

## Midweek Message

Last Sunday God provided a way for all of us to Worship together online and it appears we may be in this mode for a few weeks as our Federal and State governments call for a period of social distancing. It still feels a little unreal that in our modern day and age something like this could happen in our nation! However, as we face a new reality, I would like to take a few minutes to encourage you again from Psalm 46.

You've heard that one of the best ways to stop the spread of this virus, is to wash your hands frequently, and for 30 seconds. My son called to check on me and said he was having his children sing Happy Birthday to make sure they washed long enough. I would like to encourage you to write or print out and tape next to the sink Psalm 46:1-7 and recite it as you wash your hands. This will take about 30 seconds, and it can help refocus your mind on God during this difficult time.

<sup>1</sup> "God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.  
<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.  
<sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.  
<sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.  
<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Now, here's some further thoughts from this wonderful Psalm so that we can experience God's peace in the midst of this current crisis.

**1.** Be mindful of our Almighty God. In verse one the Psalmist encourages us with these words: *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*

I was watching the news today and heard that there was a dramatic increase in sales of guns and ammunition. It seems that many are trying to protect themselves, but as Christians, we know that we have an amazing God that will be our refuge and strength, a God who never abandons us but who will provide for us and protect us in the days ahead.

**2.** Don't give in to fear. In verse 2 he writes: *"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."*

Yesterday, I saw this picture of a man that was so afraid of coming in contact with other people, that he made a 6' inner tube and attached it to his body, so no one could get close to him while he was out walking on the sidewalk.

Fear can make us do a lot of things, but the problem with giving into fear is that it can control us and the decisions we make. Fear is an emotion and part of our human experience. It should bring concern to us, especially in this time of uncertainty but it must never be allowed to manipulate us.

3. Look to the Lord for Encouragement. Notice verses 4 and 5. *“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.”*

I've heard reports of people being so afraid and worried that they have bought a lifetime supply of toilet paper and hand sanitizer. There was a report of one family that was ordering a package of 48 rolls but accidentally ordered 48 packages. That's 2,304 rolls of toilet paper. At least it has a long shelf life.

We do need to continue on with life and we certainly should take proper steps for our own well-being. However, this isn't a time to panic but is a time to look to the Lord, knowing that our God is the source of our help and that He's only a prayer away.

4. Remember God is with us. In verses 6 and 7 the Psalmist reminds us: *“Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”*

With the suggested social distancing, many people are feeling lonely and afraid. This is a wonderful time to reach out to those in our congregation through phone calls, texts, and emails. Sometimes it's through our own Christian family that God Himself comes to those around us when we take the initiative to check in on each other.

We're not to react as the world around us reacts. Instead we should remember that we're never alone as Christians, because our God is with us. He loves us so much, as we've seen through the cross of Jesus, that He will never ever leave us to fend for ourselves.

I want you to know that all of you are in our thoughts and prayers. The officers and Pastors are here for you. If you are struggling, and have needs, please reach out to us. We'll do what we can to assist you. We are praying for you that you will remember that *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”*

***Pastor Mark***