



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- May 23, 2023

The Lord be with you.

What do you like to do when trouble strikes when you get bad news? What is your default, your preferred option for taking on trouble when the bottom drops out? When, when, when everything you thought you had nailed down is flying loose. That's what I want to think about with you for the, for the next few moments. What do we do when trouble strikes and to do that?

I want to look to God's word to the book of Psalms. When I was a chaplain at Mayo Hospital, I would sometimes walk into a patient's room and I would see the Bible open and, and more often than not, it would be open to the book of Psalms. We like to turn to the book of Psalms in times of trouble. And today I'm looking at Psalm 46 which was one of Martin Luther's favorite Psalms. He would often times say in times of trouble, let's turn to the old 46. And actually this 46 Psalm was the inspiration for Martin Luther's great hymn that he wrote a Mighty Fortress is Our God. Psalm 46.

I begin with verse one, God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth should change or the mountains shake in the heart of the sea though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Here are the Psalm is painting with vivid poetic imageries of trouble and, and how to deal with trouble. And he uses the imagery of an earthquake when it feels like the ground underneath our feet is turning to Jell O Slip, slip sliding obey. He's actually describing something that also feels like a tsunami as he's talking about waters roaring and foaming and mountains trembling with tumult.

Now, if you've ever experienced an earthquake, when you know that there isn't a more helpless feeling than feeling the earth move under your feet and there's nothing you can do. The here is drawing upon two images to express this feeling of helplessness and trouble. He uses the image of mountains and sea for the Ancient Hebrews. They thought of the mountains as the most reliable, stable things in the world. We look to the mountains for help and then he uses the imagery of the sea as representing chaos. So see here is the image of mountains sliding into the sea. Everything that we had thought sure and stable is slipping into chaos that can come with a phone call in the middle of the night. It can come with the results of a biopsy, our spouse leaving. There are times that we just don't know what to do.

Now, let me direct us to verse 10 of this 46 psalm as the spirit of God now steps in and the spirit of God tells us what to do. The spirit of God says, be still. That's right. When trouble strikes, be still, the Hebrew word translated be still is the Hebrew word charaph. That's C H A R A P H. And it has the idea of letting your arm go slack, letting your arm relax. The word is used of a soldier relaxing, letting go his weapon issues of a worker, relaxing his arm, letting go the tool in



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his hand. So this word translated be still. It means to stop striving to stop rushing about trying to fix. 3Be still.

When I was a chaplain in a juvenile correction facility, the young men there, they, they, they really grasp the meaning of this word translated be still and they translated it as chill out chill. They got the meaning of what the spirit of God is calling us to do. When trouble strikes. As in verse 10, the spirit of God says be still and no that I am God quit rushing around trying to fix but be still relax and know that I am God. When we take time to be still before God. Then we can say with the psalmist. God is our refuge. And strength of very present help in trouble.

Something that has helped me through the years to get the idea of what God means when he says to be still and know that I am God. I am helped by remembering the day when I was a little boy and I was learning for the first time how to float in water. And my dad assured me that that the water could hold me up if, if I would only relax, be still and trust the water to hold me. You know, at first that, that didn't make any sense to me at all because I knew that the harder I tried to stay afloat, the faster I sank. And then that day I learned in my experience that the water, you know what it would hold me up, it would support me as I relaxed in it.

I wonder if today the spirit of God is calling you to relax into him and to be still and to know interesting here that the Hebrew word translated to know it, it has the idea, not just to know in our heads, but to know in our experience, to be still and to know in our experience that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. And that's my prayer for you today.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.