

Faith In the Home

Reformation Sunday

Psalm 46:1-11, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

Just as the ocean is associated with water, the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," is associated with Martin Luther. It is known as the "Battle Hymn of the Reformation." The hymn defines the spiritual battle that we are in. Truly, Satan and his minions are very real threat to us and our well-being. Yet, Jesus is our champion, has defeated Satan, and continues to defeat him. In fact, Jesus has given us power over Satan to the point where, "One little word subdues him." That word is, "liar."

Martin Luther spent much of his life with the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope as threats to his life. Europe was under the threat of the violent Islam overtaking it. He saw the plague ravage his town. He and his wife Katie lost a child. We are pretty confident that Luther would have been diagnosed by a psychologist, or a physician today, he would have been diagnosed with clinical depression. The world and the devil hit Luther hard. The fame of reformer who sparked the reformation, did not yield to a life of ease. Yet, the hymn that we sung today, is evidence that Martin Luther knew who to turn to in the hour of darkness. This faithful man, turned to the Son of the Living God, Jesus!

Psalm 46, influenced and inspired Luther when he wrote this hymn. It begins with the proclamation, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." It promises that even "if the earth gives way," and the mountains be thrown into the heart of the sea," that we will do not need to be afraid. It promises a righteous provision from God for those who live with Him, and we as his people do live with Him, and We will live with Him everlasting glory. No matter what turmoil happens in the world, verse 7 says, The LORD of Hosts (heavenly angelic armies) is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." "The God of Jacob," is our God. This references the point in history when God revealed Himself to the forefathers of our faith. Jacob was renamed Israel, and through faith in Jesus Christ we are also sons and daughters of Abraham, Issac, and Israel/Jacob. Israel's God, created the universe and sent His Son to die for our sins and to rise from the grave. This God gives us eternal life. This God is our fortress in the world where we are under spiritual attack from the defeated loser, Satan.

This verse clearly inspired the hymn we sang today. Psalm 46 is written as a response in faith to our God, but in verse 10, God speaks to us I the first person and tells us, "Be still, and know that I am God." We can rest in God's strength,

power, mercy, grace, wisdom, and love. Finally, it finishes with the same proclamation, "The LORD of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."

How does this apply to us?

1. Don't forget that we are spiritual beings. There are material reasons for much of stress and anxiety. Our health, money, relationships, and so on. There is a spiritual aspect behind these things. As far as material goods and resources, the world is doing well. Yet, look at how broken this world is. Is it coincidence that so many people are unhappy and struggling in this world when they place their hopes away from God?
2. You can go through depression and still be a Christian. There is a place for counseling, and a place for medicine. However, these things should not take the place of our spiritual need for God, and the fact that we are all undergoing various degrees of spiritual warfare.
3. The biggest application from this simply put is that we can trust God is not going to fail us. This psalm promises that earth can fall apart, and yet God is going to protect our souls. He is the living God, and His people who have faith in His living and risen Son, will live forever in peace with Him.