

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Unshakeable Trust

INTRODUCTION

All throughout history God's people have had their share of trials and tribulations. What does it look like to express radical trust in the face of overwhelming opposition? Rather than being unsettled by these things, the people of God have been rooted in their confidence in God's character. Every trial we face in life is a test of our faith – it asks the question, Who are we going to trust? That is the message of Psalm 46.

This Psalm is not a promise that life will be problem-free but that God will be with you in the midst of your problems. The presence of God will sustain you even when you walk through the darkest valleys. Psalm 46 uses metaphors to teach us why we can have unshakeable trust in God.

God as Refuge

The reason we can be unshakeable is not that we are strong on our own but because we have God as our mighty fortress. His presence is our defense. The Psalmist is unafraid even though "the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea" (Psalm 46:2). While mountains symbolize permanence and stability, the foaming sea stands for the exact opposite. It is a metaphor in the Bible for chaos. Even in the midst of the chaos, the God who holds the entire universe in the palm of His hand is the same God who is our refuge, strength, and impenetrable mountain defense.

God as Life-Giving Water

Although water can represent danger, it is also a rare and precious commodity, especially in the Middle-East (during Bible times and today). Having enough water is a life-or-death issue. The river that runs through a city (v.4) enhances its security and keeps everyone alive. The Psalmist says there is a river flowing through the city of God that makes its inhabitants secure. Jerusalem's security is not in its fortified walls or its strong military but the divine presence of God – a river that never runs dry. As God's people we have the Holy Spirit within us to signify the closeness of His presence. The Spirit offers living water that quenches our thirst and satisfies our soul.

Be Still and Know...

Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God." This is a popular verse and often we interpret it as a call to silence and contemplative practices to quiet our soul. However, this Psalm presents God speaking to enemies bent on causing affliction to His people. He commands them to be still, to stop fighting and to know that no matter how much they oppose, God will be exalted and His purposes accomplished.

How can we be so sure of His presence to us as Refuge and Life-giving Water? We know God is for us not by our feelings alone; He is with us based on the objective truth of the cross. If God was willing to give His most prized possession, His own Son, to regain relationship with you, how will He now remove His presence from you? Will He not sustain you in this difficult time of your life?

Some of us may say, "I have lost my song, the battle has gone for far too long and I am too weary and broken to sing." We can be unshakeable because of God's presence in our life. We are rooted and established because whatever we may go through in life – we are not alone. Jesus has promised, "I am with you always, even until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. If you had a day to enjoy the outdoors, would you prefer being in the mountains or on the water? Why?
2. Describe a situation when you were in danger. What brought you security?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Psalm 46:1-11

3. What events might the imagery in verses 2 and 3 represent in the life of Israel? In your life? How might God reveal Himself as a refuge in the midst of these troubles?
4. We need both a durable fortress and a source of life-giving water for protection and sustenance. Describe some of the attributes of God these metaphors invite, that allow us to put complete trust in Him.

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. In your life, how has God revealed Himself as your refuge, strength and help when 'the earth gave way and the mountains fell into the heart of the sea'? What role does worship play during these times of trial?
6. Where do you feel a need for His protection right now? Which verse from this Psalm can you carry with you this coming week? Which verse can you share with someone in your life who may need encouragement?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

What does it look like for you to "take refuge in the Lord"? How can you practice taking refuge this coming week? Three times Psalm 46 repeats "God is for us" and twice it provides the reassurance "God is with us".

THE WORD (NIV)

Psalm 46

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song.

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of
God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- 5 God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
- 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
- 8 Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
- 9 He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
- 10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
- 11 The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.