

able to pluck us out of his hand or the father's hand but maybe we can kind of jump pop his hand no he's not butter fingers and I like to when I was playing sport at school

I used to be a butter fingers you know when they try to catch the cricket ball oh butter fingers God's not butter fingers amen his hand will hold you surely and safely he'll never let you go if you put your trust in him you are in his sure keeping and the Lord is with you and he is a sure refuge and while we are humanly weak God is our strength no matter what God is with us confess that Emmanuel God is with us and we are in his safe keeping for time and eternity and it tells us elsewhere in Psalm 9 verse 9 the Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed a refuge in times of trouble you might say preacher you don't know how oppressed I am how life is tough for me what's going on for me what my family's been through what I've been through what's happening right now for me the Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed!

A refuge in times of trouble so there's no escaping that the Lord will be a refuge for you if you will but trust in him trust in him God our refuge our strength let's pray Lord we thank you that your grace is sufficient that your love is so everlasting your mercy endures Lord we give you thanks these words are true now as they always have been and always will be Lord you answer your voice and we want to hear that that still small voice help us to be still so we can tune in and know your word to know you we pray if there's any yet to trust you we know for the meantime they're under the great wrath and threatening storm of your righteous judgment against our sin yet Lord we can flee to the refuge that is Christ today we can know your arms open your invitation extended come unto me you still declare

Lord let each one come unto you today help us Lord to be a people that are receptive and under your covering Lord safe in your keeping underneath the everlasting arms Lord that each one can know that assurance personally and say God is my refuge God is my strength God is my very present help in trouble and help us Lord to knowing that not to fear to let go of our fighting and struggling our stress and worry and to lean on your strength help each one Lord to find the peace the comfort that is everlasting!

that can keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus praise you Lord in Jesus name Amen