

## STATEMENTS OF FAITH: "When Life Falls Apart"

### INTRODUCTION

- **Key Idea:** Psalm 46 is a **Psalm of Trust** which teaches us not to fear in the midst of trouble.

#### Context:

- Biblical commentators place this Psalm in the historical context of the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians around 701 B.C.
- **The nation is in crisis.** Assyrian soldiers are gathering around the city gates and taunting the people that they will soon be captured. (2 Kings 18-19)

"Come, let us sing the 46<sup>th</sup> psalm and let them do their worst." (Martin Luther)

### THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE TOLD NOT TO FEAR (PSALM 46:1-3)

#### A. The Context

- **Verse 2** – The invasion of Sennacherib is described in poetic language (i.e. **earthquakes** and **surging floods**).
- The term "**trouble**" (v.1) literally means "a tight spot." It speaks of being in a confined space, the sense of being suffocated by your circumstances.

#### B. The Confidence

- Therefore we will not fear" (v.2) – God is pictured in this Psalm as a **refuge**, a **shelter**, a **fortress** against the troubles of life. (Psalm 18:1-2, Psalm 91:1-3).

#### Truths to Consider:

1. **God's Help is Strong (v.1):** God's people don't go to Him to escape life, but to gain strength to go back to life.
2. **God's Help is Sufficient (v.1):** "An exceedingly available help." Or: "a help in troubles He is found to be abundantly." *Our needs will never outstrip His help.*
3. **God's Help is Swift (v.5)** – In 2 Kings 19:35, the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians.

### THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE TOLD NOT TO FAINT (PSALM 46:4-7)

- There is a wonderful contrast in this Psalm between the **waters that roar** (v.3) and the **waters that refresh** (v.4).
- Jerusalem was not built on a river and had no natural water supply.
- This river speaks of the **river of God's presence in the midst of His people** – the "streams of mercy, never ceasing" that flow from the throne of God.

### THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE TOLD NOT TO FUSS (PSALM 46:8-11)

- "**Be still, and know that I am God**" (v.10) – These verses address the enemies of God; most likely they are a reference to immediate circumstances (i.e. invasion by the Assyrian army).
- "**Be still**" – literally to "drop your hands"; "to relax". *Take your hands off and see that God is God.*

"The restless heart of the believer is to rest when life falls apart. . . Stop trying to take things into your own hands. Let God take over and prove Himself faithful." (De Courcy)

# Sermon Application Questions

March 15, 2020

## PERSONAL RESPONSES

Pastor Philip explained that the historical context of Psalm 46 concerns the Assyrian invasion of the kingdom of Judah. The nation is in crisis. Enemy soldiers are gathering around the city gates to taunt the people they were aiming to capture.

1 This is a season of political uncertainty, physical danger, and psychological warfare.

As you consider the historical context of this Psalm, what parallels do you see in the threats that our nation faces today?

Pastor Philip told us about his trip to Carrickfergus Castle which is a Norman castle in Northern Ireland. As a typical castle, it had large stone walls as its outer defenses. Inside the castle, there was what was called the “keep” or the “stronghold”. This was a small castle within the castle where the walls were the thickest and the windows the fewest.

Psalm 46 uses the imagery of a “refuge” or “stronghold” to describe the believer’s relationship with God. How does this language encourage you in your relationship with God?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1 Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week’s sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

### 2 Kings 18:13

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

### 2 Kings 18:28-32

Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live, and not die. And do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, “The LORD will deliver us.”’

### Psalm 18:1-3

I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

### Psalm 91:1-3

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

Read **Psalm 46:4-7** carefully and consider the beautiful picture of the “river whose streams make glad the city of God.”

Pastor Philip noted that there is a wonderful contrast in this passage between **the waters that disturb us** (v.3) and **the waters that refresh us** (v.4).

2 The river of God (v.4) represents the “streams of mercy never failing that are available to God’s people in the middle of a crisis.”

**Personal Application:** Are you drinking more from the turbulent waters of the world, or is your soul drinking more from the refreshing waters of the streams of God’s mercy?

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

Pastor Philip told the story of a little girl who got nervous quoting her memory verse which was Psalm 23:1. She said, “The LORD is my shepherd, He’s all I want.”

It was the wrong quotation, but the right interpretation. Consider the promises of Psalm 23:

Do you fear **poverty**? *The Psalm says, “I shall not want.”*

Do you fear **loneliness**? *The Psalm says, “you are with me.”*

Do you fear a **nervous breakdown**? *The Psalm says, “He leads me besides still waters.”*

Do you fear falling into a **terrible sin**? *The Psalm says, “your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*

Do you fear making a **bad judgment**? *The Psalm says, “He leads me in paths of righteousness.”*

Do you fear **life, death and eternity**? *The Psalm says, “I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”*

How does Psalm 23 address your fears today? Can you say with the little girl in the story, “The LORD is my shepherd, He’s all I want”?

The term “**Be still**” (Psalm 46:10) literally means to “drop your hands”; “to relax.” The Psalmist is exhorting us to *Take your hands off and see that God is God.*

2 Pastor Philip exhorted us to “Stop trying to take things into your own hands. Let God take over. Permit Him to show Himself to be faithful.”

Perhaps pray a prayer of devotion asking God to bring peace and rest to your heart this day. Praise Him today that you are “in sensationally good hands.”