



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – July 16, 2024

The Lord be with you.

These are challenging times, aren't they? These past weeks we've been bombarded with difficult news and it can be hard to find peace with the constant stream of late breaking news. So for the next few moments, I wanna step back, take a breath and to be reminded of a powerful truth from God's word when the world feels so uncertain, so unstable.

Psalm 46 verse one, I read God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth should change though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam though the mountains tremble with its tumor.

Now we do not know the background of this song, but clearly it is a, it is a time of trouble. Uncertainty. It's everything that people thought they had nailed down. It's flying loose. And the poetic imagery here is striking. We read of mountains shaking the earth, quaking seas roaring. You know, it sounds like a tsunami of sorts as, as where the Hebrew psalmist said the two most stable, most certain things in life. Well, they were the mountains surrounding Jerusalem and, and the ground under his feet. Terra firma. But here something has happened in his life as the earth is quaking mountains slipping, giving way everything collapsing into the sea. And, you know, for the Ancient Hebrews, the sea was a symbol of chaos.

So here we have everything that they might have imagined to be certain, reliable, stable, safe is falling into chaos. Then in the midst of all of this chaos and trouble, the psalmist affirms God. God is our refuge and strength. God is our refuge. That is God is our place of safety and God is our strength. That is, that is God is our power and and God is, he says, a very present help and trouble. That is God is always with you and me. God is always a safe place for us to run to God is ready to help us when we need him. And so therefore, the psalmist says, therefore, therefore, in, in the midst of everything that's going wrong. He says, therefore, we will not fear, we will not be afraid.

Now, as I'm looking here at Psalm 46 I want to skip some verses down to verse 10 where the Holy Spirit now breaks into the text and the Holy Spirit commands is still and no that I am God. You know God's word to us here in the midst of trouble, it seems almost counterintuitive. So senseless when when everything is going wrong. God says be still at a time that I want to rush around and try to fix. God says be still the Hebrew word translated be still. It literally means to let one's arm go slack to let the arm relax. It was use of a soldier



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letting his arm go slack to lay down his sword. It was use of a farmer letting his arm go slack to lay down his two. Be still relax, be at peace. Calm, step back, take a breath, be still and know that I am God.

The Hebrew word translated know as in know that I am God. It means to know in one's experience. That is not just to know in theory, not just to know in the abstract because you read it in a book, but it is to know in your life experience that He really is God and Lord over all he really does have the whole world in his hands. You see, peace comes not from the absence of trouble, but peace comes from the presence of God with you and me as God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

So loving Father, we pray that in the midst of life's chaos and challenges. But we're seeking your peace today. Help us to find moments of stillness in this day. Quiet our thoughts, our fears grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change and the courage to act where you are calling us. Thank you. Thank you for always being our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble in the name of Jesus who promises us his peace. I pray amen.

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