

Family Baptist Church: May 28, 2023

Sermon Text: Psalm 46

Sermon Title: The Art of Waiting on the Lord

Propositional Phrase: When trouble comes, find your security in God alone.

Fallen Condition Focus (FCF): a tendency to lose hope in God and look to yourself (ingenuity, financial security, connections with others) for a solution to your problem.

Opening Illustration: Sitting around the dinner table with the family discussing some of our favorite trips. Israel topped the charts for Heather and me! I remember standing in the unfinished palace of the king of Jordan within the West Bank of Israel a couple years ago while listening to Dr. Doug Bookman recall the story of the conquest of Israel that started with Jericho (Joshua 6) and continued with the city of Ai (Joshua 7). After experiencing a marvelous work of God in causing the walls of Jericho to fall down (away from the city), Joshua turned his focus toward the city of Ai. He assumed that God would provide the victory in the same way! Unfortunately, unknown to Joshua was the sin of Achan in taking clothes, silver, and gold out of the plunder at Jericho. Achan's sin played a part in the death of the first 36 Israeli warriors to die in the conquest. **Achan lost hope in God to provide everything he needed and chose to take matters into his own hands.**

Seeing the smoke rise out of the city of Ai, the Gibeonites developed a plan to preserve their city. They pretended to be from a faraway country and requested a treaty with the nation of Israel. Instead of consulting God, Joshua agreed to make a treaty. In doing so, **Joshua failed to find security in God alone and chose to trust in his own wisdom and resources.**

Common struggle: a tendency to lose hope in God and look to yourself for a solution to your problem.

FBC:

1. Financial stability of our church?
 - a. Retaining our pastors
 - b. Supporting our missionaries
 - c. Accepting new missionaries
 - d. Reaching out to our community
2. Maintenance of the parking lots, buildings (including the parsonage), and the church vehicles.
3. Safety from random violence and occasional wildlife (Black Bears). 😊
4. Ministering in one of the most liberal states in the United States (approving weed, drug paraphernalia, identity politics, and government bail outs... while at the same time attacking parental rights to make decisions about educating their own children)

Personal:

1. Facing a diagnosis regarding cancer, a debilitating disease, effects of old age (need for a new knee, new hip, new set of eyes 😊).
2. Struggling over the loss of a loved one.
3. Parenting [at any stage... infant, toddler, middle-school, teen years, college years]
4. Wrestling between your desire to get more involved in ministry and the reality of your own financial constraints.

This morning, I invite you to look with me at the 46th Psalm, written by the sons of Korah!

THE SETTING OF PSALM 46:

- The psalm falls into the beginning of book 2 of 5 books in the Psalms.
 - Book 1 (Psalm 1-41): Psalms of Beginnings / focus on creation / connected to the book of Genesis.
 - Book 2 (Psalm 42-72): Psalms of Deliverance / focus on God's protection and provision / connected to the book of Exodus.
- The song was written by the sons of Korah. Korah led the rebellion against Moses in Numbers 16. The earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram for challenging the authority of Moses and Aaron. (Interesting to note that in Numbers 16:27, the families of Dathan and Abiram are mentioned NOT the family of Korah. The closest reference to the family of Korah is in Numbers 16:32 – "their households (Dathan and Abiram) and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods...")
- According to ALAMOTH (a musical notation found in I Chronicles 15:20 translated as "young woman" suggesting that this song was to be sung by the sopranos in the choir because it is a song of hope and celebration!)

THE STRUCTURE OF PSALM 46:

Three stanzas in a song.

- The psalm is divided into three distinct sections divided by the musical notation – Selah (3, 7, 11). Each section reminds us of God's sufficiency during Israel's difficulties.

Two major concerns.

- The challenge of facing an unexpected natural disaster. (1-3)
- The challenge of anticipating a massive military conflict. (4-7)

One solution.

- Be still and know that I am God. (10)

Read Psalm 46 with the congregation.

Propositional Phrase: When trouble comes, find your security in God alone.

Fallen Condition Focus (FCF): a tendency to lose hope in God and look to yourself (ingenuity, financial security, connections with others) for a solution to your problem.

Three stanzas in a song.

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Two major concerns.

I. The challenge of facing unexpected natural disaster. (2-3)

a. The type of trouble described in verses 1-3 refer to natural disaster.

1. Though the earth gives way – earthquake
2. Though the mountains (source of physical stability... “flee to the high places...” be moved into the heart of the sea [the very center of the ocean without any land in sight] – supernatural phenomenon... reminds me of the words of Jesus in Matthew 17:20 and Mark 11:23...
3. Though the its waters roar and foam – the destructive power of water during a storm
4. Though the mountains tremble at its swelling – contrasted with God’s sovereign control as seen in Jeremiah 5:22 – Do you fear me? Declares the Lord. Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it.”

What types of natural disasters create panic in your heart? Hurricanes, tornadoes, flash floods, hail storms, fire...

REMEMBER GOD’S KINDNESS IN PROVIDING US A RAINBOW AT THE END OF MOST STORMS TO REMIND US OF HIS PROMISE OF PROTECTION.

- But again, keep in mind, God promises to help us IN trouble not OUT OF TROUBLE!

Illustration: The story behind the hymn “It is Well.”¹

Horatio G. Spafford was a successful lawyer and businessman in Chicago with a lovely family - a wife, Anna, and five children. However, they were not strangers to tears and tragedy. Their young son died with pneumonia in 1871, and in that same year, much of their business was lost in the great Chicago fire. Yet, God in His mercy and kindness allowed the business to flourish once more.

On Nov. 21, 1873, the French ocean liner, Ville du Havre was crossing the Atlantic from the U.S. to Europe with 313 passengers on board. Among the passengers were Mrs. Spafford and their four daughters. Although Mr. Spafford had planned to go with his family, he found it necessary to stay in Chicago to help solve an unexpected business problem. He told his wife he would join her and their children in Europe a few days later. His plan was to take another ship.

About four days into the crossing of the Atlantic, the Ville du Harve collided with a powerful, iron-hulled Scottish ship, the Loch Earn. Suddenly, all of those on board were in grave danger. Anna hurriedly brought her four children to the deck. She knelt there with Annie, Margaret Lee, Bessie and Tanetta and prayed that God would spare them if that could be His will, or to make them willing to endure whatever awaited them. Within approximately 12 minutes, the Ville du Harve slipped beneath the dark waters of the Atlantic, carrying with it 226 of the passengers including the four Spafford children.

A sailor, rowing a small boat over the spot where the ship went down, spotted a woman floating on a piece of the wreckage. It was Anna, still alive. He pulled her into the boat and they were picked up by another large vessel which, nine days later, landed them in Cardiff, Wales. From there she wired her husband a message which began, “Saved alone, what shall I do?” Mr. Spafford later framed the telegram and placed it in his office.

Another of the ship’s survivors, Pastor Weiss, later recalled Anna saying, “God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why.”

¹ <https://www.staugustine.com/article/20141016/LIFESTYLE/310169936>

Mr. Spafford booked passage on the next available ship and left to join his grieving wife. With the ship about four days out, the captain called Spafford to his cabin and told him they were over the place where his children went down.

According to Bertha Spafford Vester, a daughter born after the tragedy, Spafford wrote “It Is Well With My Soul” while on this journey.

When peace like a river attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll,

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well with my soul.

Chorus:

It is well with my soul,

It is well, it is well with my soul

Anna gave birth to three more children, one of which died at age four with dreaded pneumonia. In August 1881, the Spaffords moved to Jerusalem. Mr. Spafford died and is buried in that city.

Three stanzas in a song.

Two major concerns.

1. *The challenge of facing unexpected natural disaster. (2-3)*
2. **The challenge of anticipating massive military conflict. (4-7)**
 - a. **Trust God for provision.**
 1. **A military siege was inevitable. (4)** – God provides water for the city.
 - a. **River Euphrates, Tigris, or Nile?**
 - b. **The answer is found in the word (“streams” – which refers to an artificial water channel). The Sons of Korah were most likely a reference to the Gihon Springs harnessed by King David as a source of water for the city of David!**
 - a. The Gihon Spring (Hebrew: מעיין הגיחון) or Fountain of the Virgin in the Kidron Valley was the main source of **water** for the Pool of Siloam in the **City of David**, the original site of Jerusalem.
 2. **Most battles took place during daylight. (5)** – God provides His presence in the city. (Primarily as seen within the holy of holies in the temple of God... in the past, wilderness wanderings, seen through the pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night)
 - b. **Trust God for protection.**
 1. **Most ancient battles involved taunting and threats. (6)** – Man makes vain threats. God’s voice melts the earth.
 2. **God provides protection from both the seen and unseen realms. (7)**

- a. The Lord of hosts – unseen realm
- b. The God of Jacob is our fortress – seen realm

Illustration: Going to the Jerusalem Museum and watching a movie describing the siege placed on Jerusalem by Sennacherib of Assyria during the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah (**Read: Isaiah 36-37**). The narrator spoke of Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance but made no reference to divine assistance by the angel of the Lord!

Three stanzas in a song.

Two major concerns.

One solution.

- Be still and know that I am God. (10a)
 - Directly connected to Exodus 14:13 when Israel had their backs to the Red Sea and the entire army of Pharaoh chasing them / separated by the pillar of fire! – “And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.”
 - Be still – to cast down, to throw, to relax, to let go...
 - And know (yada: to be aware of; to understand; to get to know; to discover; to experience... the word used to describe INTIMACY between a man and his wife)
 - *That I am* God – literally in the Hebrew – Be still and know God!

Who God is...

God is our refuge and strength, (1a)

- God is our refuge (mahseh: a cave or shelter)
- God is our strength (ôz: might, power, protection – used of God, men, beasts, a loud voice, or vehemence of anger)

A very present help in trouble (1b)

- **Location (He is near.):** Psalm 145:18 – “The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. / Deut. 4:7 – For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?”
- **Character (He is able.):** the footnote in your Bible states that “present” can also be translated “well proved...” God is demonstrated time and time again that He is able to help (exrah: help, aid, support, assistance – notice, the psalmist doesn't say that God will deliver you OUT of trouble but HELP YOU THROUGH TROUBLE! : sarot – distress, anxiety, need.)
 - **OPTION ONE** – REMOVE THE TROUBLE FROM YOU
 - **OPTION TWO** – REMOVE YOU FROM THE TROUBLE
 - **OPTION THREE** – PROVIDE THE GRACE NECESSARY TO FACE THE TROUBLE

The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. (7 and 11)

- The Lord of Hosts (Jehovah Sabaoth)
 - He is in control of the spiritual realm.

- A picture of the extent in which Jehovah (covenant keeping God) will fulfill His promise to His people! He will protect Israel from the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm.
- The God of Jacob is our fortress
 - A picture of God's unconditional election – He chose one people to bless all other peoples.
 - A picture of unbelievable redemption – He took a “heal-grabber and deceiver” and renamed him Israel “Triumphant with God.”
 - A picture of sovereign protection from physical forces (Our Refuge: fortress – a lofty place, a retreat, a high spot)

What God does... (8-10)

Come and behold are both imperatives (commands) (vs. 8)

- **How he has brought desolations on the earth. (flood; plagues in Egypt; plagues during the Wilderness wandering) (8)**
- **How he makes wars cease to the end of the earth... (9a)**
 - Isaiah 2:4 – “He shall judge between the nations and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”
 - Micah 4:3 – “He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make the afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.
- **How he breaks the bow and shatters the spear... (9b)**
 - Psalm 76:3 – There he broke the flashing arrows, the shields, the sword, and the weapons of war.
 - I Samuel 2:4 – The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength.
- **How he burns the chariots with fire...(9c)**
 - Ezekiel 39:9-10 – Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bow and arrows, clubs and spears; and they will make fires of them for seven years, so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons. They will seize the spoil of those who despoiled them, and plundered them, declares the Lord God.
- **God will be exalted among the nations. (Over a massive military conflict) (10a)**
- **God will be exalted in the earth. (Over an unexpected natural disaster) (10b)**

APPLY THE TEXT:

- Slow down and enjoy a relationship with God that is real and personal.
- Call out to God in times of trouble.
 - Thank God for being near when you call. (1a)
 - Trust God to help you THROUGH the trouble you are currently facing. (2-3)

- Thank God for being a God of second chances (“the God of Jacob is with us...”) (7, 11)
- Pause and reflect on the works of God each time you pass the Psalm 46:10 sign on Hwy 94.