



## **"REASONS TO REJOICE"**

**"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16**

### **"Series of Six"**

#### **A selection of Psalms for meditation: Lesson 2**

Last week we learned that the Psalms are divided into five books. This week we will be studying Psalm 46, which is a Psalm from Book 2, reminding us that God rescued His people in ancient days and will continue to rescue us now. The word "Psalm" comes from a Greek word that means "a poem sung to musical accompaniment." The Hebrew name means "praise." Psalms 46-48 are songs of praise, celebrating victory from a great enemy. This Psalm is also listed under the classification of "Songs to affirm our Faith." Imagine the Israelites breaking out into these great songs of praise as they traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festivals, reminding themselves, and others, that the Lord of Hosts was always with them.

Right now, I believe we need to be reminded that we have a God who is always with us, a God who is secure and immovable. We are facing scary times. Many are losing homes, jobs, and dreams. Many marriages are struggling because of the pressure. I believe this is why the Holy Spirit has led us to study Psalm 46. I pray that you will be encouraged, as the Israelites were, that our God is a God of the impossible. Our God reigns and is, and will always be, victorious!

### **First Day**

1. Let's begin today by reading Psalm 46:1-11. Does your Bible say who wrote it? What facts do you find? Are there any repeated words or phrases?
2. What would you say is the general theme of this Psalm?
3. What, or who, is emphasized?

4. If you had to give it a title, what would you call it? Why do you think it's classified as an "affirmation of faith" Psalm?
  
5. This hymn of praise was written to celebrate deliverance from some kind of foe. Many scholars believe it was written after the victory the Israelites experienced after the Assyrian army surrounded and invaded Jerusalem. Read 2 Kings 18:13 through 19:37. Briefly recap the story.

This Psalm is said to be written for "The Chief Musician" to sing, the one who was the most skillful musician in Israel. The "Sons of Korah" were the authors and seemed to be called upon to sing background, so to speak. These men were temple assistants, serving in a division of the Levites that took their turns serving at the temple. A "Song for Alamoth" can either mean it was a song "pitched high," or it may refer to shrill-sounding instruments (1 Chronicles 15:20).

6. Divide this Psalm into 3 sections and give each a title that reflects the main thought.

That's it for today. I pray that you are already excited after just one day of studying Psalm 46! May the Holy Spirit take these words and encourage your heart, no matter what you're going through. Hang in there -- He is our EVER present help!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

## Second Day

**Work on your memory verse. Hide it down deep in your heart.**

Before we begin, I wanted to share with you a very interesting fact about this Psalm. Martin Luther wrote many hymns, and one of his most popular was called "A Mighty Fortress is our God," which was inspired by Psalm 46. It was written somewhere between 1527 and 1529. This song has been called "The greatest hymn of the greatest man of the greatest period of German history." It is also called "The Battle Hymn of the Reformation." This song was sung at the funeral of American President Dwight Eisenhower in 1969. It was also used as a theme song for the children's series "Davey and Goliath." Martin Luther said, "We sing this psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends His church and His Word against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and sin."

The Psalm has a natural break after each "Selah," which most likely indicates a pause in the music or a pause for contemplation. It has been outlined many different ways, but we will look at it according to the three "Selah" breaks. The sections also declare God's power over nature (1-3), over the attackers of His city (4-7), and over the whole warring world (8-11).

1. Read Psalm 46:1-11 again. Reread verses 1-3. What word in verse 1 makes it so personal?
2. Define the word "refuge." How is God our refuge? In what other things do we often look for refuge? Is there any other refuge that is comparable to God?
3. What did Jesus call a man that put his refuge or security in money or things? Read Luke 12:15-21.

The word for refuge literally means "a place to go quietly for protection." Some synonyms are security, safety, retreat, sanctuary, haven, and stronghold. We can go to Him for protection when calamity hits. He is our personal refuge; He is always available to us. He is our strength; any other strength is weakness.

4. Have you found your refuge in Him? Are you looking to Him for security, or have you been looking for refuge in money, things, or family and friends?

The word "**trouble**" in verse 1 literally means "**in tight places.**" We have all found ourselves in "tight places" before, so this promise is very comforting.

5. What "tight places" are you in, or have you been in, lately? How can God be a "present help" to you in those tight places? Are you letting Him be? What assurance does this verse give you? How does the term "ever present" imply His readiness to be found?

6. Because of verse 1, what "don't" we have to do, according to verse 2? Why? What is the Psalmist trying to say?

No matter what is happening around us, no matter what destruction or disaster occurs in the world, or our life, God's children don't need to fear. We can have a quiet confidence in Him. Because He is our eternal refuge, we can't let fear and doubt consume us. Concerning these two verses, Spurgeon wrote, "The two phrases set forth the most terrible commotion within the range of imagination, and include the overthrow of dynasties, the destruction of nations, the ruin of families, the persecution of the church, the reign of heresy, and whatever else may at any time try the faith of believers. Let the worst come to the worst, the child of God should never give way to mistrust; since God remains faithful there can be no danger to His cause or His people." Sometimes we can "quake like mountains" when we are afraid, but when we trust in the Lord, we don't have to be dismayed.

7. Are there any waters that are roaring in your life? How about any swelling mountains? Anything in your life making your "knees quake"? How do these verses encourage you?
  
8. Do these verses exempt the believer from facing trouble? Does the Psalmist tell us that those who love God won't ever face disease or calamity? Why is this important to note?

There is something interesting to notice in these verses. The word for "earth" in verse 2 can be translated "land," and the word "removed" can be translated "change " or "change hands." It can then be read, "Therefore we will not fear though the land changes hands." The Psalmist was reminding them that they are so secure in God that they had nothing to fear, even if invasions occurred. Hezekiah's refuge was as permanent as before."

This verse reminds me that even when I don't like what's going on in my country, my world, or my family, God is still there. Natural disaster or any other chaos doesn't have to unsettle me. Even when I don't agree politically, socially, or morally, I don't have to fear.

When reading about this Psalm, I found that it is one of Elisabeth Elliot's favorites. She talks about this Psalm when she explains what it was like losing both of her husbands. Her first husband, Jim Elliot, was killed by the Auca Indians, while living in Ecuador as a missionary. Her second husband, Addison Leitch, died slowly of cancer. She refers to this Psalm, saying, "In the first shock of death, everything that has seemed most dependable has given away. Mountains are falling; earth is reeling. In such a time it is a profound comfort to know that although things seem to be shaken, one thing is not: God is not shaken." She added, "The thing that is most needful is to do what the Psalmist does later, to 'be still' and know that God is God. He is God whether we recognize it or not."

9. Let's end this section with a prayer, thanking Him for all the things in our life that we don't have to fear. Ask Him to help you to trust Him as you face your own personal calamity. (You can write it down, no one will peek! ☺ )

### Third Day

**Spend some time reviewing your memory verse. How about writing it down and putting it on the frig?**

1. Let's begin today with prayer, asking Him to give you understanding of the next few verses. Then read Psalm 46:1-11 again. Focus on verses 4-7. We turn from the upheaval of nature to a city under siege, a turbulent sea to a calm river.

In ancient days, water was crucial for a city to exist. Jerusalem was one of the ancient cities that was not built on a river. Hezekiah was very wise, building a tunnel within the city walls. It gave Jerusalem an almost unfailing water supply. John Phillips, in his commentary Exploring the Psalms, wrote: "The spring of Gihon, located below the steep eastern hill of Ophel in the deep Kidron Valley, Jerusalem's most ancient water supply, was exposed to enemy attack. Hezekiah diverted the spring through a conduit, 1777 feet long and hewn out of a solid rock, into a reservoir inside the city's walls. He then completely covered the ancient spring so the enemy wouldn't know it was there."

The fear of any Eastern city in the time of war was that the water supply would be cut off during the siege. But throughout the fearful siege there was a river, "the streams whereof made glad the city of God." Jerusalem's water would never be cut off, because God was in her midst.

The Psalmist seems to have a few different perspectives as he writes about the river and the holy place, or the temple. He's not only referring to earthly meanings. The "city of God" theme is also a major theme of Scripture, and not only concerns the security of earthly Jerusalem, but also the nature and safety of God's people throughout history. The church is "the city of God." He designed, built, elected, purchased, and indwells it. "It is dedicated to His praise and

glorified by His presence." (Spurgeon) It also points us to the New Jerusalem, The New Heaven, which has been prepared by God for the final dwelling of His kids. The "river" referenced here can be the "river" that flows from God's throne (Ezekiel 47:1-12, Zechariah 14:8, Revelation 22:1-2), and the "holy place" is the dwelling place of God in Heaven. This is the city that Abraham looked for, not an earthly Jerusalem, but "the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10)."

Jerusalem itself had no river, but it had God, who sustained their lives. Jerusalem lived on hidden resources, a secret river that kept them strong. And most importantly, God was in their midst! We too have a river that keeps us strong: the rivers of joy that come from the Living Water!

2. Read John 4:1-14 and 7:37-38. Who is the Living Water? What is promised to those who drink of it?

3. Just like water sustains a city, how does Living Water sustain us?

4. God's power reigns over those who siege the "city." What comfort do verses 5-6 give you?

God's city cannot be ruined; He is in the midst. Again, the Psalmist is praising God for His power and protection over the cities. It's important to note that when God lived among the people, God protected them. When they abandoned Him, He allowed them to fall into the hands of the Babylonian army. How important it is to keep God "in the midst" of our city!

In verse 5, it says that God helped her "just at the break of dawn." Although this may be stretching the context a bit, God has helped me "just in the nick of time" or the "break of dawn" many times, as I waited on Him. Whether it was for words to write, words to speak, or verses to comfort, God has always come through when I called upon Him.

5. Has God ever helped you "at the break of dawn"? Why is it so important to wait upon the Lord for His Words and His timing?

6. Read the following verses about waiting and summarize them. Why should we wait?

A. Psalm 33:20-22

B. Psalm 62:5-7

C. Psalm 27:14

D. Isaiah 40:31

E. Lamentations 3:25-26

F. What's your favorite verse on "waiting"? Why?

7. In verse 6, God's voice caused the earth to melt, again signifying His power and protection over His people. I found the coolest verse in Job 26:12-14, where Job was responding to one of His friends. Explain the phrase "mere edges of His ways." How do these verses excite or encourage you?

The "Lord of Hosts" is "Jehovah Sabaoth" which means the Lord over the hosts, or armies, of Israel, and the angelic armies of God. God's hosts are powerful! And they "are with us." The word "with us" is from "Immanuel" which means "God with us." The foe they were facing never had a chance!

8. Read 2 Kings 6:13-23. This is a great story that reveals the "hosts" of Heaven. Read the story and write your thoughts.



The mention of "hosts" speaks of His might. The mention of Jacob, God's chosen, refers to His grace. It took Jacob awhile to learn to trust God. Alexander MacLaren says, "The God of Jacob is the Lord of hosts. More wondrous still, the Lord of hosts is the God of Jacob."

That's enough for today. We could go on and on about His power. I pray that as you lay your head on your pillow tonight, you will have peace as you remember how He loves and protects His people. And remember that He is Immanuel ... He is with us, not against us.

#### Fourth Day

**Tell your memory verse today to someone who is facing difficulty and encourage them to call upon the Lord for help.**

1. Read Psalm 46:1-11, focusing on verses 8-9. Write your thoughts, remembering the context of the Psalm as a whole.

This section is interpreted a bit differently by commentators. I believe the general thought is that God is the ruler over the nations and is in control of all warring. But I did enjoy John's Phillips interpretation. He writes, "There is a past, present, and prophetic application of these verses. As to the **prophetic** application, the Psalm looks forward to the day when Jesus will come to destroy the armies of the world at Armageddon: He will turn swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks. The **past** application is equally clear. The Psalmist had looked down one morning from the Battlements of Jerusalem and had seen the dead corpses of the Assyrians. The **present** application is that we are presently engaged in a deadly struggle with principalities and powers, with the rulers of this world's darkness, and with wicked spirits in high places."

2. Read Psalm 46:10-11. How do you think these verses summarize and wrap up the entire Psalm?
3. All this talk of God's power, and then the Psalmist says ... "Be still." What do you think he means? How is this possible in the face of turmoil?

The words "be still" actually mean "take your hands off." Perhaps God is telling us to "take our hands off" and allow Him to be God in our lives. He promises that He will not let the enemy win. Can we believe that?

4. Is there an area in your life that God is telling you to "be still" or "take your hands off" this "thing"? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal it to you.
  
5. God has brought this \_\_\_\_\_ (a particular circumstance) into my life so that I can learn to trust in His \_\_\_\_\_ and see His \_\_\_\_\_.
  
6. To remain still seems almost impossible at times. What can we "do" in our "stillness"?
  
7. Do you think whining and complaining to God because of our circumstances falls into the "be still" category? Why or why not?

Knowing that the "Lord of Hosts" is with us can be an overwhelming thought. I like to remind myself of it when I face things that seem unbearable or when I fear people around me. When I need someone to fight my battle for me, the Lord of Hosts is who I call upon. The title "God of Jacob" can make me chuckle at times. God met Jacob when he "had nothing and deserved nothing; He met Jacob in his backslidings and failures; He took that deceitful shepherd into His embrace and changed him into Israel." (John Phillips) No wonder we get a "Selah" or pause after that. That's amazing. And that's what He did for you and me. We didn't deserve His love or His forgiveness. But He gave it to us anyway. That's grace ... God's unmerited favor.

8. Are you making time to "be still" in God's presence every day? Have you allowed yourself to become too busy to be still before Him? What can you do to change this?
  
9. In our "quiet time" with Him, we should be taking time to simply praise and worship Him. That's what the Psalms are all about. As we close our study today, end in prayer and simply praise Him for being our refuge, our present help in trouble, and our help at the break of dawn!

### Fifth Day

**Write your verse from memory.**

1. Read Psalm 46:1-11. What ministered to you the most in this Psalm?
  
2. What does the word "exalted" mean?
  
3. Verse 10 tells us that God will be exalted in the earth and over the nations. Is God being exalted in your life? In what ways? How can He be exalted more in your life?

4. Read these verses and fill in the blank.

A. \_\_\_\_\_ still (Psalm 46:10)

B. \_\_\_\_\_ still (Exodus 14:13)

C. \_\_\_\_\_ still (Ruth 3:18)

5. How can the wise words above help you when you are tempted to take control of some area or issue in your life?

6. How can I apply the truths in this Psalm to myself as a:

A. Christian Woman

B. Wife

C. Mother

D. Friend

We know the Lord is available to us, always dependable, has power over all things, is in control of all things, and is worthy to be praised. I'd like to end our lesson with some great words by a great man, Jonathan Edwards, in reference to verse 10, "I am God."

**"In that He is God, He is an absolutely and infinitely perfect being. As He is God, He is so great, that He is infinitely above all comprehension. As He is God, all things are His own. In that He is God, He is worthy to be sovereign over all things. In that He is God, He will be sovereign, and will act as such.**

**In that He is God, He is able to avenge Himself on  
those who oppose His sovereignty.**

**He is God."**

