

God is Our Help

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[0:00] The book of Psalms and Psalm 46. God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way, and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, and the mountains quake with their surging.

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. 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. Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations He has brought on the earth. He makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear.

He burns the shields with fire. Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.

[1:06] The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. On 9-11-2001, we were told that the world itself as we knew it had changed.

And the bubble in which many of us had lived and presumed that we were safe was popped. And we came to realize that we can't protect ourselves. That we are in danger.

And we now live with that ever-present danger of Muslim terrorists who want to destroy our nation. And we're told that terrorist cells are well organized within our own nation.

And though many plots have been uncovered and thwarted in the mercy of God, yet there is much more activity. And we're seeing individuals such as at Fort Hood acting on their own even.

And then that was November. And then in December, and Christmas Day up at Detroit, the airport there, we talked to a fellow that was four seats ahead of that.

[2:13] Man that tried to blow up the plane there. These things cause fear when traveling, when in public places. What new terror will the new year bring?

We face an increasing threat of nuclear disasters. What will happen when weapons of mass destruction of the nuclear type fall into the hands of rogue nations that have no regard for life? It used to be that just the presence of our nuclear armament would be a deterrent to anyone thinking about firing one our way.

We're going to have a thousand more coming back at you. But that holds no weight with people that are willing to die for their cause. And willing to give up masses of humanity on their side just to end the process of taking us out.

The balance of powers in our world is changing. The present economic collapse is changing our world. Changing our lives.

[3:22] Some of you here have been affected dramatically by that. So retirement accounts and the seniors who live upon such have been affected and your jobs and reduced income.

And when people get desperate, they do desperate things. And we've not yet seen what desperate things people might do in our nation. Changes in government are happening at a frightening speed. for the first time ever. Our public tax monies, it looks like, are going to be used for abortion. The very kind of nation that we have is changing and how it operates and what it does with the Constitution and the powers that are being taken by President, Congress, and the Supreme Court. Changes in our laws. What will the new America look like? Where will it all stop? Health concerns. I recently saw a documentary in 1918 of 50 million people that were killed by the influenza. 50 million, only 18 million died in World War I. But 50 million died from the flu. Could there be other diseases on the horizon that we will not be able to handle?

[4:48] And then there's the sad state of the church in the West, especially, selling out to the world and compromising and all those enemies of the church. Unbelief and false religion.

And it seems that even our own government becomes more anti the church of Jesus Christ. Will these and other questions press in upon us if we're watching the news and if we don't have our heads in the sand?

And they can cause us to be troubled and fearful as we face the uncertainties of this coming new year. Well, God is not unconcerned about how we respond to these troubles.

He's watching us. What will they do in these troubles that are coming upon them? And the answer is not to stick our head in the sand and pretend it's not happening.

It's not to belittle or deny the problems. And it's not to be the eternal optimist just because things always get better, you know. No.

[5:56] Psalm 46 gives us a better way to deal with frightening uncertainties. And it is to face our troubles. We can look them square in the eye, but to face them with faith in our God.

Spurgeon says Psalm 46 is a song to sing in troublesome times. And God's people have returned to this song over and over and over again.

In the midst of some of the hardest days of the Protestant Reformation when Rome seemed to be ready to stamp out the Protestant reform.

Martin Luther would say to Philip Melancthon, come Philip, let's sing the 46th. It was to this song that they looked in the time of their trouble.

And so let's look to it together this morning as we face troublesome times. May God himself renew our confidence in him that will shatter our fears and bring him glory.

[6:57] Now the song is an easy one to divide because God divides it for us into three stanzas. And at the end there's a *selah* at the end of each stanza that causes us to pause and to meditate upon what we have just sung.

So stanza number one I've entitled What God is for us in trouble. Verses one to three. What God is for us in trouble. God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble.

Now the Bible nowhere acts as if our troubles are not real. They call us to face them head on. Even massive troubles as are envisioned in this chapter.

Indeed right at the beginning of this psalm we're talking about an earthquake here. He speaks of the earth giving way the mountains falling into the heart of the seas and the waters roaring and foaming and mountains quaking with their surging.

These are calamities of the created order. These are disturbing upheavals of nature itself that are frightening just to think about.

[8:15] But it's also poetic language of the psalms that speaks of things in our own lives that have been as stable as the ancient mountains.

things that are as solid and unmovable as the earth. At least they have been that way to us but now they're giving way. Now the ground's moving beneath our feet.

And so I say I think we're right to think of what has been economic prosperity and suddenly the mountains shaking. or our job security or our safety or our health.

And now these things that we've enjoyed for so long are being threatened and even our stable government and freedoms that we enjoy.

Life as we have known it suddenly interrupted and massive changes being brought to the landscape of our lives. That's what's envisioned here. Nations are here and elsewhere symbolized by the turbulent sea ever churning and roaring and foaming in their warfare and strife.

[9:30] They're grabbing and grasping. And what we find is long established kingdoms are falling. As nations are in uproar some kingdoms are falling.

Some nations that have been well established are no longer there. The earth itself is melting and desolations are seen everywhere. Now these are no small problems.

No small troubles. It's the very worst case scenario that's being envisioned because if you can face the worst scenario then you can face all lesser ones. And yet though all of this is happening through trouble on every side the psalmist declares with such confidence in verse 2 therefore we will not fear.

though this is happening we will not fear. Now we need to be established on who the we is. Who is this we will not fear?

Well it's certainly not the United States of America. God's purposes do not rise and fall with this nation. We could be one of those nations that it speaks of that are falling.
[10 : 40] no the we here is the people of God. As we'll see as the psalm unfolds it's the city of God. We got the city of the world and the city of God.

He's talking about the people of God. The redeemed holy people of God. We're able to say of the one true and living God you are our God.

This God who dwells in the midst of his people it's talking about his people with whom he dwells. So it's not referring to all mankind.

It's not that all mankind can look at troubles and say we won't fear. No it's only those who by a saving relationship to God through Jesus Christ belong to him and can say you're mine.

You are our God our refuge our strength our help. And that's why we will not fear. Because of who you are. It's not because that we're tough and have always recovered from these sorts of things.

[11 : 47] It's not because our troubles are small or insignificant. It's not because our armies are well equipped or our neighborhoods well policed. It's because of what God himself is for us.

You see it? God is. Therefore we will not fear. It's because of who God is. Period.

that we have reason to refuse fear. Now the natural response in trouble is to be afraid. The supernatural response in trouble is to not fear but to be confident.

And that's what we see here. In the greatest of troubles, faith looks to our God and so refuses to be afraid.

afraid. Now it's not some vague faith. Oh I have faith in God. And that won't enable you to look at troubles such as we're facing and say I'm not going to be afraid. No it's a faith with specific content.

[12 : 48] faith. It's a faith in what God is and what he is for us, his people.

Well what is he? Well God is our refuge. He's our safe hiding place. When there's trouble we can run and find a safe place in our God.

God. That's what the wise man says in Proverbs 18. 10. The name of the Lord which is who he is. The Lord himself is a strong tower. The righteous run into him and are safe.

Dear brothers and sisters, how many times in this past year when trouble has shaken your world have you run into God and found that safety and that security, that place where all is well because my sovereign God is on the throne.

He's my refuge. He's our refuge. He's our strength. Now he's all these things to us in trouble. We shouldn't think about these in isolation.

[13 : 57] He's our strength in trouble. And don't troubles have a way of making you feel your weakness? Your insufficiency? You're in that you don't have what it takes.

Isn't that what makes us afraid? We're up against something that we can't handle ourselves. And so we're worried about it. Paul says these things that happened to him, he says they were far beyond our ability to endure.

Oh, but this happened that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead. How's that for strength? There's a dead man.

God raises him to life. God's love. So we won't fear with that God being our strength. And he's our ever-present help in trouble.

Troubles are never far away from us in this fallen world. So what comfort is it to know that our God is an ever-present help in trouble? God is an ever-present help in trouble.

[15 : 13] when you are in trouble. How quickly does the ambulance get to you once you've dialed 911?

Well, God is an ever-present help in trouble. So that means he's already there when the troubles arrive. He's already there. He's ever-present, always with us, in all that he is for all that we need. His wisdom, his power, his faithfulness, his love, it's all already on the premises, already there, on sight, when the troubles arrive.

And that's the answer to our fears and trouble. Faith does not fix upon the troubles. Yes, it looks them square in the eye, but then it looks at our God and fixes on him and who he is for us, our refuge, strength, and ever-present help.

So, the author of this psalm is teaching us, God is teaching us, that faith refuses to look at our troubles without seeing God in the picture.

[16 : 25] Faith sees him. Faith plants him in the center, front and center, on whatever's happening on the stage of your life and world. It always sees it with God at the middle.

So, you're talking about the economy. Well, my father, he owns the cattle on a thousand hills. And he has promised to meet all my needs according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus. And he told me not to lay up treasures on earth anyway, where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal, but to lay up treasures in heaven where none of that happens. Or you want to talk then about the warring nations and the governments of the world. Well, my God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth and the people are like grasshoppers. Indeed, before him all the nations of the world are as nothing. They are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. And as for the king who may be threatening this or that, well, his heart is in the hand of my God.

[17 : 32] And just like a river course, he directs it wherever he pleases. You want to talk about terrorists, do you? Well, they draw their next breath from my God.

If he doesn't give it, they won't take it. And on that very day, their spirit will depart and they will return to the ground. And on that very day, their plans come to nothing. Therefore, I will not fear. Is it health concerns that we're speaking of? Well, my body has been fearfully and wonderfully made by my God and he by his powerful word sustains it. And he says, go and sickness must leave and he says, come and health returns. Are we talking about mountains falling? Oh, he weighs the mountains on the scales. They're little things compared to my God. Talking about the earth giving way.

[18 : 37] He weighs the dust of the earth. faith in the scales. Talking about the waters roaring and foaming. He measures the waters in the hollow of his hands.

So I will not fear. In other words, we don't think about anything without seeing it in relation to God. And that's what faith does.

That's the problem. That's the the work of faith to connect your troubles to your God. Your troubles are real and so is your God. So always see him and see him for what he is and is to you. A refuge, a strength and ever present help in trouble. Now, that means the better we know God, the more we'll be able to stare down troubles without fear.

The better you know this God when he when you think of him in light of your trouble. How well do you know him? Well, that will determine how much you will be able to say with confidence, I will not fear in this situation.

[19 : 50] So how will you do in this coming year? Will you come to know him better than you know him now? How will you do that? Oh, spend much time with him. This book will tell you and teach your hearts about this great God that is yours in Jesus Christ.

Memorize portions of it, meditate on it, and then spend much time talking to this God and adoring him and praising him for who he is so that when your troubles come, it's not just God, three letters that carry no weight with them, but it's this God that I've been reading about, this God that I've been speaking to.

And therefore, we can say, I will not fear, though the earth give way. So it's a call to know our God better in this coming year as we face troublesome times to do those things that we need to do. What are you doing today to prepare you for tomorrow's troubles? What are you doing every day to keep God front and centered, living a God-saturated life so that you don't see anything without him in view?

Well, that's the first stanza, Selah, pause and consider all that God is for you who are his people. The second stanza brings a change of scenes, and I'm entitling this stanza, What the City of God Enjoys in Troubles.

[21 : 18] Well, there's trouble at hand. We're taken inside a walled city. All right, let's just assume that we're inside the city and the city is walled around.

But the city's under siege. That means our enemies have so surrounded that they've cut off all transportation, all communication going out and into the city.

Now, the great fear in such a situation in these days in which the psalmist writes was that the water supply to the city would be cut off by a siege. No city can last long without water.

And so to have the supply of water cut off to the city would mean ultimate defeat and loss. And yet, the mood inside of this besieged city is not one of fear, but one of gladness.

we're not left to to guess why that is. Notice verse four. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the most high dwells.

[22:30] Here's the reason for their gladness. There's a river flowing within the city that has its source inside the city walls. You find that river portrayed in Ezekiel 47 and it's flowing where?

From the holy place. And wherever the river flows, everything will live. You bump into this river again in Revelation 22 at the end of the Bible.

The river of the water of life. There it is. John sees it in vision. The river of the water of life. It's clear as crystal flowing where? From the throne of God and of the lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.

The city of God. Here's this city of God. And here's this river flowing from within it, from right within it, the throne of God who dwells with his people.

Now, what's the encouragement of this for us? Well, people of God, you are the city of God. You comprise the city of God already in the Old Testament. Jerusalem or Zion was symbolic of the people of God.

[23:36] That becomes even more clear when we turn to Hebrews 11 and 12 and Revelation 21 and 22. Zion is the people of God. And we have enemies that surround us and want to harm us.

And yes, the harm that would come to us as a nation, it also comes to us. And then there is that harm that would come to us specifically because we are the city of God, the people. That are hated by the haters of God.

But we know gladness instead of fear because God himself is a river of life within. So he's ever delivering to us that never failing supply of grace, that working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, in our hearts.

Everything we need in trouble, it flows to us from the fountain God. You see, it's another picture of what he's already said in verse one, that God is an ever present help. He's on the scene.

He's inside the besieged city. Are you besieged? God's besieged with you. He is so identified himself with his people. You are the city of God in which the most high dwells.

[24:48] God is so satisfied. And so from his fullness of grace have all we received in grace upon grace.

You give us drink to drink from your river of delights. And therefore, we are glad because nothing can cut off this supply of God's grace to us in our troubles.

We're glad because of God's own presence. This is we're in this city besieged, may it be, but it's where the most high dwells. God is within her, the text says.

And that's enough to fill any people with joy. Buckingham Palace is the Queen's official residence in London, and her royal flag is flown from the top of Buckingham Palace when she's in residence.

And so if you ever visit London and you go to Buckingham Palace and you look up and you're looking for the Queen's standard, her flag, if it's present, you know the Queen's present. If it's not, then she's in a different palace.

[25:54] Someone has said, joy is the flag flown in the citadel of the heart when the King is in residence. That's why these people are glad. The King's there. He's in residence.

Yes, we're besieged, but the King's with us on the inside. And so nothing can stop the flow of his grace to us. In his presence, his fullness of joy.

And that's true in good times and in bad, but especially in trouble sometimes. He's with us. And that is the assurance of victory, you see.

He is with us. The one inside with us is here called the most high. That means there's no one higher than him. So if the most high is with us, can man triumph over God?

And it's great comfort to our hearts to have him inside. If he's for us, who can be against us? And so the text says, therefore, she will not fall.

[27:02] You see that verse five? God is within her. She will not fall. She can no more fall than God can be toppled from his most high throne.

He is so identified with his people, united with us in us. So mountains may fall. Kingdoms may fall, but the city of God will never, never fall.

Rather, God will help her at break of day. In the nick of time, just when it's needed, he will arrive for your help.

One of the greatest deliverances in the Old Testament was at the Red Sea. And it was at the break of day that the Israelites received their greatest deliverance throughout the night.

You remember they passed through the Red Sea and the Egyptian army pursuing them. But at daybreak, the sea went back to its place. Now, that's a friendly phrase, but you know what that

means.

[28 : 12] The sea went back to its place. Well, the Israelites were already on shore, but the Egyptian army was still in between. And the sea went back to its place. And the Lord swept the Egyptians into the sea of the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea.

Not one of them survived. So though it may seem long, God's help, long and tearing and waiting at the crucial point, he will come to his people.

At the break of day. He will help her. And that causes gladness within. Now, people of God, do you see yourself that way?

Do you see yourself in your troubles as besieged with God inside with you? You're in a stormy sea at night, but Jesus is in the boat with you. It can't go down.

He's in the city with you. He's in your trouble with you. And nothing can cut off the supply of all that we need in him. So see yourself in this fortress, this safe place.

[29 : 21] You see, the imagery just keeps running back to verse one. God is our fortress, our refuge, our safety. See yourself in him. Where nothing can separate you from him.

This is the cause of gladness within. Now, the tone outside of the city is anything but gladness.

There it's all noisy and loud. God, verse six is one of the most concise verses in the Bible.

Look at the economy of words here. Nations are in uproar. Kingdoms fall. He lifts his voice. The earth melts.

Yes, the nations are making a lot of noise outside, threatening the people of God. But they're still to peace. And all it takes is a word from our God.

He lifts his voice. The same voice that was lifted and the earth came into being out of nothing.

Psalms 33, 9. For he spoke and it came to be.

[30 : 28] He commanded and it stood firm. But here, when he speaks, his voice is as decisive in undoing the earth as it was in creating it. He speaks.

And the earth melts. Other kingdoms may fall, but not his kingdom. Just a word from our captain and proud armies are annihilated.

And that leads us into the refrain of two lines sung here and repeated at the end of the last stanza.

And it returns us to the realities of verse one, our refuge, strength and help.

And it reminds us why we will not fear whatever's happening to us. Here's the chorus. Here's the refrain. The Lord Almighty is with us. He's with us.

Who? The Lord Almighty. The Lord of all might. The Lord of hosts. The Lord of the armies of heaven and earth. The Most High over all the armies.

[31 : 34] All the angelic armies. He's with us. And the God of Jacob is our fortress. Why should that be a comfort to us?

Well, there's Jacob and he's walking all alone. And it's dark. He lays down for the night to rest. All he can find is a stone for his pillow.

He's running away from his brother Esau who wants his life. Is that him that he hears in the shadows of the night? Or is it a wild animal? He's in danger.

In fact, he's on a 500 mile journey to his mother's family through a wasting, howling wilderness with bandits and wild animals.

He's afraid. And that night, the Lord appears to him in a vision. He sees these, this ladder, this stairway. Kids, it must have been a long one because it reached from the earth to the heavens.

[32 : 39] And running up and down on the ladder are angels. And at the top is God Almighty. And they come to him and they receive their orders and they fly down the ladder to earth and they perform what he sends them on and back they come.

There's this communication between heaven and earth. God's army of angels responding to him. And in that vision, the Lord has a word for Jacob.

I am with you. Haven't we just heard that? I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land.

What a comfort as he's heading out on this journey not knowing what's ahead of him. God is with me. He will prosper me and bless me wherever I go and will bring me back into this land.

So we fast forward 20 years and here comes the same Jacob and he comes to the Jordan River and it strikes him as he's ready to cross over the Jordan how he came to that river the first time.

[33 : 49] He said, I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan. But now I have become two groups and I am not worthy of the least of your mercies or your truth.

But you see, God blessed him. God was with him and protected him and brought him back into the land just as he had promised. Now, here's the chorus that we ought to be singing often in our troubles.

The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. We sang already God is our refuge. He's our safe hiding place, our fortress.

Here we sing the God of Jacob is our fortress. All that he was to Jacob he is to you children of God. So we take great comfort in our trials and say, therefore, we will not fear.

Happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his help. And then we come to the last stanza. And I've entitled this what we are to do in trouble.

[34 : 59] What are we to do in trouble? There's two words, two exhortations here. What we are supposed to do now. Now, now listen up, he's saying, in light of what's just been said, there's two things you need to do.

Number one, come and see. Number two, be still and know. All right. First of all, come and see. There's a word for us. I believe these words apply as much to the unbelieving, warring nations as they do the children of God who belong to God.

There's a word to the unconverted and a word to the converted and they both need to come and see, first of all. Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. Verse eight says, that's what we're to do in trouble. We're to come and see. God's works of deliverance for his people are not to be forgotten. It's in seeing God's past works of deliverance that we will gain confidence to say, therefore, we don't need to be afraid of this trouble in our lives and we're the poor for forgetting them.

So come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations, the destructive works of God. Come and see them with me. And so we go back to that Red Sea.

[36 : 20] And we remember how it opened up and the Israelites ran in, but the Egyptian forces ran in after them. Oh no, here is a trouble. Here's cause for fear.

We'll come and see. And he takes us to the far side of the Red Sea. And there we see the bloated carcasses of the Egyptian army floating up on shore as the waves wash them in and out.

come and see. Come to Jerusalem, the city of God. When she's surrounded by the Assyrians and that great Sennacherib boasting, no other nation has been able to withstand our armies.

Don't think you'll be able to stand before us, Jerusalem. No other God has saved their people, his people, from our hand. And those inside were trembling with fear, but Hezekiah prays and then were invited to come and see.

Because during the night, just one angel of the Lord went out and slew 185,000 of them. And in the morning, there were all the dead bodies. And the Assyrians packed it up and went home.

[37 : 37] Come and see. Come and see great Sihon and Og, those kings of the Canaanites. Where are they? Oh, where are kings and empires now of old that went and came?

But Lord, thy church is praying yet a thousand years the same. You see, they've come and they've gone. But God's city keeps on praying.

Well, come and see. Come and see when all the people of God were in a tremendous predicament. Indeed, their greatest predicament. They were captives of sin, slaves of the devil, and about to receive what they deserve because of it.

Eternal damnation. And come and see. Let me lead you outside of Jerusalem to a cross where God Himself, Emmanuel, God with us, identifying with His people, takes all of our sins on Himself and goes to the cross and suffers its punishment and triumphs over Satan and sin and hell.

And is raised from the dead in glorious victory and is coming again. And when He comes again, John invites us to come and see by way of vision what will happen.

[39 : 10] Come and see, John says in Revelation 20. See what I saw in vision. Great enemies of God's people gathering together like the sand of the seashore, deceived by Satan.

the nations of the world warring against God's people. It's quite a scene enough to terrify you if you just read verse 9 of Revelation 20.

But come and see. See what I saw happen next. Because they marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city He loves.

Sound familiar? But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. Because God is within her. She will not fall.

God will help her at break of day. He speaks and the earth melts and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

[40 : 12] Because the heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements will be destroyed by fire and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare and the elements will melt in the heat.

This is our God. This is our refuge. This is the one with us fighting for us. And He makes war cease to the ends of the earth.

Verse 9. Not by some agreement reached at a bargaining table but by force. The outcome is universal peace.

But the method is judgment. The method is fire. He breaks the bow.

He shatters the spear. He burns the shields with fire completely destroying the weapons of war. fire. For He rules the nations with an iron scepter.

[41 : 15] He dashes them to pieces like a potter's vessel. And every enemy in that day will lick the dust crushed beneath his feet.

And dear people of God, this is the one who is with us and who fights our battles for us. Come and see. That's the first word in our troubles.

Never forget this great God of deliverance and what He's done for His people and will do for them. But the second word is be still and know. Be still and know.

Again, as much for the unbelieving nations as well as an application for His people. Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations.

I will be exalted on the earth. first, let's see its application to the warring nations of unbelievers. It's the same word that Jesus spoke to the wind and the waves.

[42 : 15] Remember? Quiet. Hush up. Be still. And now the warring nations. We're fighting against God's people.

a word. Be still. You be quiet. You're acting like you're God and you are not God.

Be still and know that I am God. That's what the nations need to know. God is God and I will be exalted among the nations.

Not you, not your dinky kingdom. I will be magnified. on the earth. I will. I will. Do you hear something of determination in God's voice?

I will do this. I will. I will be exalted. Folks, that's our comfort. It's the dread fear for all the enemies of the Lord because he will be exalted in his victory over them.

[43 : 18] But it is our comfort that he is determined to be exalted by saving us from all of his and our enemies. 75 times in the book of Ezekiel.

I just read through it recently in my devotional reading and I just kept bumping into this statement. Then you will know that I am the Lord. Or then they will know that I am the Lord.

Something like that. One or the other. 75 times. Does that tell you something about our God? He wants people to know that he is the Lord. who he is.

The world doesn't have a clue. And half the time his people, we live in a fog as to who he is. And so he says, I'm going to act in great judgment and those people will learn that I am the Lord.

Or I am going to act in such astounding mercy. And then they will know who I am, the Lord. God.

And that's the God who is with us, who says to the nations, to every unbeliever, you be still.

[44 : 28] You're not God. I am and I will be exalted. Even if it be over. Your destruction. So unbelievers right now, stop your rebellion.

That's the word in this passage to you. Stop it. Be still. Silence all this talk about me and my surrender. There's still mercy to be found with the Lord.

Acknowledge me, he's saying, as God. Acknowledge me as Savior. Acknowledge me as Lord. Bow to me. Serve me. Trust me. Love me. Why will you die?

Why will you not turn and live? These are the questions this God of might and power puts to you.

Why would you choose death? I would rather that you turn and live.

But the same word here is for believers, dear people of God, all stirred up and worrying and fretting about the troubles coming into our life and world. Though it be the worst of troubles, earth-shaking troubles, world-changing troubles, earth-melting troubles, you too need to be still.

[45 : 40] Just be still. Shut your mouth. Shut your fretting worries down. Be still and know that I am God. I'm your refuge.

I'm your strength. I am your ever-present help. You're safe in my hands. I'm your fortress and I'm determined to get glory on the earth by saving you.

My name's attached to you. I'm in the boat with you. I'm in the city with you. And I will not let my glory be given to another.

You're safe, child of God. And so who God is should silence the noisy raging of his enemies, but also the noisome fears of his friends.

isn't it the same problem? The world's lack of a fear of God and the people of God's fear of troubles all stem from the same root. We need to know God.

[46:51] We need to know him better. That's the reason the world doesn't fear him. That's the reason the world rages and carries on like they do because they haven't been still and known who he is.

And very often it's the reason why we are so troubled and worried because we haven't just been still to know who he is. And so verse 11 repeats the refrain, the Lord Almighty, he's the one with us.

The God of Jacob is our fortress, so I will not fear. It's repeated. Not all repetition is vain repetition.

This is worth singing again. We forget it to our own harm. So take up the chorus again and sing it again. The Lord Almighty, that's the one with me. The God of Jacob, he's the fortress around me.

It's truth to remember, truth to rejoice in, truth to live upon, and it sends fears packing. Therefore, we will not fear. Alexander the Great had a great general.

[48:01] and he was called Antigonus Cyclops because he lost one eye. But he was a great general, and after Alexander died, he became a powerful king.

But it was when he was a general under Alexander that one day he overheard his soldiers all huddled together, counting how many enemies were fighting against them.

and he saw fear in their eyes. And so he stepped in, right into the midst, and he asked them this, and how many do you count me for?

Is it not that because we value God so little that we fear our troubles so much? what do you count me for?

He's saying to us as we step into the new year, and we're trembling perhaps. What do I count for, child? We see the nail prints in his hands, and we see what he's done for us, and how he's appeared for our deliverance, and he says to us, what do I count for?

[49:31] Well, if he is for us, it doesn't matter who's against us. Let's glorify him this year by confidently facing our trials, our troubles, and doing so, declaring to our hearts and others that God is the one who makes the difference.

Thank you.