

A Very Present Help

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[0 : 0 0] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Now, Jeff, I don't know you well. I've sat under your teaching a few times, and I love the way you think biblically.

You've regularly set an example for me, and I so respect that. But what stands out to me today is that you dropped everything to come care for us.

And, man, that tells me all I need to know. So I love that. I respect that about you. So it was his impulse and desire to come to help us. I could tell you all of Jeff's credentials, and you'd be amazed.

But you'd be thankful to God for it. But I want to hear him preach the Word today. So very thankful for you to come, my friend. Jeff, welcome. Truly an honor to be here this morning.

[1 : 2 5] I've been looking forward to coming to this church here in Athens since it was founded. And although I wish it were under different circumstances, I'm really grateful to be here today.

Walt and Kim have been very dear friends of my wife, Julie, and me since they attended the Pastors College, which I have the privilege of overseeing. 2008, 2009, I believe were their years.

They went quickly from students to dear friends and now co-laborers in the gospel, which makes being here this morning so special, not only serving them but seeing you.

I remember the conversation. I actually had a few conversations with Walt over the years as he was thinking about his calling, as he was thinking about what the Lord would have him do. And I remember him talking about the prospect of this church plant.

And I was confident in the Lord that Walt was called to do this. And then I heard about the team that God was sending him, and I said, oh, well, this is a no-brainer.

[2 : 3 3] I learned about the history of how a number of you used to drive all the way from Knoxville to attend this church. Such a statement of your heart for Christ.

Such a statement of your heart for the local church. And now to see the fruit of all of that sacrifice and all of those labors here in this church, it's just a thrill for me to see.

And that may sound like an overstatement by a visiting guy. Trust me, it's not. I have the privilege of serving on the Sovereign Grace leadership team. We pray for our churches.

We seek to serve our churches. This is what it's all about. You are a living illustration of what our family of churches is about, to see Christ magnified through the gospel, rescuing sinners, creating churches like Trinity Grace.

So I'm just thrilled. It's a special thing has been mentioned. It's a special thing God has given us. And this is a very, very poignant expression of that for me this morning. I do send you greetings from Taylor and Elizabeth Hollingsworth, who you have sent to the pastor's college.

[3 : 45] Yes. Thank you for sending them to us. Thank you for entrusting them to us. We love them. And we love their children. About two weeks ago, I was in the floor with their kids for about 30 minutes.

Could barely get up, but it was a blast. There's a reason why God gives little kids to young parents. But we are just so grateful.

You'd be so proud of them. Their example, the way they're serving their fellow students. And it's a particular joy to hear their affection for you.

They cannot wait to come back. So it's going to be hard to send them back, but I promise, do our best not to be selfish and to keep them with us.

So thank you again for your warm welcome. Please turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms, Psalm 46.

[4 : 50] When I learned I would be coming this Sunday to be with you, I immediately thought on the heels of this unspeakable tragedy that Walt's friends have faced.

What might God want to say to your pastor? Then I thought, okay, this church, you who love Walt and Kim, you who serve Walt and Kim, you serve alongside Walt and Kim, what might God want to say to you?

Then I thought about this year that you, and we, we've all been through, I mean, has there ever been in your lifetime such a combination of life-altering, health-threatening, culturally disrupting, economically crippling, politically divisive circumstances?

Life as we know it has changed. Work and school and shopping and socializing, and all of that was then intensified by the summer of protests and riots, and then an emotionally charged political season and election.

It seems that our country's never been more divided politically and culturally. And you find yourself wondering, all right, what headline awaits me today? What else could happen?

[6 : 33] I don't know if you're a Lord of the Rings fan. I am. And it reminds me of Galadriel's words. The very beginning of the first Lord of the Rings film. This is how the trilogy opens.

And you have these haunting words that kick off the movie. The world is changed. I feel it in the water.

I feel it in the earth. I smell it in the air. Much that once was is lost. It sounds familiar, doesn't it?

So it occurred to me as I thought about all of that, that few parts of our Bible fit this moment better than Psalm 46.

The context of this psalm is particularly relevant to 2021, to our nation, to Walt and Kim in their shock and in their grief.

[7 : 32] It's a context that bears eerie resemblance to our own cultural moment. You see, this psalm has in view trouble. Not just inconvenience, not irritation, not hassle, but earth-shaking, life-threatening trouble.

That's what this psalm is about. And two people facing such trouble, frightened by trouble, this psalm delivers authoritative, perspective-altering, circumstance-interpreting truth.

This psalm was actually the inspiration for one of the great hymns in the history of the church, A Mighty Fortress is Our God.

You know that hymn? Martin Luther based that hymn on this very psalm. And like Luther himself, if you know his history, and like his song, this is a rugged psalm.

This is a robust psalm. This is a defiant psalm. You know, some psalms come and speak tenderly to us. They come and soothe us.

- [8 : 53] That's not Psalm 46. Psalm 46 looks trouble and calamity in the face, and it stares it down, and it exhorts us to a radical confidence in God, whatever life brings.
- That's really the theme of this psalm, and I believe it's the message God would have us hear this morning. Here's what God, I believe, would say to us from this psalm this morning.
- I'd sum it up this way. God's presence with His people makes them secure no matter the threat.
- Whatever you may be facing this morning, there's no scenario that this psalm doesn't apply to. There's no special circumstances outside of this psalm's field of vision.
- To every one of us this morning, Psalm 46 comes to us like a strong, wise friend, unfazed by our trouble, undaunted by our circumstances, and it speaks faith and comfort and courage to our souls.
- [10 : 11] Through this psalm, God speaks faith and courage and comfort to our souls. So, let me invite you to open your heart to this strong, wise friend, to God Himself as He speaks to us.
- And as we look at this psalm and how it delivers this truth, we can see three aspects of God's care for us in trouble, God's care for us in life.
- And I'll mention them up front. They're very simple. God's protection, God's presence, and God's pronouncement. That's what we're going to see. So, first, God's protection.
- Look with me at Psalm 46, verse 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- Did you notice the very first word of the psalm? God. It's not I. It's not we. There's no opening plea. There's no opening prayer.
- [11 : 24] Just God. Before any examination of circumstances, before any consideration of trouble, before any prayer, before any exhortation, right out of the gate, the psalmist rivets our attention upon God.
- And he really raises a banner over this entire psalm, really a banner over the entire life of the people of God. God is our refuge and strength.
- Whatever else He's going to say, whatever else you're going to hear, that's the banner. God. God. A refuge and strength.
- And remember, this is a psalm. This is poetic. And so, the images are meant to be mined for their meaning. So, first, God is a refuge. That's a very prominent word in the psalms.
- Do you know what a refuge is? It's simple. It's a safe, inaccessible shelter. It's a place where danger can't reach you. So, picture a medieval battle.
- [12 : 27] And soldiers on the run arrive through a castle gate, and they close the giant doors and lower the bar against those doors. Instant safety.
- Big sigh of relief. Complete security. That's a refuge.
- And so, God says to us, think of me that way. Relate to me that way. A safe, secure place to hide from all danger, all turmoil, all threats.
- Think of me that way. Do you? Is that how you think of God? He's also, it says, our strength. So, we're not just protected.
- We are empowered. Empowered to act. Given wisdom to decide. Infused with resolve. Sometimes to just get out of bed.
- [13 : 33] And take the next step. Pray the next prayer. When we're exhausted. We're discouraged. We're paralyzed with fear.

So, that's the banner. He's our protection. And he's our supply. Now, lest we think that that kind of protection is distant or difficult to access, reserved for special Christian.

Yeah, that's true for some really godly people in my church. Or for special moments. No. No. Verse 1b.

He's a, did you see it? A very present help in trouble. He's not a distant help. He's not a, he's not a potential help.

A help if you can just find the secret. Read the right book and he will help. Pray the right prayer and he will help. Help yourself and he will help. That's not what it says.

[14 : 39] The point is this. He is a help that is there when you need it. You need it? Anyone need help?

He's there. Man, what assurance this gives us. So, let me ask you a question. What, think about your life. What is more real to you this morning?

Is it your trouble? Or is it the God who is there? Here's the reality. That we're often blind to, but it's as true as that chair you're sitting in.

He's more present to you than your trouble. Your trouble is no match for God. This room is filled with people with stories of trouble.

I don't care. I do care. But, I mean, I don't care what it is. No match for God. And don't miss, for our young students here, don't miss an important preposition.

[15 : 49] Every word of Scripture is important. God is a help in trouble. That little word in is loaded. The psalm assumes trouble.

So, there's an underlying truth that this psalm is assuming and letting us in on. Trouble is going to come to the godly.

It's in the very fabric of a fallen world that sin has twisted and distorted. One former professor of mine used to say, all you have to do is live long enough and you're going to suffer.

Christians are not exempt from it. We are not immune to it. But this psalm brings hope right into the midst of it.

And even the particular word here for trouble is vivid. This particular word suggests a sense of confinement, of being hemmed in.

[16 : 54] So, here, it's any threatening situation where there's no room to move, no space to maneuver, no way out.

Now, maybe you know that feeling. I have no idea what I'm going to do in this situation.

I feel trapped. I see no way out of this, no hope in this.

Or maybe it's further along for you. You'd say, Jeff, this situation, it's broken. It's already broken. And there's glass all over the floor.

There's no fixing that. It's especially in those moments, desperate moments, that God is a very present help.

[18 : 01] He's blocked those moments out on His calendar. He could not be more present to you. And note something else.

I love this. The text does not say God will help. What does it say? God is a help.

God doesn't just send help. God doesn't just, yeah, I'm going to send you something, hope it works. No, God Himself will come to you with all of His care and His compassion and His wisdom and His resources, and His resources, His omnipotent strength.

That's the theological banner over this psalm. That's the theological banner over your lives. God is a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

That's bold. God is a gift. But it's true. Now think with me for a second. Given that truth, that immovable foundation, that banner over our lives, how do we respond to that?

[19 : 15] What effect is that supposed to have on our souls? Well, that's what we see in verse 2. A conclusion is drawn.

Look what He says. Therefore, therefore, given this, therefore, we will not fear. If God is really this, then fear makes no sense.

That's a life-changing insight, isn't it? See, fear, here's what fear does. Fear reveals the logic operating in our hearts.

It shows what we're trusting in that might fail us. It shows what we cherish that we fear we would lose. It shows what we're trying to hold on to that we can't control.

You see, here's what the world tells us. The world tells us a story in which fear makes sense. If we really are just the result of accidental processes, no purpose, no meaning, alone and vulnerable in this world, if that's true, then be afraid.

[20 : 35] Be very afraid. Right? It's a terrifying thought. But the Bible tells us a different story. It gives us a worldview in which fear makes no sense.

Think about it. The maker and sustainer and ruler of this world, holding every molecule in His fingers, has acted to rescue, to save, to gain a people for Himself.

He's taken responsibility for His people. He didn't just do something to save them and then set them on their way. He's gathered us in His arms. He's owned us.

He's with us in trouble. There will be trials. There may be mystery. But nothing can destroy His good purposes for His people.

Nothing. That's the scenario in which fear doesn't make sense. And I want you to see how real the Bible is, how realistic the psalmist is.

[21 : 49] This is no platitude. This is not some rhetorical flourish for a preacher. He imagines here worst-case scenario. Look at his language.

Four catastrophic scenarios in verses 2 and 3. And they're marked by the word though. Therefore, we will not fear. Though the earth gives way.

Though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea. Though its waters roar and foam. Though the mountains tremble at its swelling. It's like an apocalyptic film, isn't it?

Massive earthquakes that alter the very landscape. Mountains sliding into the sea. Tidal waves or tsunamis. And the elements are personified.

They almost come alive. It says the waters roar. That's a verbal sound. The waters roar and foam and swell. So what he's saying is even if the whole created order unravels, even if the very foundations of my life are shaken, even if the whole world comes crashing down, even if...

[22 : 54] Fill in the blank. Where does your mind go? Even if... The psalmist comes, puts his arm around us, looks each of us in the eye, and speaks for us.

We. Him. You. Me. God's people. We. Will. Not. Fear. Fear. told you this was a strong friend.

And it doesn't take an earthquake or a tidal wave to feel like your world is crashing down. Personal pain doesn't get suspended in the midst of a global pandemic.

Right? Right? So if you want to apply this faithfully, just think. What's my worst case scenario?

What's so precious in your life that if it were threatened, just fear? If it were taken away, panic.

- [24 : 09] Maybe it already has. Perhaps you dread a future where finances will fail or be insufficient.
- Maybe you have longings for a spouse or child. Good, good things. And you just feel they may not be fulfilled.
- You or someone you love may be enduring a sickness with just no end in sight. Or maybe a terminal illness whose end seems all too clear.
- It's to those scenarios that this psalm especially applies. friends, this psalm was written to take us by the shoulders and assure us to look us in the eye and assure us nothing, if you're in Christ, nothing can do you ultimate harm.
- Nothing can threaten God's ultimate purposes for you within the refuge of His protective presence. presence. Look at your trouble in the eye.
- [25 : 36] This psalm does it. It's real. Look at your trouble in the eye. There's there's something there's someone massive between you and that trouble.
- There is in Him and nowhere else security, protection, strength, grace.
- whatever you fear in Him you can face. Whatever you need deliverance, protection, wisdom, endurance, He will provide.
- I do not know the Leslie family, Walt's friends. cannot fathom what they're walking through right now.
- It's unthinkable. But when I read the statement they issued this week, which was posted on your website, and I hear late last night from Walt how they are responding things they are saying, holy things, Christ exalting things, Christ trusting hope.
- [27 : 15] Right before your eyes, God being to them, right here, in worst case scenario, a refuge and strength, I see a living, vivid, undeniable, mind-boggling, world-baffling illustration of Psalm 46.
- I just want to say to the devil, man, take that. Look at that. Look at the power of God. Not just awesome people, no, God, a refuge and strength.
- Just take that. God's presence with His people makes them secure, no matter the threat.
- That's the first take-home from this Psalm. The second one, first, God's protection, number two, God's presence. What was implicit in the first part of the Psalm now becomes explicit.
- Look with me at verse 4. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
- [28 : 42] God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God will help her when mourning dawns.
- Did you hear the dramatic change in tone with verse 4? We move from roaring seas and trembling mountains to a tranquil river and a glad city.
- The whole picture moves from chaos to calm. And what makes the difference? It's the presence of God. The writer depicts God's presence with vivid symbolism in verse 4.
- There's a river whose streams make glad the city of God. Foaming waters roaring give way to a river whose streams bring life and refreshment to the city of God.
- In other words, His people among whom He chooses to dwell. Chaos and danger replaced with serenity joy.
- [29 : 49] It's a picture of God present among His people, dwelling with Him in peace and protection. And that gets explicit in verse 5.
- Why is it so calm? God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God will help her.

roar. And then, check this out, it's like the camera zooms out again. And this tranquil, secure city is contrasted with images of national turmoil and threat.

Verse 6a, the nations rage, the kingdoms totter. You see that word rage? It's the same word as roar in verse 3.

The waters roar, rage, the nations roar. They rage. It's a picture of cosmic conflict, fallen creation and rebellious nations.

[30 : 50] They conspire against God and His purposes. But then, look at the drama. There's so much drama in this text. Look what happens in verse 6b.

The nations rage, the kingdoms totter. He, God, utters His voice. Literally, He gives His voice.

And this whole troubled, groaning, rebellious world just melts like wax. That's how threatening this world is to God. Like a candle, it just melts away.

You see what the psalmist is doing? To the threat and terror of verses 1-3, He steps back and provides all of us with the fuller picture, the deeper reality.

God is not off the stage sort of swooping in to rescue. He's in the middle of it all, ruling and reigning and protecting.

[31 : 52] And that trouble is no match for His sovereign power and His omnipotent word. And so in addition to personal trouble, these verses picture national trouble.

Trouble not just for the individual, but for the people of God. There is no psalm more relevant for our moment than this psalm. In recent years, it seems the velocity of trouble in our nation has just accelerated, hasn't it?

The culture seems to rage against the church, against God's people, against God's truth. There's not just disagreement anymore, there's aggression. Reject our culture's redefinition of marriage, you're a bigot.

You're evil. You're not just wrong. Defend human life against abortion, you're an extremist. You're not just religious. religious. And even that is nothing compared to Christian brothers and sisters right now in prison or losing their life for the gospel.

So Psalm 46 speaks to that kind of trouble as well. Don't be deceived, friends, by headlines and pundits, cable news. The psalmist cuts through the noise and he shows us the reality.

[33 : 15] God is in the midst of his people. She shall not be moved. Not because of her strength, not because of her personal merit, not because of her cleverness. She won't be moved because verse 5b, God will help her.

And he will help her because God is in the midst of her. Now, this section concludes.

Remember, this is a song. Songs have choruses, don't they? So this song has a chorus. It comes in verse 7. Then it comes again, repeats in verse 11. So here's the chorus. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our fortress. This refrain just crystallizes the story that was told in these verses.

Look at the words, the Lord of hosts is with us. You see in your Bibles that word Lord, it's all caps. L-O-R-D. You know what that means? You probably do. It's not just God now.

[34 : 24] Now it's Yahweh. That's what's behind that word. It's the covenant name given to Moses. The personal name of God that distinguishes God as our God.

He's not just a generic God. He's not just a powerful God. He's our God, the personal God who pledges himself to us, who binds us to himself.

Don't you love it? He just lays hold of you and he's not going to let go. And it's combined with this little phrase, Yahweh of hosts, armies, massed forces, angelic legions.

Oh wow. It's this combination of personal intimacy and unlimited power. A heavenly father who's a matchless warrior king.

Oh what a God we have. What a God we serve. That's reinforced with the little phrase, the God of Jacob. Incredible. He joins his name to ours.

[35 : 43] Jacob was his covenant partner. We can all put our name right there. The God of Jacob. Yahweh of hosts. He's in charge of heavenly legions and he's buddy's God.

He's Ben's God. He's your God. God. God. Your name is written on his heart.

And this God who owns his people, this loyal God who stands by his people, he is something else. He's our fortress.

This is a different word than verse one. It means literally an inaccessibly high place. I was driving through the mountains last night, just saw these beautiful mountains way up there, can't get to it.

That's a fortress. So the picture of God setting us safely on high, removed from danger and exposure. So here's the chorus to the song of our lives, friends.

[36 : 46] This powerful God with infinite resources who knows your name is present with us. presence with you.

Never a moment when you're out of his sight. Never a moment when you're out of his hand. So you got trouble? You won't be moved.

Your cause will not be abandoned. The Lord of hosts is with us. You're safe with him.

He's got this. Okay? What's your trouble? He's got it. Okay? Finally, we've seen God's protection. We've seen God's presence.

Now we hear something. God's pronouncements. For the first time in the psalm we hear commands. And there's four of them.

[37 : 47] The first two are in the psalmist's voice and they come as an invitation. Look with me at verse 8. Come, behold the works of the Lord.

How he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear. He burns the chariots with fire.

The psalmist wants our view of the future to be informed by God's actions in the past. All of salvation history, all of the Bible, all that God has done in 2,000 years of the church is marked by God acting to deliver and preserve His people.

That's who He is. That's what He does. So don't be deceived by appearances. Don't be shaken by headlines. God is not passive in history.

God is moving history to His final goal. And this is not weak, peace through compromise. This is peace through victory.

[38 : 47] victory. So, to the wicked who would exalt themselves, who would preserve to oppose God or ignore God, and to the righteous who fears trouble, the psalmist invites us, look up from your ambitions, you proud.

Look up from your fear, you timid. And remember, remember what He's done to save you and preserve you.

Consider His ways, His purposes will triumph. All opposition, all trouble, it's going to end. And then, suddenly, for the first time, God speaks.

unannounced. The heavenly voice, that voice that melted the earth like wax now breaks in, verse 10. Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth. If the first two imperatives issue a command, these two issue a challenge.

[40 : 03] Think about what we've said. In light of everything that's preceded, God's protection of His people, God's presence with His people, God's unrivaled power and sovereignty, God's certain and ultimate victory over evil and rebellion and ambition and personal autonomy, two challenges follow.

First, be still. There's a few Hebrew words that are translated this way. This is not a call to quiet meditation.

This is not a gentle reminder to wait on God. It's a strong injunction. Be still. Stop.

Cease and desist. Abandon your course. One translation puts it this way. And end to your fighting.

life. And so to sinful, self-satisfied humanity, God says, stop. Stop your attempts to triumph and oppress and rule others.

[41 : 14] Abandon your project of living life apart from God. Stop it. Maybe you have this verse framed in your guest bath.

You may want to remove it. Maybe Psalm 23. The second command is this, and know, know that I am God.

Recognize me. Blow away all the smoke. Stop all your ignorance. Recognize what's true. I am the sovereign, unrivaled one who rules all things and is working all things together for my good and perfect and ultimate purposes.

So just know it. Now think about this. This is first addressed to sinful humanity. They apply to every single person who lives independently of God.

And I just have to say this because I don't know you, but if you are here or if you are watching online and you are not a Christian, so grateful to be able to speak to you if that's you, but it's vital that you hear and heed these commands.

[42 : 31] Maybe people think you are a Christian, but deep down, God does not have your heart. The Old Testament writer here speaks of God's acts to judge the wicked and save His people.

All of those acts point forward to God's greatest act of sending His Son, Jesus Christ. The very purpose for which Jesus came was to deal with rebellion against God.

Scripture is clear. Every one of us has turned away from God. Every one of us has gone our own way.

Every one of us has denied God's authority, rejected His love, renounced His rule. Every person takes their place in this picture of raging against God.

But today, if you're not a Christian, you can respond to this command two ways. First of all, be still. The New Testament would put it, repent.

[43 : 46] Repent. turn. Turn from ruling your own life, from living independently of God, from pursuing things that offend Him and poison you. You can be forgiven today.

Everything can change today. Secondly, know that He is God. In other words, acknowledge Him as God and receive His Son Jesus as your Savior.

The one who died in your place to pay for your sin. Receive Him as that. You can be forgiven today. You know what? You can know God as your protector today.

All the promises of this psalm, they don't apply to you if you're not a Christian. But today, you can claim all of the promises of this psalm.

If you humble yourself and receive what Christ did for you, place your life in His hands. These commands also speak to God's people.

[44 : 56] And so to the restless heart, and all our hearts can be restless, God would say, be still. Stop living like you don't know me.

cease your strivings to solve your own problems, to outmaneuver your circumstances, to control your life, to find peace and refuge in yourself or your circumstances or anywhere else but God and all He promises to be for you in Christ.

stop. And secondly, know. Remember. Lay hold of again.

I am your God. Let me be God again to you. Let me be all that I promise to be. Let me be that to you. Let me, here's the invitation, let me lift from your shoulders your fears and your future and your burdens and your disappointments and your longings and your strivings.

Let me just lift them from you. And He follows this with a promise. I will be exalted.

[46 : 25] What does that mean? I will be exalted. Here's what it means for the believer. Those aren't threats. Those are promises of joy. For God to be exalted in your life means that we'll see Him in His beauty and His glory and His all sufficiency.

We'll know Him fully in His love. Folks, that's what we were made for. For God to be exalted means that His purposes of wisdom and love and mercy will be fully accomplished in your life.

for God to be exalted means that you and I will be filled with joy and flooded with good. When we grasp that, we'll add our voice to the final refrain of this glorious song that repeats in verse 11, the Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our fortress. Let me tell you something. This is so true.

This was true for the psalmist, but we sitting here have greater assurance and deeper understanding than even the writer of this psalm.

[47 : 51] The trouble he imagines is external, but there's a greater trouble from which we must be saved. The greater trouble is God and His own righteousness.

He must, if He has any integrity at all, He must punish sin. But the God who was with the psalmist drew nearer still in the person of Jesus Christ, whom the New Testament calls Emmanuel, God with us.

And Jesus bore that greater trouble on the cross, bearing our sin, absorbing God's wrath, removing all hostility. And so for us, the metaphor changes from a castle to a cross.

And that cross has become our refuge, saving us from the greatest trouble of all. And here's the great news, because God has saved us from that trouble, we can come to Him in any trouble, knowing He's with us.

He'll never forsake us. Few men knew the truth of this psalm like Martin Luther.

[49 : 17] And in His fight for the truth of the gospel in the Reformation, maybe you know the story, He faced all powers, the power of the Pope, the power of the Catholic Church, the power of the Holy Roman Empire Himself.

He faced physical threats, relational threats, death threats, health threats, church threats. And when the stress and pressures and trouble grew too severe to bear, when He grew fearful, when He grew discouraged, He would turn to His faithful friend, Philip Melanchthon.

and you know what He would say? Come, Philip, let us sing Psalm 46 and let them do their worst.

friends, let us sing the truth of Psalm 46 and let the devil, let the world do their worst because we're safe with Him.

Amen? Let's pray. Lord, we are humbled, we are amazed, we, sometimes Your Word seems too good to be true.

[50 : 35] But Lord, we know it is. Father, I pray for Trinity Grace Church. I pray that these dear folks who love You, I just pray today that Lord, You would, as it were, take their hand, put it in Your hand, let them know deep in their souls, You are with them, whatever trouble they're facing, You've got this.

Father, we pray for Walt, Kim, we pray for the Leslie family, Lord. It's unthinkable to us, Lord, but not to You. We've already heard testimonies of Your grace with them and to them, Lord.

Continue, continue to comfort, continue to draw near, continue, Lord, out of this unspeakable tragedy to bring glory to Your Son.

We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.