

August 2, 2026

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵ God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. ⁶ The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah ⁸ Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. ¹⁰ “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” ¹¹ The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

Scriptures for further
study:
Ephesians 3:16



“If we only spent more
of our time in looking
at Him we should soon
forget ourselves.”

-Martin Lloyd-Jones

Psalm 46

BIG IDEA: Because the God of Jacob is powerfully present with us, let us run to Him in life and ministry as our only and all-sufficient refuge and strength.

OUTLINE

God’s Sufficiency

God’s Power

God’s Presence

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. When was the last time you made a big purchase that turned out to be a dud or lemon? How did you handle that?
2. Verses 1–3: The sermon names specific "duds" people lean on — controlling outcomes for aging parents, others' approval, comfort, a child's success. Which of those, if any, is quietly functioning as your refuge and strength right now?
3. Verses 2–3, 6: When the "ground" under your life has actually given way — a season that felt like the mountains moving into the sea — did you find God to be your refuge, or did you look elsewhere first?
4. Verses 4–6, 8–10; Ephesians 3:16: The psalm says God's power isn't just past-tense — it's present through the Spirit. Where in your daily life are you actually relying on the Spirit's strength, versus just believing in Him in theory?
5. Verses 1, 5, 7, 11: The refrain names "the God of Jacob" — a schemer God still bound Himself to. Where have you been unfaithful to God, and how does His commitment to Jacob reassure you that His "with us" doesn't depend on your track record?
6. The sermon notes that at the cross, the earth itself shook and Jesus had no refuge — no "very present help in trouble" — so that you always would. How does that change what verse 1 means to you?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Psalm 46 is addressed to the choirmaster and assigned to the Sons of Korah — Levitical musicians descended from the line that did not join their ancestor's rebellion, now leading Israel in corporate worship rather than judgment. Marked "according to Alamoth," it was likely sung in a higher vocal register, in the same tradition used for Israel's most significant worship occasions (1 Chron. 15:20). The psalm itself is a hymn celebrating Zion as the special city: God has pledged himself to her, and through her he will bless the world — sung by a guild whose own history testifies to exactly that kind of undeserved pledge.

Praise to Jesus —Praise the Lord who is our refuge, strength, help, courage, foundation, and comfort — the Lord of heaven's armies, present with us, who kept his promises to Jacob despite Jacob's duplicity, and who has kept, is keeping, and will always keep every promise to his people through the life of Jesus Christ, given for us.

Repent through Jesus —Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in prayers of confession. Confess what you've been leaning on to carry you — security, control, approval, comfort, success, health, money, family — instead of leaning on Him.

Consecration for Jesus —The God of Jacob is powerfully present with us, may the gospel propel us to cling to the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ, who cannot be shaken in a world that constantly seeks to shake us. Let us run to Him in life and ministry as our only and all-sufficient refuge and strength.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. What is a refuge? What is a refuge for you? (It is a place of safety where you can go during times of trouble. You can point out that in the poetry of the Psalms if you want to understand what a word means, then often time we can look to the next line in the psalm for clarification. In this case we can see that the next line tells us that God is “a very present help in times of trouble.”)

2. How can the truth found in the first two verses help you in a time of need? (Remind your children that the blessed life is not a life without any troubles. The difference is that as followers of Christ we can have the assurance that God is with us in our troubles. In fact, one of the names or titles for Jesus is “Immanuel” or “God with us.” Therefore, in times of trouble pray to God and go to Godly people in your life to seek Biblical wisdom.)

3. What does it mean in verse 10 for us to “be still” before God? (It could be translated as “be quiet”. Or it could be understood that in our time of trouble, we can know that God is God and we are not. We can trust Him to protect us in our times of trouble. Other Bible translations translate it as “stop striving.” That is helpful to teach us that in our times of trouble that we don’t have to work harder, but trust in God.)

4. Martin Luther was inspired by this psalm to write “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” Take time to listen to that hymn together.

Scriptures for further study:

Romans 8:31

Mark 4:35-41

Matthew 1:20-23

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

Romans 8:31

Mark 4:35–41

Matthew 1:20–23

Ephesians 3:16

John 7:37–39

Isaiah 41:10

1. The psalmist calls God a refuge, strength, and a very present help in trouble. Think about what you actually run to when life gets hard - a person, a distraction, a way of numbing out. What is your default refuge, and what does that tell you about where you are actually placing your trust?

2. In vv. 2-3, the psalmist describes an extreme scenario - mountains crashing into the sea, the earth giving way - and says even then, we will not fear. Has there been a season in your life when the ground underneath you actually gave way? Did you find God to be your refuge in that moment, or did you look somewhere else first?

3. In the middle of all the chaos, there is a river that makes the city of God glad, and God is in her midst. The image is of calm supply inside the storm. Where in your life right now do you need to believe that God is present and active, not distant and silent?

4. Nations rage, kingdoms fall, the earth melts. God speaks, and it ends. The refrain names him as the God of Jacob. Jacob was a schemer and a deceiver, and God still bound himself to him. Where have you been unfaithful or inconsistent in your walk with God? How does the fact that he called himself the God of Jacob reassure you that his presence does not depend on your track record

5. The Psalm invites us to come and see the works of the Lord: desolations, wars ended, weapons destroyed. How does knowing that Jesus entered into the full weight of Psalm 46's chaos, with no one to run to change what verse 1 means to you personally?

6. As the Psalm concludes, there is a command: "Be still, and know that I am God." In a world that rewards the loud, the fast, and the in-control, stillness feels like losing. Where in your life right now are you striving, trying to manage outcomes, force results, stay in control, when God is calling you to be still and trust him?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. First, notice all the ways Psalm 46 underscores God's great attributes. See if you can identify the key verses that speak to each of the following:

- God protects and provides security
- God is present with us
- God powerfully controls (creation, nations, armies/wars, etc.)
- God helps

2. If God is all these things, then what is the upshot for us? How do all these attributes of God affect the lives of those who know him as Lord? See if you can identify at least four or five ways (according to Psalm 46) that our lives should be changed by these realities.

3. Let's get more personal

Questions: What are some of the things in this world or in your own life that most trouble you at the moment? How does this Psalm provide comfort, encouragement, calm, peace, security, etc.? What are some of the unhelpful or false ways we often try to achieve these things on our own instead?

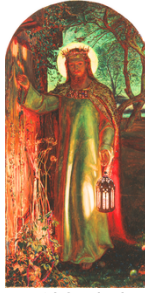
4. Psalm 46 emphasizes that with God we have nothing to fear. According to the Bible, the only thing we would ever truly need to fear is NOT being in relationship with God.

Question: Do you know him? Have you believed in him?

5. Verse 4 speaks of a river whose streams make glad the city of God. Jesus taught (John 7:37-39) that he alone can provide living water, and eternal life. He refers to his Holy Spirit as dwelling within us and flowing from us.

Question: Do you want to experience his life within you? Do you want a new heart? Do you want to have this kind of joy and peace and gladness? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



"The Light of the World" (1851-1853) by William Holman Hunt

Psalms Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul. As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

About the artwork and artist.

The Light of the World, 1851-1853, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt. The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios, hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.