

## INTRODUCTION.

SINCE THIS IS COMMUNION SUNDAY, ~ I THOUGHT WE'D DO SOMETHING different.

▶▶ So ~ we are going to set Philippians aside for a week. ~~ We'll continue looking at Paul's closing exhortations next week.

▷▷ In the meantime, ~ everyone can ponder ~ the first two ~ exhortations.

↪↪ And I encourage you ~ to keep reading Philippians ~ at least once a week.

TODAY, ~ WE'RE GOING TO DIP INTO THE OT, ~ SPECIFICALLY THE PSALMS. ~~ Even more specifically, ~ Psalm 46. ~~~ And we're going to get ~ even more specific than that.

▶▶ And I want us to do this ~ in order ~ to gain encouragement, ~ confidence, ~ and courage ~ in our everyday living.

▷▷ In addition, ~ I want us ~ to do this ~ in order to gain ~ a proper perspective ~ on our personal lives ~ 77

↪↪ and also ~ on what's going on around us ~ in this world.

▶▶ And I believe that these results will be the natural outcome of a good grasp of [Psalm 46](#).

▶▶ Now, ~ we're just going to be scratching the surface. ~~ In fact, ~ we will be looking solely ~ at the first three verses.

▷▷ This past Monday night, ~ my plan had been ~ to preach through the whole psalm.

↪↪ By late Tuesday afternoon, ~ I realized ~ we were not going to get past ~ the first three verses.

→→ Maybe at some point, ~ I'll come back to it. ~~~ Maybe after Philippians is done.

▶▶ In the interim, ~ I encourage you ~ to do an in-depth study of [Psalm 46](#) on your own.

▷▷ And then ~ I believe ~ you will definitely ~ see these results that we just mentioned.

▶▶ But ~ I think ~ we might begin now ~ to see these results in our lives, ~ just simply ~ 77

▷▷ from our brief look today ~ at the [first three verses ~ of the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm](#). 77 1/11

IF YOU'LL NOTICE, ~ I'VE ENTITLED MY SERMON SIMPLY, ~ "YAHWEH," ~~~ WITH TWO ~ exclamation points. ~~ Yahweh, ~ of course, ~ being the personal name of God in the OT.

▶▶ Why this title? ~~ Because ~ this whole psalm ~ is about God. ~~ He ~ is the subject ~ and content ~ of it.

▷▷ We ~ are not the subject ~ of [Psalm 46](#).

↪↪ This psalm is not about us. ~~ Too often, ~ I think, ~ we make everything about us.

▶▶ As for the exclamations points, ~ this psalm ~ is not just about God, ~ it emphasizes him.

▷▷ Specifically, ~ it emphasizes his strength, ~ his power, ~ his sovereignty, ~ his ability to protect his people, ~ ↴↴

↪↪ and probably ~ a whole lot more.

PSALM 46 ~ HAS BEEN CALLED ~ LUTHER'S PSALM.

▶▶ It was the basis for his hymn, ~ "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

▶▶ But ~ there's more. ~~ It was his source of encouragement ~ when times were trying and difficult.

▷▷ Apparently, ~ during those times, ~ it was customary ~ for him to say to his fellow workers, ~ ↴↴

↪↪ "Come, ~~ let us sing the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm."

▷▷ Perhaps ~ it would do us much good ~ to learn from Martin Luther.

↪↪ To make it a habit, ~ when we find ourselves in dark valleys, ~~ to turn to [the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm](#) ~ and read it.

→→ But ~ even in the good times, ~ [Psalm 46](#) is a good reminder to us about Yahweh, ~ our Good Shepherd.

↪↪ It will help us ~ keep our bearings in life.

NOW LET'S DIG IN TO THE DETAILS ~ OF THE FIRST THREE VERSES ~ OF THE 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm.

IN VERSE 1, ~ THE PSALMIST BEGINS SIMPLY WITH ~~ "GOD." ↴↴ 2/11

## THREE OBSERVATIONS HERE.

▶▶1<sup>st</sup>, ~ the way the psalmist begins [Psalm 46](#), ~ as we've already alluded to, ~ tells us ~ clearly ~ that [Psalm 46](#) ~ is all about God.

▷▷The psalmist ~ is going to talk ~ about Yahweh. ~ IOW, ~ the psalm is God-centered.

▷▷This reminds us that our lives, ~ are to be God, ~ and not self, ~ centered.

↳↳Our lives should be totally Christ-centered.

▶▶The 2<sup>nd</sup> observation.

▷▷The way ~ the psalmist begins this psalm ~ reminds us ~ that we need to view our lives ~ and this world, ~ and what's happening in it, ~ from God's perspective.

▷▷Myopia ~ is a visual problem ~ that keeps people ~ from seeing objects at a distance.

↳↳They can see ~ only ~ what is immediately before them.

→→Without glasses ~ or contacts, ~ they cannot see ~ where they are going ~ or ~ what is in on the distant horizon.

▷▷A person ~ suffering from ~ spiritual ~ myopia ~ can see ~ only the here and now.

↳↳They can focus ~ only ~ on that which is temporary, ~ earthly.

↳↳IOW, ~ they can focus ~ only ~ on that which is, ~ as Solomon put it ~ in Ecclesiastes, ~ "[under the sun.](#)"

→→This ~ is the key phrase in Ecclesiastes ~ and means ~ looking at things ~ from a purely earthly ~ point of view.

▷▷The psalmist's emphasis on God ~ reminds us ~ that we should never ~ develop spiritual myopia.

↳↳But rather, ~ we are ~ to constantly view life ~ and what's happening in this world ~ from above the sun. ~ I.e., ~ from the Lord's perspective.

→→Meaning, ~ we should always ~ view and evaluate everything ~ through the grid of Scripture, ~ which gives God's perspective on everything.

→→The Bible ~ should always come in between ~ our eyes ~ and the world. 📖 3/11

▶▶ And the 3<sup>rd</sup> observation.

▷▷ The way the psalmist begins the 46<sup>th</sup> psalm ~ says it all. ~~ "God."

▷▷ When we think about "God," ~ who he is, ~ what he is like, ~ what he can do, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ we almost don't have to read the rest of the psalm ~ to figure out ~ what the psalmist is basically ~ going to say.

▷▷ But ~ if for some reason, ~ and it's quite possible, ~ given that we are frail, ~ sinful creatures, ~ even after we're saved, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ if, ~ for some reason, ~ a believer's thinking about Yahweh ~ does not line up with the psalmist's, ~ guess who's thinking is wrong?

→→ Not the author of the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm.

↳↳ Loved ones, ~ if this is the case for any one of us, ~ we need to adjust our thinking ~ to line up with psalmist's.

→→ Because ~~ what he says about God? ~~ is absolutely true.

IN THE REMAINDER OF VERSE 1, ~ THE PSALMIST DECLARES ~ THREE THINGS ~ about God.

I.E., ~ A THREEFOLD DESCRIPTION OF YAHWEH.

▶▶ "God ~ is ~ our ~ [i.e., ~ believers';] ~ refuge and strength, ~~ a very present help in trouble."

FIRST, ~ GOD IS BELIEVERS' REFUGE.

▶▶ The idea here ~ is that God provides protection for his people.

▷▷ "A mighty fortress ~ is our God, ~ A bulwark ~ never failing."

↳↳ God is like an impenetrable fortress in which we live. ~~ We are absolutely secure in our Great Shepherd.

▶▶ In Jn., ~ chapter 10, ~ verses 27-30, ~ and we should always come back to these verses, ~ Jesus declares, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "My sheep ~ hear my voice, ~~ and I know them, ~~ and they follow me. ¶¶ 4/11

▷▷I give them ~ eternal life, ~ and they will never perish ☞☞ [remember that Greek double negative, ~ "and they will certainly not, ~ never, ~ by no means ~ perish"], ~ ¶¶

▷▷and ~ no one ~ will snatch them ~ out of my hand. ~¶¶

▷▷My Father, ~ who has given them to me, ~ is greater than all, ~ and ~ no one ~ is able to snatch them ~ out of the Father's hand. ~ I and the Father are one."

▶▶Peter talks about God's protection of us ~ and helps us understand it more fully.

▷▷In 1 Pet. chapter 1, ~ verse 5, ~ LEB ~ ¶¶

↳↳Peter says ~ that believers ~ "are being protected ~ by the power of God ~ through faith ~ for a salvation ~ ready to be revealed in the last time."

▷▷The phrase ~ "being protected" ~ is a good translation, ~ because ~ it brings out the meaning of the Greek quite well, ~ ¶¶

↳↳since the Greek text ~ shows ~ that God's protection of us is a continual thing.

▷▷To make a long story short, ~ Peter is saying here ~ that God ~ is protecting us ~ by his power ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳until ~ we receive our resurrection bodies and inheritance, ~ which will happen ~ when Jesus returns.

▷▷Now, ~ the fact ~ that Peter says ~ we are continually "being protected by the power of God" ~ does not suggest ~ that God protects us from pain, ~ difficulty, ~ or suffering.

↳↳Look at the verse, ~ believers ~ "are being protected ~ by the power of God ~ through faith ~ for a salvation ~ ready to be revealed in the last time."

↳↳"being protected by the power of God" ~ means ~ that God ~ is continually protecting our souls, ~ ¶¶

→→ensuring ~ that we will ~ receive our resurrection bodies and inheritance ~ at the Second Coming of Jesus.

↳↳"Let goods and kindred go, ~ This mortal life also; ~ The body they may kill: ~ God's truth abideth still, ~ His kingdom ~ is forever."

THE 2<sup>nd</sup> THING ~ THE PSALMIST DECLARES ABOUT GOD IN VS. 1. ~~~ GOD IS OUR strength. ¶¶ 5/11

▶▶ Here ~ the psalmist is declaring ~ that God ~ was the source of his strength.

▷▷ God strengthens his people ~ and thus enabling us ~ to stand firm ~ no matter what is thrown at us in life.

▶▶ Note God's promise in *Is.*, ~ chapter 41, ~ verse 10.

▷▷ "fear not, ~ for I am with you; ~ be not dismayed, ~ for I am your God; ~ I will strengthen you, ~ 11

↳↳ I will help you, ~ I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

▶▶ And notice what Isaiah says in *Isaiah*, ~ chapter 40, ~ verses 28-31.

▷▷ "Have you not known? ~ Have you not heard? ~ The Lord ~ is the everlasting God, ~ the Creator ~ of the ends of the earth. ~ 11

▷▷ He does not faint ~ or grow weary; ~ his understanding ~ is unsearchable. ~ He gives power to the faint, ~ and to him who has no might ~ he increases strength. ~ 11

▷▷ Even youths ~ shall faint and be weary, ~ and young men ~ shall fall exhausted; ~ 11

▷▷ but they ~ who wait for the Lord ~ shall renew their strength; ~ they shall mount up with wings like eagles; ~ 11

▷▷ they shall run and not be weary; ~ they shall walk and not faint.

▶▶ "Did we ~ in our own strength ~ confide, ~ Our striving ~ would be ~ [what?] ~ losing."

▷▷ Loved ones, ~ what kind of strength ~ do we want to rely on? ~ Limited, ~ puny ~ human strength?

↳↳ Or ~ Yahweh's ~ unlimited, ~ unmatched, ~ untiring, ~ unstoppable ~ strength?

▷▷ TPID, ~ do we want to run around the chicken coop ~ or sore like eagles?

▶▶ But, ~ the enemy comes in and says, ~ 11

▷▷ "Oh, ~ you can handle what you're going through. ~ No need to bother God. ~ You're very strong you know."

↳↳ And our sin nature rears its ugly head, ~ and says, ~ yeah, ~ Satan's right, ~ you can do this, ~ don't be such a wimp. 11 6/11

▷▷ And if we fall for such nonsense, ~ we will be forgetting what Jesus told us, ~ in **John**, ~ chapter 15, ~ verse 5.

↳↳ "I am the vine; ~ you are the branches. ~ ~ 77

→→ Whoever abides in me ~ and I in him, ~ he it is ~ that bears much fruit, ~ ~ 77

↳↳ for ~ apart from me ~ you can do ~ [how much?] ~ nothing."

▶▶ You know, ~ 77

▷▷ it is actually ~ very liberating, ~ encouraging, ~ and ~ comforting ~ to know ~ that we don't have to live the Christian life ~ under our own power.

↳↳ How utterly ~ depressing ~ and stressful ~ it would be, ~ if we had to.

▶▶ So, ~ my . . . , ~ I go back to the question. ~ What kind of strength ~ do we want to rely on?

▷▷ Limited, ~ puny ~ human strength?

↳↳ Or ~ Yahweh's ~ unlimited, ~ unmatched, ~ untiring, ~ unstoppable ~ strength?

OK, ~ THE LAST THING THE PSALMIST DECLARES ABOUT GOD IN VERSE 1.

▶▶ "God is A very present help in trouble."

▶▶ The psalmist declares that Yahweh ~ is always present with us ~ and always ready to help us ~ in times of trouble.

▷▷ Next week, ~ when we're back in Philippians, ~ we're going to talk at length about God's presence. ~ So I won't spend time on that now.

▷▷ The Lord is always ready and willing to help us. ~ Never ~ think he's not. ~ **Hebrews**, ~ chapter 4, ~ verses 15-16, ~ **NIV**.

↳↳ "For ~ we do not have a high priest ~ who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, ~ but we have one ~ who has been tempted in every way, ~ just as we are ~ yet ~ he ~ did ~ not ~ sin. ~ ~ 77

→→ Let us then ~ approach God's throne of grace ~ with confidence, ~ so that we may receive mercy ~ and find grace to help us ~ in our time of need." 7/11

▶▶Now, ~ we will be stopping at [verse 3](#), ~ as I noted, ~ ¶¶

▷▷but since it goes with what we're saying here, ~ at the end of [verse 1](#), ~ drop down a minute to [verse 5b](#).

▷▷"God will help her when morning dawns." ~ Now, ~ most likely ~ there's much more to it, ~ but observe this one thing.

↳↳Help may not come right away. ~ It says, ~ "God will help ~ at break of day."

→→IOW, ~ help from the Lord ~ may not come right away, ~ but, ~ it ~ will ~ come.

▷▷I call your attention to [Mark](#), ~ chapter 6, ~ verses 45-48a.

↳↳"Immediately ~ he [[Jesus](#)] made his disciples get into the boat ~ and go before him to the other side, ~ to Bethsaida, ~ while he dismissed the crowd. ~¶

↳↳And after he had taken leave of them, ~ he went up on the mountain to pray. ~¶

↳↳And when evening came ~ [notice the time, ~ evening], ~ the boat was out on the sea, ~ and he was alone on the land. ~¶

↳↳And he saw ~ that they were making headway painfully ~ [remember, ~ it said it was evening], ~ for the wind was against them. ~¶

↳↳And about the fourth watch of the night ~ he came to them, ~ walking on the sea."

↳↳"the fourth watch of the night" was between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. ~ No longer evening.

→→Notice, ~ Jesus didn't come right away. ~ But ~ he did come ~ and rescue them.

▷▷So, ~ help from the Lord ~ may not come right away, ~ but rest assured, ~ he will help us. ~ And he will do it ~ according to his timing, ~ not ours.

▶▶Yahweh is always present with us ~ and always ready to help us in times of trouble.

▷▷But there is another aspect of this ~ that we should mention.

↳↳It also indicates that the Lord ~ is a very sufficient help ~ in times of trouble.

▷▷IOW, ~ not only is the Lord always present with us ~ and always ready and willing to help us, ~ he also ~ has the power ~ to help us. ¶ 8/11



▷▷ Through Jer., ~ chapter 32, ~ verse 27, ~ the Lord says, ~ "Behold, ~ I am the Lord, ~ the God of all flesh. ~ Is anything too hard for me?"

↳↳ The obvious answer? ~ A very emphatic, ~ No!

▷▷ We never have to worry ~ whether or not ~ the Lord can deal with whatever it is we're going through.

THEN IN VERSES 2 AND 3, ~ OF THE 46<sup>th</sup> PSALM, ~ THE PSALMIST STATES A practical result ~ of this threefold description of God.

NO FEAR.

▶▶ "Therefore ~ we will not fear ~~ though the earth gives way, ~~ though the mountains ~ be moved into the heart of the sea, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ though its waters ~ roar and foam, ~~ though the mountains ~ tremble at its swelling."

▶▶ What is he doing here?

▷▷ He is presenting ~ the worst-case scenario, ~ a collection of natural cataclysms ~ happening all at once, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ perhaps ~ an earthquake, ~ a hurricane, ~ a typhoon, ~ a tornado, ~ a tidal wave, ~ all happening ~ at the same time.

▷▷ And he's essentially saying, ~ "In the absolute, ~ worst-case scenario, ~ we ~ will ~ not ~ fear."

↳↳ Why? ~~ The psalmist says ~ here's why: ~¶¶

→→ Because Yahweh ~ "is ~ our refuge." ~¶¶

→→ Because Yahweh ~ is our "strength." ~¶¶

→→ Because Yahweh ~ is ~ "a very present and very sufficient help ~ in times trouble."

▶▶ My . . . , ~ ¶¶

▷▷ think of the most absolute, ~ worst-case scenario, ~ that could possibly happen to you in this life. ¶¶ 9/11

▷▷ And know this: ~ like the psalmist, ~ we need not fear it.

↳↳ And if we need not fear the absolute, ~ worst-case scenario, ~ then we definitely need not fear ~ the lesser-case scenarios.

▷▷ IOW, ~ we need not fear ~ any scenarios in which we find ourselves.

▶▶ And why ~ do we need not fear ~ any scenarios ~ in which we find ourselves?

1. ▷ Because Yahweh, ~ our God, ~ the almighty, ~ sovereign creator of the universe, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ will protect us ~ through every scenario ~ we encounter in life.

2. ▷ Because Yahweh, ~ our God, ~ the almighty, ~ sovereign creator of the universe, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ will give us the strength ~ to withstand ~ every scenario ~ we encounter in life.

3. ▷ Because Yahweh, ~ our God, ~ the almighty, ~ sovereign creator of the universe, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ will be right there with us ~ and helping us ~ every step of the way ~ through every scenario ~ we encounter in life.

▶▶ Recall what Isaiah, ~ chapter 43, ~ verses 1-3a, ~ says. ~ LEB.

▷▷ "But now ~ thus says Yahweh, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he who created you, ~ Jacob, ~ and he who formed you, ~ Israel: ~ [now, ~ it's important to understand ~ that what follows, ~ is for all believers] ~¶¶

▷▷ "You must not fear, ~ for I have redeemed you. ~ I have called you ~ by your name; ~ you are mine. ~¶¶

▷▷ When you pass through the waters, ~ I will be with you, ~ and through the rivers, ~ they ~ shall not flow over you. ~¶¶

▷▷ When you walk through fire, ~ you ~ shall not be burned, ~ and the flame ~ shall not scorch you. ~¶¶

▷▷ For I am Yahweh, ~ your God, ~ the holy one of Israel, ~ your savior." ¶¶ 10/11

## CONCLUSION.

"GOD ~ IS ~ OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH, ~~ A VERY PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE."

▶▶Loved ones, ~ these are God's promises to us. ~~~ And he ~ does ~ not ~ lie.

▷▷Let us ~ therefore ~ stand ~ on the awesome promises of Yahweh, ~ our Good Shepherd, ~ no matter what ~ happens to us ~ in this life.

▶▶Standing on the promises that cannot fail, ~ When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, ~~ By the living Word of God I shall prevail, ~~ Standing on the promises of God.

▶▶Loved ones, ~ trust in him, ~ he will fulfill his promises.

LET'S PRAY . . . . 11/11