

S.N. July 24, 77 A.M.
(P. outline)

THE INFALLIBLE REFUGE

Psalm 46

INTRODUCTION:

During an earthquake that appeared a few years ago in a small village - there was generally very much alarm. They were at the same time surprised at the calmness and apparent joy of an elderly lady, whom they all knew. Then at length, one of them addressing the lady said - "Mother, are you not afraid?" "No, she said, I rejoice to know that I have a God who can shake the world."

"Why should I ever careful be, since such a God is mine? He watches over me night and day, and tells me "thou art mine."

We focus our attention today upon Psalm 46. There are great uncertainties attached to the meaning of alamo. But some are of the opinion that it is the name of a musical instrument. Or of a melody. Or perhaps the name of the musical choir.

It is impossible to determine the exact author of the song. Nor are we able to say with certainty what occasion it was composed. Probably it refers to the invasion of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. 2 Kings 19, Isa. 36. We find the circumstances of the invasion, the great host, and the seige of Jerusalem and the confidence of Hezekiah, God's people, and the final over throw of the Assyrians.

It is a most (glorious hymn) of faith. Some people have said if I Cor. 13 is the great chapter on love, then Psalm 46 is a great chapter on faith.

This Psalm has been used by Luther in the reformation time. As he was caught up with the meaning of it and wrote the great hymn. "A mighty fortress is our God!"

During the 14th century, it was used by countrymen to stir up as the enemies approached their land. To revive them, about these invaders. Through the ages, men have been stirred by the realization that the eternal God is available. This sufficient power.

The choir master received this song of the sons of Cora ^K

Every line of it is with worship and devotion. The 46th word in the 46th Psalm is shake. The 46th word from the end of the Psalm, is shake ^{is here}. Man's security is found in God. And man's appraisal of life on earth and his insecurity are here brought out in this Psalm.

There are three divisions in this Psalm that I wish to point out today. This will help us to remember the Psalm, and to get in a nutshell some of the meat of the Psalm.

I. A ^{Troubled} TEMPESTUOUS WORLD

A world in which there is turbulence and trouble. Earthquakes, disasters, invasions, and desperate situations that are overwhelming the people. They are in danger of losing their grip on God. It was in the midst of such dark days when the tempest was raging that the poet spoke these wonderful words. Fear and dread covered the people like a blanket.

Sennacherib in his invasion had now crossed Palestine and Hezekiah was trembling with his people helplessly behind the walls of Jerusalem. And the Assyrians would soon break down the walls.

Who would be foolish enough to have hope in his heart in such an evil day.

In the (darkest day), Isaiah the prophet, came forth and spoke to Jerusalem. You will be safe. "Now an arrow will fall within the city." But he made it clear that their security was not the result of the arms of men. It was the presence of Jehovah, the host. And he decreed that the city would be safe. There would be a spectacular deliverance.

V. 2
V. 3
The Psalmist said, V. 2 - the earth be removed. And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, V. 3 - though the waters thereof roar, and the, the trouble through the mountains shake, with swelling thereof. This is a scene of wild commotion. The kingdoms of the world are being shaken. People were roaring. The earth itself seemed unstable. The sea was rolling with trouble. You better watch those waves that roll in on the Atlantic. And the breaking of thunder. The mountains were trembling with volcanoes. And the invasion of Sennacherib taking all the city, and the tribes of Judah. And Benjamin by force. And Hezekiah was here to defend Jerusalem. What a tempestuous, what a turbulent time. Their ammunition was cut off. They were beseiged by the army. And Hezekiah had submitted to this Assyrian and paid a tribute. He had taken the gold from the walls and the pillars of the temple. And they promised that he would depart in a friendly manner, although he departed to conquer Egypt. A large part of his marching force stayed around Jerusalem. And demanded unconditional surrender. There was terror among the nations. This was described by the Psalmist - this is a picture of the commotions of the world today.

This very moment, there is turmoil in the world, and unrest. Anxiety of statesmen. The politics at home. The strife and contention of parties. In the commercial world there is fierce anxiety, contemplations.

Even in the religious world, every realm of life, there is unrest and turmult to a great or less extent.

And he talks like even the earth being carried into the midst of the sea. And the mighty empires like mountains - what a picture. The turmult of the world - the sin of the world.

Since 1770, Thomas Payne, in his Crisis Paper remarked, "these are times that try men's souls." Each of us in every generation conclude that we live now in times of crisis. These words are very contemporary. Every age and every generation, and even modern history - it is hard for us to say that we can come to any other conclusion. These really are hard times that try men's souls. Wherever you look at the world today. You see this.

Life is in a turmoil but compared to that day, it was a snail's pace. To the jet-liner age. The explosions that we are having today. Population - the explosion of knowledge leaves us reeling. 80% of the world's total knowledge has been brought forth in the last decade. It is said that 90% of all the scientiests that ever lived are alive today. The miracles of the test tubes.

Today we have rapid communications - events, as generations pass by and did not even notice. They are pumped right into your living room. Into your car. Earthquakes. Typhoons. Famines. Political crises. Cool wars. Personal tragedies.

1976-77 - Coldest winter } ought to
1977 - Hottest summer } say something to us -

Nor is the pace, nor is the turmult something in the (distant lands) of the earth. Think of the murder on Eastern Shore. Think of the tragedies that happen in our own city. And in our own surroundings. We are something like the rabbit in Alice and

Wonderland. We hasten here and there - make much tadoo about nothing. Day and night. Home has become a filling station. And I want to tell you the churches have not escaped the contagious disease of this age. We are in the process of leading programs, meetings, numbers so possess us today that we lose sight of the reason why the Gospel is preached.

In a little paperback, that was compiled by the Wall Street Journal Staff, entitled "Here Comes Tomorrow" In this little book, treatment of living and working in the year 2000 - at the rate we are going, that is not very far away. To those people who grew up during the Depression of 1930-35, that doesn't seem far away. But the year 2000 is closer to us than the Depression is behind us. There is something sad in that little book about the population explosion, food running out, computers answering questions. Energy crisis, air travel speed, space shuttles, automobiles ruining the environment. Cities out of hand. Homes, medicine, and even war.

Now a part of that thrills the whole being, and part of it sends fear right down to your heels. Because tomorrow is coming very rapidly. There is not anything much that you can do about that. The progress of the world is in motion. We are getting some of the shocks of the transition, the transit, the novelty, and the diversity of things today.

Yes, this whole world is in transit. We, you know if we describe our generation today, - we live in a throw away society. Things are being built are so obsolete and not the order of the day. We are just like nomads - transit. Many people in our world travel millions of miles today. Our forefathers just traveled probably only a few hundred miles in his whole lifetime.

One out of three people in my community moved last year. We are in a hurry to get to work, we are in a hurry to get to the long weekend, and the family is having troubles. And there are many possibilities and choices. We are rapidly moved.

I reminded you of the average man today taking pills like an animal - to put him to sleep, to get him awake in the morning, and in between times to keep him on schedule. We are certainly in tempestuous days in this world. Our literature deals with these things. And somehow, we are on to thrills today. We take stock at what is happening today. This is a tempestuous world in which we live. Everything that man claims for a foundation is at the point of crumbling. Even the mountains are toppling and the oceans sweep over hill and valley. And certain destruction and disaster are in the way.

There is dread all the way to the throne. And they need to find a solution.

Man who listened to Radio, A.M. & P.M. - Politics, Wars, Murder, Fire, Scandals, - Wondered how he could carry on & not break - Met Minister, Ask how do carry light on your path -

"I turn in A.M. & P.M." - man I do same but not result -

Perhaps we not use same Radio Minister said - Nonsense, man said diff style, shape, Radio - man mine shape & table - Minister mine shape & boots, carry pocket. "Let me see it" - " - N.I.T & Psalm "God is always speaking to man" Transcription of God's voice -

II. A TRANQUIL CITY

V. 4-7 - The next three or four verses bring to us a new picture - with suddenness, it startles us. There is confusion, disaster - and then here is a dramatic vision of peace and quiet.

And the Psalmist says, V. 4 - there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad. The city of God.

G. H. Marson, in The Wind, on the heath tells an interesting story. Beneath the streets of the ancient city of Shechem. Flowing rivers. During the busy hours

of the day you cannot hear them, above the noise of the narrow streets. But when evening comes and quietness settles upon the city, then quite clearly in the hush of the night you may hear the flowing music of the buried streams. There are many such voices in life. That can be heard only when life is still. And quiet.

Rev. 22:1 "showed me a pure River of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God - on either side of the river was tree of life"
You can not touch this stream at any point, but you will find God - find Healing!

The stream provides grace, healing life. It flows on calmly and silently through the storm.

The divine secret is now out - God is in the midst of his beloved city. He is the river of gladness. Quietly and gently, the streams of grace are poured into needy hearts. The night may be dark, but the dawn will break and the sunrise will come. Help is available, he says.

V. 5 - God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. God shall help her - and that right early.

When the morning appeareth, God helps her. The distress of the Lord's people can have only as it were in the night quarters. But when the morning breaks, then his help is coming. And behold, at evening time, there is trouble. For the morning comes, and it is no more. 17:14. Isa. 37:36.

Because the people of the Jerusalem city arose, and there lay all of the dead corps.

So the real key here to the triumphant city for God's people to note, that he is with them.

V. 6 - He uttered his voice, the earth melted.

This has reference to the power of God and his mighty doings. The very earth seemed to melt and dissolve before him. Everything became still. The danger passed away at his command and there was calm.

In the morning, 185,000 warriors lay dead. God had spoken and the Assyrians had been crushed. Jerusalem had been delivered.

So the refreshment from this city of God - the church, the streams, flow with divine grace. To full strength giving life.

III. TRIUMPHANT REFUGE

v. 7 V. 7 through the end of the chapter. We are invited to come behold the works of the Lord. What desolations they have made in the earth. He invited them to come and contemplate and survey what desolations that had been wrought upon the Assyrians by the angel of the Lord.

V. 9 - He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. Who can make wars cease - not man!

He breaketh the bow. Who can destroy the war instruments. He cutteth the sphere, he burneth the chariots, with fire.

Still these wild conquerors. Who could defeat them. Who could break their bow, who could cut their sphere. Why, the church couldn't do it. The people of God couldn't do it. They were unable to move. The danger of all of this has been taken away. And here is the day when they shall beat their swords into plowshares. Isa. 2:4, Micah 4:3.

The dooms of the Lord. I think we read here in these verses.

Something that ought to say a warning to the enemies of the church. You ought to behold God's mighty work.

Second, here is encouragement to the church. Look upon God's doings and upon His behalf. And see here what they sing with increased force and fervor. The host is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.

V. 10 - Instruction to all. Be still and know that I am God.

Here is some instructions. This means, the Hebrew verb translated - be still, means to relax. It is saying, this is the time to change your tempo. Now the modern life is go, go, go.

We go so much, that we miss this.

There is another word Sabbath which means rest. Because he knew the nature of man, God gave him one day out of seven to relax. Rest, in body, mind, and spirit.

There are very few, or a small number of people who use it in this way. When the work week is over we go, go, go. There is a disejockey in Oklahoma City who used to on Mondays, dedicate one record to the tired weekenders. And he called it tired blood.

So exhausted, that people return to their jobs depleted of bodily strength - foggy in mind - and exhausted in spirit. People are caught up in a rat race. But there is relaxation. It is an attitude of life, of mind.

A lot of people find it hard to do this. Like one woman who said I work hard - I work hard. And when I sit, I sit loose. Now there are few of us who need to catch the drift of this - to sit loose.

And when we do this, we practice what the Psalmist said be still. Be still and meditate how God is going to be exalted in the earth. And be still and know that I am God. This is really the way to worship when we come to church. We wait before God. Most of the time before the preacher comes in for the worship service, I know I read about a woman once who complained the organ prelude was so loud that she could not hear her neighbor in two or three pews behind her.

This Agony - brethren, we have come and met to worship. Will you pray with all of your power. While we try to preach the word. All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down. Brethren, pray and holy manna will be scattered all around.

Now this type of meditation with God, is great when we come to worship. But every man needs a quiet place where he can get alone with God. As I emphasized in Psalm 1 last week. Most of us do not like to be alone with ourselves or with God. We don't like to see what we are. We don't want to see the void in our lives. A lot of people can't be alone. They have to have the radio, T. V. If they can't do that, then they've got to get the telephone. And if that don't satisfy, then they say, I am going on a shopping spree. Anything to get away and escape the loneliness.

Now, if you have tried this as it has been suggested by some - that you get your Bible and turn to a favorite passage or some Scripture, and read a verse or two. And meditate upon it, and pray for God's spirit to speak to you. And it will help you. You'll be able to confess your sins. Another thing, you'll be able to place your problems before God. And reflect upon God's goodness and count your many blessings. And let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight - oh Lord my strength and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14.

The Psalmist said here - then be still, here is God among you and he is going to be exalted among you.

V. 11. The Lord of hosts is with us. And the God of Jacob is our refuge. Here is a triumphant refuge.

Where on earth could we find such a refuge as he closes this Psalm. We think about the deliverance of Jerusalem from the army of Sennacherid. And no one had helped them. The people were helplessly behind the wall of Jerusalem. Expecting to

be destroyed at any moment. Why, it was not Egypt that delivered them - but it was God. The Psalmist was so triumphant in his singing. The heathen raged, and the kingdoms were falling.

Now what was true in that day is true today. There are multitudes of people who need to hear, my friends, the river - that water - that stream mentioned in V. 4. Christ comes in every crisis. Let not your heart be troubled.

I read that Dr. Hobbs once said about the uduks of Sudan - translated this. "Don't shiver in your livers." But by whatever word you may translate it, it means, have faith in God. Let not your heart be troubled. Be still and know that I am God.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism died and it has been related that these were his last words. The Lord of host is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. What a blessing to leave behind. This is a triumphant refuge. Which will help you to live a triumphant life.

Now in conclusion, how can we apply this Psalm to our lives. First, there would be no doubt that you would agree that we live in a tempestuous world. *Troubled world*

You would also agree, that the tranquil city with the presence of God flowing in through this stream is very practical.

And lastly, the triumphant refuge *unfailable Refuge* - That we are living in some of the same

...of the same ... and from our hearts. But who will save us. The solution

is found in a consciousness that God is near, he is available, he is adequate.

He loves, and knows, and will do something about it.

What a difference it makes when the storms, the earth-quakes, the calamities, the disasters, the tragedies.

When we can say with Paul, we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

Christ alone can make us new creatures. Our lives are disconnected without him.

Farmers used to stack their hay around a stack pole. Before the days of bailing hay. And if you ever wondered what the stack pole would do - you should see some hay that is piled up and left without a stack pole. It will be scattered for a hundred yards. Jesus is a unifying force - he holds life together for us. God made it this way. He is our pattern.

Dr. James Sullivan said he was helping a carpenter. His job was to saw some boards the same size. He had a pattern to go by. But he decided the easiest thing to do was to saw one board by the pattern, and then use the new board for the next one, and so on. And you already know what happened. When he got through, the boards were not the same length. Because he had changed the pattern.

It is not old fashioned today young people - but it is very contemporary for us to ask the question what would Jesus do about things. In every crisis today, we need to keep our cool. Keep our emotions. Keep our perspective centered on Christ. We need to have the Christian spirit to recognize the important things. If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Christ needs to be the center of your life, and God can be your refuge.

I heard Dodson Nelson tell about when he was a boy growing up in a small town. The telephone - you first had to ring a bell, and then you lifted the receiver. Mrs. Johns was the central operator. She would say number please. He said, I never gave any number in my life. I'd say, I want to talk to Charles Patterson. Likely as not, she would say Charles went to Jackson today, he'll be home about 4 o'clock this afternoon. Every message in that little town went through that central operator. Now until you and I get to the place where we put Jesus Christ in the central office, and we get to the place where we can say, what would Jesus do if he were here. What solution would he offer to this problem or this crisis.

The answer is found in our Psalm - God is our refuge and our strength. Be still and know that I am God. So then you and I, in this time of crisis, must somehow quiet our racing, racing souls. Because our strength is going to come from above and our refuge is going to be in Him. And the Holy Spirit can give to anyone who trusts him to live the victorious life. The triumphant refuge.

You are never going to be defeated.

This is a life-giving fountain of God's presence. Psalm 36:9, Isa. 32:2, Jer. 2:13, 17:13. The waters roar - and that is bad and you can't help it! The nation's rage and there is trouble all around in the world. And it ought to be helped. The kingdoms are tottering. And we need a tranquil city. That will be triumphant in the end. And the Psalmist offers it to us.

Vivian Forbes - infallible Refuge -
Goodbye - I love the people in the church -
 " appreciate all your help -
Voice - Whisper - Talking - Talked of heavenly vision of saints long dead -
Reaching out hands to welcome her -

R. E. Payson's - joyful exultances - Triumphant March -

The Battle fought -
 " victory in war
 " " is won forever -
called under conquest in -