

God is Our Fortress

The Psalm for Reformation Sunday is Psalm 46. It was the inspiration of Martin Luther's great hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah* ⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. ⁶The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah* ⁸Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth. ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. ¹⁰"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" ¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

The 46th psalm is a psalm of thanks, sung by the people of Israel because of the mighty deeds of God. He had protected and saved the city of Jerusalem against all the rage and the fury of all the kings and the nations. While nothing in the text specifies the occasion when this was written, but the destruction of the Assyrian army of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:35) was a dramatic example of the way in which this psalm is fulfilled.

In ancient times kings dwelt in castles which were surrounded by the city walls. These places were well fortified. When enemy armies came, the people working outside of these secure walls could come running and be protected from enemy attacks. That is the picture depicted here. That option was always available.

Trouble is never far away. A tsunami of problems can assault us. There can be loss of employment, loss of friends and loved ones. Economies may go into turmoil. The world may seem to be coming apart. There may be wars present and future. We may experience suffering from a variety of illnesses and even death. In all of this God is our refuge and strength. In God's Word and his Sacraments we can come for protection for our spiritual being. God is always with us. The name for God in this psalm means "the promise keeper."

In context of the final victory, he will make wars cease and establish peace. God can destroy every kind of war-making tool. He finally says: *be still and know that I am God*. To "be still" has the meaning of "enough!" or "stop!" That is what he says to all of our troubles.

Prayer: O Lord, make us to know you as our refuge and strength, our very present help in every trouble. Amen. (TLSB)