

God, Our Refuge and Strength

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Bible Text: Psalm 46
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We turn in sacred scripture to Psalm 46. Psalm 46. I ask that you keep your Bibles open during the course of the preaching this evening. We're going to work through this whole Psalm. We're going to study it as a whole Psalm, so it will be profitable to keep our Bibles open as we work through the three sections of this Psalm. "To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamothe," and that "upon Alamothe," that might be a particular too for perhaps a high pitch, to sing with a high pitch, and we're going to do that at the end of the worship service as we sing Psalter 128. To be sung in a high pitch.

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. 4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. 6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. 7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. 8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. 9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. 10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. 11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

The whole Psalm is the text this evening and I ask again that you keep your Bibles open to the whole Psalm.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, by way of introduction I want to point your attention to three things about this Psalm. First of all, notice that this is a Psalm oozing with confidence. There really is no lull in the entire Psalm. From beginning to the end, it is full of confidence. And so in preparing for the sermon this evening, instead of relegating that idea of confidence to just one point of the sermon, perhaps the third point, ending with the confidence, I wanted to have the entire sermon, all three points, infused

with that idea of confidence. So that explains in part the approach that we're going to take this evening.

Second of all, notice the way that the Psalm is organized and the development and progression that characterizes this Psalm. The Psalm is clearly organized into three main stanzas, verses 1 through 3, verses 4 through 7, and verses 8 through 1. And each of these stanzas, or paragraphs, however you want to call that, is marked off clearly by the word Selah. And if you look at the three stanzas carefully, you'll see that there is a development of thought in the Psalm and that's really how we're going to approach the Psalm tonight. Notice the first stanza focuses on how God's people are confident in God as they prepare for a great battle. In the second stanza, it focuses on how God's people experience God's care in the heat of the battle, during the battle. And then the third stanza focuses on how God's people are rejoicing after the battle. We'll see that as we work through the Psalm.

And then third of all, by way of introduction, I want to speak, I want to point out about when this Psalm was written and notice that the Psalm itself doesn't give any indication of when it was written or the specific details. So some will say that this Psalm was written perhaps during the days of David, and this could be a Psalm of David. It's not titled that, but it could be a Psalm of David. Many others will say that this Psalm really fits in well with what happens during the days of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles chapter 20, where, if you remember, three enemies were gathered together in an alliance and they together were marching against the city of Jerusalem and were about to attack it, and then the Lord suddenly gave his people a very marvelous victory, unexpected deliverance from the enemy during the days of King Jehoshaphat. While others, still others, will say that this Psalm really fits in well with what happened during the days of King Hezekiah, when King Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, marched with his huge army against Jerusalem and was about ready to destroy the whole city, and then the Lord rose up and gave his people another very sudden and marvelous deliverance from the enemy. We can't be sure about when this Psalm was written, but for my part, I think it really fits in well with what happened during the days of King Hezekiah and so that's the history that we will interact with as we work through this Psalm together, and I think that looking at that history as we look at this Psalm will help us understand the Psalm and then also help us apply it to ourselves and our own circumstances today.

We take as our theme "God, Our Refuge and Strength," and we look at that theme under three points. First, confessing this, anticipating the battle; second, experiencing this in the heat of the battle; and then third, exulting in this after the battle. As we begin looking at this Psalm, we need to make sure we understand the context in which this Psalm was written, that is, we need to understand and appreciate that this Psalm arose out of a situation in which God's people found themselves in very great trouble. Now to see that, we need to get out of the first stanza for a moment, the first three verses, and also look at the other stanzas. For example, notice verse 6, "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved." What the Psalmist is describing there is this, the word heathen is the word goyim. It's the word for nations. Maybe you've heard that word, the Yiddish word, goyim. It's a reference here to the hordes of the ungodly, the heathen nations around Israel, those who do not call upon the name of the Lord. That's the word heathen. Then the word raged

is the word that means to roar, to roar like a lion, to growl or become boisterous. The heathen raged, that is, the nations were in a furious uproar. The nations gathered around the city of the Lord like wolves ravenous for the prey. They foamed and roared and swelled like a tempestuous sea.

Then we continue to read in verse 6, "the kingdoms were moved," and the word kingdoms here refers to a political entity. It refers to different nations, different countries. The kingdoms were moved and that word moved means to shake or to totter. And so the idea is this, kings and armies raged against God and against God's people, and as a result of that raging, entire nations were shaken, uprooted, convulsed, and destroyed. Charles Spurgeon puts it this way, "A general confusion seized upon society. The fierce invaders convulsed their own dominions by draining the population to urge on the war and they desolated other countries by their devastating march to Jerusalem." And that's what happens in warfare, isn't it? One nation rises up against another nation, and what happens? Entire nations, all the surrounding nations even, are shaken and convulsed and uprooted by one nation's desire for warfare.

That's verse 6. Notice also verse 9, "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire." Now obviously what that verse is telling us is that there was a great enemy that had marched against the city of Jerusalem, a great army with archers and swordsmen and spearmen and charioteers. A great, great army marched against the city.

And then if you go to verses 4 and 5, you'll notice something more. Verses 4 and 5, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." And I point out those verses because what those verses are telling us is that God's people had fled to the city of Jerusalem for refuge. The enemy had been marching against Jerusalem. The people fled from their homes and from their farms in the countryside, and they all gathered to the capital city of Jerusalem and hid behind the thick walls of the city, and there they were, as it were, huddled together within the fortifications of Jerusalem.

So in verses 4 and 5, you read of Jerusalem as a besieged city. That's the idea. And the point of all of this is to show you that this Psalm arose out of a situation in which God's people found themselves in very great trouble. They were in trouble and that's also why I said in the introduction that this Psalm really fits well with what happened during the days of King Hezekiah. Even you children will remember that history of what happened during the days of King Hezekiah. It was during the days of Hezekiah that Sennacherib, the mighty king of Assyria, was busy expanding his huge empire, a worldwide empire. Sennacherib was a very mighty king with a very mighty army and as he went to war, he conquered nation after nation after nation. King Sennacherib was even the one whom God used to destroy the northern ten tribes of Israel, the kingdom of Israel in the north, and scattered them throughout his vast empire. And after defeating many nations, Sennacherib set his eyes on Judah and Jerusalem and we read in the history that he marched through Judah. He destroyed all the defended cities in the land, and all that was

left for him to conquer was the city of Jerusalem. And so we read King Sennacherib brought his huge army, at least 185,000 Assyrian soldiers to the edge of the city of Jerusalem. And there we read that the Rabshakeh, the general of Sennacherib's army, raged against Jerusalem. You can read of that history in 2 Kings, chapters 18 and 19, and in Isaiah 36 and 37. And Rabshakeh, the general, spoke to the people of God who were hiding in the city of Jerusalem, and he roared against them. He raged against them, and he said, "Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations," have the idol gods of the nations, "delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?" And what do you have in all of this history? What you have is this, God's people huddled in Jerusalem, and the heathen are raging, and the kingdoms of the earth are in upheaval. This is a time of world war and it was at such a time as this that Psalm 46 was written.

And now the point of saying all of this is this, let's go back to the first stanza and go back to verses 2 and 3, and we can understand a little bit more what verses 2 and 3 are actually getting at. "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." What we need to understand about those verses is that the Psalmist isn't just talking about natural calamities but the Psalmist is talking about the most cataclysmic disasters that can be experienced on the face of the earth, and he's using this language of natural catastrophes to give an idea of this. Though the earth be removed, that is, though the earth should give way and fall out from underneath our feet like in an earthquake. Imagine going through that experience. Though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, the idea is, though the most permanent structures in society should fall to ruin, and then the idea is this, should everything as we know it in the world today fall to ruin, and the kingdoms and nations of the earth be overturned, so that there are revolutions that change the very fabric of society and the world as we know it, though the nations of the world unite and combine all their powers to crush God's people, yet will not we fear. That's verses 2 and 3. Though the greatest realities of the world as we know it are completely overturned, though King Sennacherib with his innumerable hosts of soldiers should come against Jerusalem and besiege it, we will not fear.

That's what's going on here in verses 1 through 3. Verses 1 through 3 are capturing what God's people are confessing as they anticipate the battle. They see the enemy gathering strength in the distance. They see the bands of soldiers of the enemy forming into their lines and columns, getting organized. They hear the mighty blasts of the trumpet and the footsteps of the army as it gets closer and closer to the city of Jerusalem, gradually surrounding, encompassing the city more and more, and they say, "We will not fear." That's what's going on here. Beloved, let me ask you, would you be afraid in such a situation? I think we would be afraid. I would be afraid. In Hezekiah's day, that was the temptation. We read that when Hezekiah himself heard the dreadful news about the army

of Assyria marching, he tore his clothes, he covered himself with sackcloth, and he said, "This is a day of trouble." And then, of course, he went to the Lord in prayer, and he went through the prophet Isaiah, who was living during that time.

But for us today, warfare might not seem like such a present concern or a fear for us, but yet today, we do have our own fears and concerns, don't we, other things that we might be tempted to fear. Maybe you can look ahead at the circumstances coming to you in life. You see spiritual battles coming your way on the horizon, marching your way and maybe you're tempted to become afraid. Maybe you see spiritual battles coming on the horizon for the church. That's really the application here because Jerusalem is the church. And you see spiritual battles arising in the future of the church. Or maybe we have our own concerns about the well-being of the church. Or maybe you fear death. I like reading this passage on the occasion of those who are preparing for surgery, serious surgery, because surgery and the prospect of death can be a fearful thing for us. Or maybe you struggle with peer pressure. Think of this, you like to party on Friday nights, but you know that what you are doing and how you are behaving is wrong, and you know it's coming to the point now where you either need to lead your friends away from this bad behavior or you need to leave and get new friends, and that can be a fearful thing to stand up even to friends and tell them that what we're doing here needs to change. That's a big deal, even for adults. Something like that can sometimes make you feel like your life is in danger of being turned upside down. Maybe you're fearful of college and the challenges you'll face at college. There's so many new things. For some of us, we might simply say life is happening. Changes are coming and I don't know if I'm mature for this. I don't know if I'm ready for this. And the challenges that you are facing in life might seem to be threatening the very fabric of your life as you know it. You see, that's exactly what verses 2 and 3 are getting at. The Psalmist is saying, though the greatest realities of the world as we know it are completely overturned and destroyed, and our lives are never the same, we will not fear.

And now, why won't we fear? Why won't we fear the future? Why won't we fear what happens in the battle? Because as verse 1 says, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Notice first of all, God is. I remember God. I see the mighty army approaching before me and I'm tempted to have all my doctrine fly out the window, what I know by faith to fly out the window and I forget God. And then we gather ourselves together and we first remember God. God is. God is the great reality right here in this situation, in every situation. I know my God is real, of course, I know he is in control, and I know God is with me right here and right now. I must not forget God.

Again, isn't that often our first mistake when facing a frightening circumstance? We forget God and then all the comfort that we know can so easily escape us. No, we say God is. And who is God? God is ours and God is our refuge and strength. He's a refuge. That is a shelter, a hiding place. Children, when there's a tornado in the area, where do people go? Well, they go to their shelter. Oftentimes they go to the basement. In World War II, when the Nazis were searching for the Jews, where would the Jews go? They would maybe hide in the attic, or they would hide between walls, or all different kinds of

hiding places that they had. That was their refuge. And when the enemy is attacking, where do people go? They flee into the city, they go to the castle, and they hide in a strong tower. And beloved, that's who God is for us, his people. He is a strong tower. Those who run into him are safe. By faith we run into him. By faith we hide ourselves with his promises. We commit ourselves to his protection. God is my refuge. He is my hiding place.

And the Psalmist says, God is our strength and here we have Hebrew parallelism, where the second idea here is really repeating the first idea and expanding on it. The word strength there could be translated as stronghold. God is our refuge and our stronghold, our shelter. He provides safety and security even against the most formidable foe.

And then the Psalmist writes, a very present help in trouble. God is not just one who sympathizes with you, although that is true. God is not just one who can give you some good advice. No, he's the one who actually helps. He is the one who actually comes to the rescue and brings assistance. And he's a very present help, and the idea there is he's a proven help. This is something that we have experienced in the past. And the idea is also this, he's a help in every circumstance and in every way. Wherever or whenever you need help, his abilities match the need. You cannot desire a better help, nor shall you find any help like his help.

This is what the Psalmist is saying as he anticipates the battle. We have nothing to fear. God is our refuge and strength. And this is what we must say too, beloved. This is the confession that God puts on your lips tonight. God is your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. You know it to be true. You've experienced it in the past. And if you ever feel yourself unsure about it, then look again to the cross of Jesus Christ because that is, you might say, especially where God revealed himself to be our refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble. We were in trouble. We were in bondage to sin, in spiritual darkness, deserving of extreme, that is everlasting, punishment of body and soul in hell and no mere creature could come to the rescue and help us and save us from our misery, and then what did God do? He did everything. He did everything. He came in our flesh. He came as our head. He came as our substitute. And as our brother, he did everything that we needed done. He obeyed God's law perfectly. He endured all the agonies of hell with perfect love to God. He made a complete covering for all our sins. And he helped us. He rescued us. He saved us. He made himself our refuge and our stronghold. We remember the cross of Jesus Christ. We know he's been a proven help, and then we look ahead to what lies before us, what lies before us, the struggles and battles of life that we maybe are anticipating, and this is what our confession is: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Well, this is not something we simply confess as we anticipate the battle, this is also something we experience in the very heat of the battle and that brings us to verses 4 through 7. In verses 4 through 7, you have the second stanza of the Psalm and in the second stanza, we are brought actually into the city of God, into the city of Jerusalem, and we get a description of what's happening in the city. Outside the city, the enemy has set up their camp. Outside the city, the enemy is preparing for an attack, maybe already

starting the siege of the city, and now what's going on inside the city? Well, verse 4, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High." I remember when I was younger, that verse always seemed confusing to me but in the way I'm preaching the sermon tonight, I hope that this is easy to understand. The idea is this, inside the city of Jerusalem, there is a river, that is, there's fresh water for the inhabitants to drink. You see, when a city is under attack, this is probably what is of greatest concern to the people, is there fresh water in the city to keep the people alive as the warfare goes on?

Now what's interesting is that in Hezekiah's day, this was actually something that King Hezekiah worked on as he prepared for the battle. You can read of that in the Bible. Maybe you've heard of Hezekiah's tunnel, a very long tunnel that Hezekiah built that rerouted the water springs around Jerusalem outside the walls so that the water actually flowed into the city. And there was a river in Jerusalem atop that high mountain hill, there was a river flowing through the city. It's actually one of the great engineering wonders of the Old Testament. You can even tour Hezekiah's tunnel today in Jerusalem.

And the idea of verse 4 is this, there is a river of water flowing through the city and it breaks off into little rivulets, little streams, the streams whereof, little canals break off the river so that the whole city is supplied with water. Every neighborhood, every house in the city has fresh water. And the point then is this, there is peace, there is safety, there is comfort within the city even while the enemy rages outside the city and attacks it, the people are comfortable and even glad.

Verse 5 goes on and says, "God is in the midst of her." Think of that, think of the people in the city of Jerusalem and they could look at the temple and there they see God dwelling right in the midst of his people. And then the latter part of verse 5, "God shall help her and that right early." Literally, God shall help her at the dawning of the morning. The idea is this, trouble surround us, but God will help us and he won't wait until midday. He won't wait until halfway through the battle as he comes fashionably late. No, but at the very dawning of the day, you might say right when you wake up and you see your need for him, he is there.

And then the last part of verse six, "he uttered his voice, the earth melted." And that's where you see God rising up to help his people and you see the power of God and what does God do? What is his power? He simply speaks his voice. The enemy is raging. The heathen nations are roaring. They want to destroy God's people and what does God do? Well, all he needs to do is speak his word because that's the power of the voice of God, beloved. We already sang it. The voice of the Lord is powerful. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. That's Psalm 29. And what does God do? He utters his voice and the earth melts. And if you remember the history of King Hezekiah, that's exactly how it went. Hezekiah goes to the Lord. He spreads himself out before the Lord in prayer. Remember, he even had that letter. He lays it out before the Lord, and he cries out, "O Lord God of Israel, which dwelleth between the cherubim, Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear, open, Lord, thine eyes, and see, and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent

Rabshakeh to reproach the living God. Hear what he's saying, how he's mocking you and scaring your people." And what did the Lord do? He uttered his voice. He spoke the word and that same night, he sent his angel, the angel of the Lord, and in that very same night, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were slain in their tents and the next morning, they were all dead corpses. And what did Rabshakeh do? What did King Sennacherib do when they woke up that morning? They departed and they melted away from Jerusalem.

He uttered his voice, the earth melted and, beloved, that's how it is for us today in the heat of the battle. This is how it is for God's church. There's a river that's flowing through the church of Jesus Christ today and that river is the grace of God that flows to us through his Son, Jesus Christ. As the Bible says, this is a common figure, the Bible says, God is the fountain of living waters. Remember what Jesus says in John chapter 7, "If any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink." Jesus is the fount of living waters. As the book of Revelation puts it, in the new heavens and new earth, there is a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the land. And there, the river is called the river of life. It's the river of eternal life found in Jesus Christ. It's the river of God's powerful, life-giving grace. And how does that river of God's grace in Jesus Christ flow to us? Well, it flows to us through the means of grace, through the scriptures, through the preaching, through the sacraments and by faith, we partake of the means of grace with the hand and mouth of the soul, and we drink of the water of life freely. We experience that in the church, in the city of God, and we are made glad. And the point is, in the very heat of the battle, right, six days a week, you are in the heat of the battle and this is how it is for God's people. Satan and the kingdom of darkness besieges God's people over and over again, but what do God's people find in the church? They find God in their midst, taking care of his people so that they continue to enjoy the refreshing waters of his grace.

And not only do you have the river of water, that river of God's grace flowing through Jesus Christ, but you also have the powerful voice of God as God speaks against the enemies of his people and causes them to melt away. And again, you see that especially at the cross. What happened at the cross 2,000 years ago? God uttered his voice and that was a voice, first of all, speaking a word of judgment, a word of judgment upon Jesus as the substitute and head of his people and for three hours, there was darkness, thick darkness as the earth melted, as God uttered his voice. But then what also happened at the cross? God also uttered his voice and at the same time as Jesus bore the agonies of God's wrath, the enemy was being destroyed. Remember what Jesus said right after those three hours of darkness, "It is finished!" And that was the voice of God in the flesh announcing the destruction of Satan and all of God's enemies and our enemies. Jesus endured the darkness, Jesus bore the full judgment of God against our sins, and Jesus obtained the victory over death and the grave and sin and the devil.

He uttered his voice, the earth melted, and through the cross of Jesus Christ, you then also hear that word of salvation that God utters upon his people. He speaks that word of mercy and blessing and peace, "Your sins are forgiven. I am your God and you are my people." And that's how it is for God's people in the midst of the battle. Each Sunday again through the preaching, this is the word we hear in the church, this is what we

experience. We experience God as our refuge and strength, so that as we read in verse 7, we boast and we exclaim, "The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge." And you experience that in your own personal lives too. Even in the heat of the battle, the Lord provides the grace that his people need from day to day. And whatever is ahead of me for tomorrow, I can imagine the worst, but God will give me grace for what he actually brings to me tomorrow.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. That's not only something that we confess as we anticipate the battle, that's not only something we experience in the heat of the battle, but this is also something we experience and exult in after the battle is over. That leads us to verses 8 through 11. "Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire." And then as a poetic device, the Psalmist writes in verse 10 as if God himself is speaking so that in verse 10, God is speaking there, first of all, to the enemies that rose up against Jerusalem, against the city of God and God says to those heathen hordes, "Be still. Be still, you enemies. Be still and know that I am God. I am not like the idol gods of the heathen nations. I am God and God alone. I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth." That's verse 10, and then you hear the joyful exclamation of God's people as they repeat their joy. "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." That's the progression here in the third stanza.

We will be brief. Notice how verse 8 starts, "Come, behold the works of the LORD." We could also translate that word "come" as "go" or even "walk." It's as if the Psalmist is calling his neighbors in Jerusalem to look outside the city walls with him and even to go outside the city gates with him and inspect and analyze what God has just done. "Come," he says. "Don't be passive but check it out for yourselves and inspect the things that God has done for us." And now beloved children and adult alike, can you imagine in Hezekiah's day what the people would have seen as they slowly walked out the city walls of Jerusalem? Imagine that next day after the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers had been slain and God's people walk outside the city and inspect and analyze what God has done. 185,000 Assyrian soldiers dead in their tents. "Come, look at it. Take in the sight." An eerie silence fills the air. The wheels of abandoned chariots creak in the soft wind. Bows and arrows lie everywhere, swords and spears innumerable, and all the soldiers are dead, fully clothed, perhaps still in their tents, but dead. And there way off in the distance, what do you see way off in the distance? You see Sennacherib with his few living servants in utter shock and confusion, turning around and making the long trip back to Nineveh.

Do you see it, beloved? Do you see it? Are you beholding the works of the Lord? Do you see the appalling desolations that he has made in the earth? I could say to you today, do you see the cross of Jesus Christ, beloved? Are you inspecting and analyzing what Jesus has accomplished? Even here, the Roman centurion right next to the cross with astonishment saying, "Truly, this was the Son of God." God will be exalted among the heathen. He will be exalted in the earth and how do God's people respond? They say the same thing, "Our God is God alone. He will be exalted among the heathen. He will be exalted in the earth, the LORD of hosts." And maybe you know what that means, the

Lord of armies. He's not just the Lord of one army or many armies. He's the Lord of all armies. And especially here, the reference is to angelic armies. He's the Lord of an unfathomable multitude of angelic hosts who are soldiers serving in his kingdom. "The LORD of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob," and that's a reference to God's covenant faithfulness, who spoke promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And he is the one who's faithful. "The God of Jacob is our refuge."

Beloved, this is how it is in life for God's people. Again, we exalt in this. This is your reality. Whatever you're going through, whatever fears you might have, fears at school, fears of peer pressure, fears at work, spiritual fears. No, God has made you his people. God has made himself your God. He is your refuge and strength. He is your very present help in trouble. Exult in it, beloved. Do not lull in your confidence of it. Experience it. You have nothing to fear. The Lord of hosts is with you.

James, this is something you have experienced and as we grow up and as we go through life, we experience this more and more, and I can only imagine those in old age who've gone through many sieges and many battles and you say, "Yes, this is exactly how it is." This is something you have confessed. You know who God is as your God. You know who Jesus is as your Savior. You know the victory he has gotten for you over death in the grave and sin in hell. James, your God will never abandon you. Your God, Jehovah, LORD of hosts, God of Jacob, is the one who loves you with an everlasting love. He is with you. You have nothing to fear. Going forward, James, live fully for him. Live fully without fear for him.

This is true for all of us. Beloved, when you struggle with fear, you are consumed with worry, when you see the enemy approaching and you're struggling in the midst of the battle, then not only must the heathen be still and know that he is God, but you too, as his child, as his friend and servant, you too in your own way have to be still and know and remember who is God. Jehovah is God. He knows how to bring glory to his own name perfectly and he will show you his covenant faithfulness to you. He is the God of Jacob, faithful to his promises. Remember the victory that is in Jesus Christ. Remember the victory that Jesus will surely bring with him one day on the clouds of glory. That too is coming, right? We are on the battlefield right now and there is coming a day when we will hear the judge come from heaven and he will say, "Be still." In the midst of the world and camping against the church, right, we know the last days. In the midst of that peril, the trumpet will blast and God will come down, Jesus will come down and he will say, "Be still and know that I am God." And then we with God's people from the beginning to the end of history and unto all eternity will boast this boast, "The LORD of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank thee for these triumphant songs that thou dost teach us, thy people, to sing. Strengthen our faith, and cause us to see the truth of these words, and that we might sing not just with the mouth, but sing from the heart with exultation. Lord, all praise and honor be unto thee. Thou art the Lord of hosts and the God of Jacob. Holy

and righteous are thy ways, and we thank thee that thou hast made us thy people. Use this preaching to shape our lives to thy name's glory and honor. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.