

Psalm 46

God is our refuge

How to cope in times of difficulty ?

Context

The psalm is one of 10 written by the sons of Korah in order to strengthen them in a time of trouble. Sennacherib, an Assyrian leader with his army of possibly over 180000 soldiers had attacked Israel and threatening Hezekiah in his stronghold at Jerusalem.

How will Israel survive ? So they sang a song.

They reflected back over their family line and realised that God had been faithful. They had an infamous family line with Korah leading a rebellion during the time of Moses but

Our past does not determine our present response to difficulty

- Not cursed by previous generations. We are in Christ and are free from this. Ezekiel 18; 20 states that 'the son will not bear the punishment for the fathers iniquity.'
- Christ took our curse on the cross and we can now live.
- Fear that past failures will repeat themselves but we are not doomed to live a life of repeating past failures. Romans 6 teaches that we are now free from the automatic power of sin and God is our refuge from sin. In our weakness, God helps us to say no to sins which have caused us to stumble.
- Past failures in marriage, jobs, parenting, etc are not the determining factors for present situations.
- Don't need to live with the memories/guilt of past sins as we have a God of grace, the God of sinner Jacob, who totally loves, totally forgets and totally forgives
- The sons of Korah were not to be consumed but were chosen to be a line of worshippers.
- God has chosen to save us, not because we are special but because He is special. We are to be carriers of His divine purpose and displayers of His divine character.
- Psalm 61 – when my heart is overwhelmed by guilt, failures, condemnation, 'Lead me to the rock who is higher than I'

Our circumstances do not determine our present situation

- Earth may change, mountains slip into the sea, waters roar, mountains quake but God is our refuge.

- Encounter unusual circumstances and never walked this way before. Threatening situations often bring about fear. Ungovernable situations when we no longer feel in control. Hence Sennacherib on their doorstep who was renowned for his cruelty.
- God remains on the throne. He has not opted out of control and nothing comes as a surprise to Him. Still in his hands. He is present before we call ; He is closer than a friend ; He is not just by our side but is within us. 'When you pass through the waters , I will be with you.' He who took His Son to the cross has the power to take us through. The forefather of the sons of Korah was swallowed by an earthquake but God is greater than earthquakes. I can rest in His hands rather than in my own self- sufficiency.
- Luther said 'Let us sing Psalm 46 and let the Devil do his worst'
- The circumstances of life are there to teach us to trust God, our immovable refuge.
- All types of burdens seek to weigh us down so that our heart and mind become out of control and we become victims of our thoughts and emotions. They have no right to reign over us.
- Fear becomes deafening and we struggle to hear God. The temptation is to turn away rather than turn to God.

God dictates our present life

- Be honest about your fears. Say sorry for not relying on Him. Read Psalm 61 ; 1-2
- We can tabernacle under the shadow of His wings, the place in the tabernacle where the blood is shed for us.
- Remind yourself that no matter what, you are loved by God a fear and worry would seek to draw your focus away from this.
- Fear , as in Peter on the sea, paralyses and turns us inward but realise that God has walked this way before in Christ and can hold our hand. We must lay our burdens down at the foot of the cross and trust, rely upon Him. He gives strength for today and grace for tomorrow. We do not get tomorrow's strength today so worrying about tomorrow seeps today's strength. Leave tomorrow to God
- Allow God's peace to garrison your heart.
- 366 Fear notes or equivalent in the bible. Even one for a leap year !

- Fear will not automatically go away, sometimes faith holds on through tears and heartaches but continue to pray through the fears. Allow the Holy Spirit to walk around your heart building a wall of peace.
- Circumstances may not change but can walk in the rain of difficulties under the umbrella of the God who has promised to be our refuge.