

I. Psalm 46; Sunday, October 19, 2014 (Sunnyslope)

Psalm 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be
pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

- A. "Good morning, church!"
- B. Lots of prayer chain: Struggles and suffering
- C. Pray chain = rush to God with our
struggles/suffering = good
 - 1. Alternative = progression away from God
 - 2. Suffering → worry/fear of unending or greater
suffering → no force to stand against this →
disillusionment (perpetual separation from
God)
 - 3. There is no "middle ground"
- D. Scripture contains solution pattern: Focus on God;
rush to God = comfort because of confidence we can
have in God (because He is the Almighty)
- E. Careful look into Psalm 46
- F. 3 parts/sections to the psalm
 - 1. 1-3 = We have nothing to fear because God is
with us. (Challenges to our confidence can be
brushed aside.)
 - 2. 4-7 The Lord enthroned in Jerusalem. (The
secret of why we have confidence.)
 - 3. 8-11 Peace on Earth and worldwide domination.
(The vindication of confidence.)

II. Challenges to our confidence can be brushed aside

Psalm 46:1-3

¹God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

- A. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble
 - 1. He is also abundantly available for help
 - 2. We are blessed when we realize our safety and protection lie not in riches or armies but in the Almighty alone
- B. Imagine the worst that can happen
 - 1. Suppose the Earth itself should melt from a storm of cosmic rays
 - 2. Or a gigantic asteroid hits us
 - 3. Or an earthquake strikes that's so large it tears up mountains and causes them to fall into the sea
- C. Or imagine that the mountains are symbolic of countries
 - 1. Imagine the very foundations of society and the world economy collapsing, crumbling
 - 2. Imagine nations all over the world churning with political, economic, and social confusion and trouble
- D. But we have no reason to fear
 - 1. The worst that can happen is no cause for fear
 - 2. Because God Himself is with us
 - 3. And God is Sovereign

- E. Being that God is the Almighty, and being that He is Sovereign, and being that we care for the salvation of our souls and care not for our physical bodies..
- F. ...what possible calamity on earth should we be fearful of? (Whether that calamity be overwhelmingly large or infinitesimally small)

III. The secret of why we have confidence

Psalm 46:4-7

⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

⁵God is within her, she will not fall;

God will help her at break of day.

⁶Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

⁷The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

- A. From verse 4, there is a river: God Himself is the river whose streams will make glad the city of God
 - 1. How can we know this; well, in reality, the city of Jerusalem has no river
 - 2. But everything that a river is to an ordinary city, God is to Jerusalem
 - 3. God is the fountain of life and refreshment, the river of mercy and goodness
- B. It is because of God being enthroned in Jerusalem that the city will never be moved
 - 1. God will help her
 - 2. Think of Jerusalem as a symbol of God's church, the people who are part of God's church
 - 3. God is the church's river of life
 - 4. And God will never let His church be permanently harmed

- C. There may be crazy things we hear on the TV news
1. There may be a seemingly unending series of problems in our lives or the lives of those we love
 2. But ultimately, these things exist only to try to distract us away from rushing to God
 3. We have powerful reason to always rush to God
 4. Because we know God is Sovereign; and He will never abandon His church

IV. The vindication of confidence

Psalm 46:8-11

⁸Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

¹¹The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

- A. This section is a bit difficult for our Western minds to grasp because we have been raised to see and think of the world in terms of a series of ordered events on a timeline
1. We have a very hard structure for understanding time and events
 2. Things happen only one event at a time in a series; where there is always a past, a present, and a future
- B. But much of the ancient Middle Eastern societies and cultures understood time as more mixed; things that took place in the past and things that will take place in the future often interacted, they mixed together

1. So here in Psalm 46, David writes from verse 8 onward about the ultimate conclusion on Earth, the end of days, when Christ returns in glory
 2. But David writes it here as though it has already happened or is in the process of happening
 3. Because from David's point of view, the process of the second coming was happening (it's just an extremely long process)
- C. Starting in verse 8, the King is seated on His throne in Jerusalem
1. We are invited to go out and examine the field of His victory
 2. Everywhere we look, we see the wreckage of His defeated foes (which are sin and Satan)
 3. There are no more wars
 4. There are no more conflicts
 5. There is only peace
- D. The last two verses in Psalm 46 are what I believe we should constantly remind ourselves of when we face struggle, doubt, or suffering
1. "Be still and know that I am God"
 2. God is Sovereign
 3. He is the Lord Almighty
 4. And He is with us
- V. This week we've heard a number of prayer chain requests; and it's fitting and proper that we use the prayer chain robustly as a call to prayer
- A. But we need to be on guard, aware that when the prayer chain heats up with activity, we might be tempted to waver in our confidence

- B. That when struggle after struggle arrives, we may allow ourselves to get distracted from our rush to God
- C. When we are distracted, this is what begins the pattern toward disillusionment
 - 1. Suffering → worry/fear of unending or greater suffering → no force to stand against this → disillusionment (perpetual separation from God)
- D. Remember: There is no "middle ground"; either we are rushing to God in prayer, or we are on a pathway that leads toward disillusionment
- E. The only way to break this pattern, this pathway, is to rush to God, to remember (as David wrote) that: The God of Jacob is our fortress
- F. Amen