

- ii. Moses Lee, *What the Early Church can Teach Us about the Coronavirus*.

When the World is Falling Apart

Jerry Cisar — March 15, 2020

Text: Psalm 46

Introduction

Psalm 46 reminds God's people who He is and where He is and informs us how to act in light of that.

- C. When the waters of chaos rage, making everything that was once stable now crumbling apart, we can trust God, let go of all our save-yourself-tactics, know that God changes the waters of chaos until they are a river of life!

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Why do you think the psalmist begins the psalm by immediately turning our attention toward who God is?
- How does Genesis 1 help inform the imagery of Psalm 46?
- How many words or phrases in this psalm speak about God's nearness to his people? (Underline those words.)
- What is the significance of God being near us according to the psalm?
- How does God act in order to deal with the chaotic forces (v6)?
- What are some of the ways that God speaks into our distress?
- Why is it important to remember that God dwells in a city and not an isolated country home?
- How does the phrase "God will help her at break of day" connect God's way of salvation in this situation to His way in the Exodus? How does this inform how God works today?
- What are we invited to "come and see"?
- What does it mean to "be still and know"?

I. When Waters Destroy (1-3)

- A. The Scene
 - B. Psalm 46 begins by focusing our attention on God and who He is.
 - ii. He is our refuge and strength.
 - iii. He is help in times of trouble or distress.
 - C. We are to be reminded of Genesis 1.

"Chaos is seeking to reassert itself and destroy the order of creation. In the midst of such a threat of chaos, the psalm confesses that God is refuge and strength. The God who is creator and remains sovereign over the creation is also the God who is present with the community.... The psalm urges faith in this divine presence in the midst of threats to the created order." (The New Cambridge Bible Commentary)

- D. This Psalm focuses our attention on who God is rather than our troubles.

II. When Waters Give Life (4-7)

- A. The nearness of God is emphatic in this psalm.
 - i. He is *ever present* help (1).
 - ii. The city of God is the place *where* the most high *dwells* (4).
 - iii. God is within her (5).
 - iv. The Lord Almighty is *with us* (7, 11).
- B. What does it mean that God is with us?
 - i. It means that He _____ the violent waters that seek to destroy the earth and _____ them into a river with streams that bring life and joy!

The peaceful waters of this river and streams “stand in stark contrast to the roaring, foaming chaotic waters that seek to devour humanity” (The Psalms: Language for All Season of the Soul).

- ii. Because God is with us:
 - a) The city of God *will not* fall, but God will help her (5).
 - b) Nations are in uproar; kingdoms *will* fall (6a).
- C. How does God accomplish this? (6b)
 - i. When God is present, He lifts up His voice.
 - ii. Part of what we need in a time like this is to hear the voice of Christ through one another; to hear the Word of God from one another.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “Christians need other Christians who speak God’s Word to them... when they become uncertain and disheartened because... the Christ in their own hearts is weaker than the Christ in the word of other Christians. Their own hearts are uncertain; those of their brothers and sisters are sure. At the same time, this also clarifies that the goal of all Christian community is to encounter one another as bringers of the message of salvation. As such, God allows Christians to come together and grants them community.” (Life Together)

- D. God will help her at break of day!
 - i. Exodus 14:27
 - ii. God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help (1) *becomes* the Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress (7, 11)!
- E. Who is God? An ever-present help in trouble... a refuge and strength.
Where is He when everything seems unstable? Right here.
Which means that we will be led through the darkness and come out at the break of day!

III. Know that God Changes the Waters (8-11)

- A. Come and see
 - i. We are summonsed to come and see God acting as Divine Warrior on our behalf.
 - ii. Believers look back at Jesus the Divine Warrior who came robed in righteousness, with garments of vengeance. Yet, strangely enough, we discover that He came and the only blood that got on his robe was his own. And He did battle on a cross. And He laid in the heart of the sea (like Jonah), or earth, for three days and then was raised to life. Then the bows and spears of death were broken and shattered; no more to be feared.
- B. Let go and know that I am God.
 - i. Robert Altar notes that the verb which we often translate “Be still” is actually “let go.”