

Praying The Song of God

Psalm 46



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FOCAL Read Responsively Psalms 46:1-11 To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (2) **Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;** (3) **Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.** (4) There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. (5) God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. (6) The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. (7) **The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.** (8) Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. (9) He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. (10) **Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.** (11) **The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.**^{KJV}

Illustrate Have you ever noticed the *wide variety of tools* that are available in our stores? Think about the *shovel*. As a child, our very first shovel may have been an old spoon that momma allowed us to take outside. I remember as a child sitting in the dirt, digging with that old spoon, making mud pies and holes. As we grew up we moved to other shovels - and what a variety there is! There are *coal* shovels, *ice* shovels, specialized shovels

KJV Focal text, and all other quoted text is King James Version (Authorized), unless otherwise noted

of every type. There are shovels with "D" grip handles, *ditching* shovels, small and large spades. When I worked in construction we used a certain shovel to work cement, another to dig certain holes. Each shovel had a specialized purpose, but the overriding purpose of *any* shovel, no matter what its shape and size, was to *dig a hole*. I watched a *National Geographic* special on television just the other night where they showed several apes using twigs to coax termites out of logs. The commentator gloatingly boasted that this use of the twig was "proof" that the great apes are distant cousins to humanity, and "proof" that we have evolved. I thought to myself, "You *idiot*, that's only a twig! Show me an ape make as many types of shovels as we have made, show me an ape at a hardware store choosing a "termite shovel", then I'll believe your half witted assumption. The shovel and its many types show us the uniqueness of man, and how we *must* have been created by Infinite God. We make shovels to dig holes. We make shovels to overcome *problems* in our lives. We have used shovels as children, and as adults we use shovels to dig graves to bury the earthly remains of our loved ones.

A shovel is a tool to solve our problems. But a shovel, though it may come in many different types, will not fix every problem. The greatest solution to our problems is *prayer*.

When I pray, I find it very useful to focus on the Word of God *prior to, during, and after* my prayer. Praying God's Word back to It's Creator, like the shovel, helps me to dig my way out from under my trials. The trial may go away, and it may not go away. But I guarantee you this – if you will pray the Scripture back to God while focusing

on its promises, you will certainly *be at peace* even in the midst of the deepest of trials.

Let's take a look at Psalm 46, meditate on it, then pray the promises of this Psalm – a beautiful song - back to our Heavenly Father.

“A Song Of Alamoth”

FOCAL Psalms 46:1 To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth. **God is our refuge and strength**, a very present help in trouble.

One of the most beautiful songs in "The Hebrew Songbook" is the **song upon Alamoth**, Psalm 46.

1. The word **Alamoth** is actually a musical direction, telling the Chief Musician that the song is to be sung entirely by *soprano or female voices*¹. Why did God do this? _____

As humans, it often helps for us to *understand by experiencing* a thing. This Psalm conveys the message that "God's strength, not My Power, is what will save me now". What is the best way to emphasize this truth than by having an *all female choir* sing the message? I don't

¹ *Easton's Bible Dictionary* states: "Virgins, a musical term (1 Chronicles 15:20), denoting that the psalm which bears this inscription (Psalm 46:1-11) was to be sung by soprano or female voices."

mean to be *politically incorrect*, nor imply that the female voice is not beautiful in song. But it is a fact that the all female choir was extremely rare in ancient Israel, as Alamoth is only mentioned in one other place in the Scripture (see **1 Chronicles 15:20**).

2. Alamoth emphasizes the Biblical truth that man's strength is not what we will trust in. God alone is our refuge and our strength.

Jeremiah 17:5-6 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. (6) For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Man's hand is absent from this Psalm, for God's power is to be emphasized. Man's pride is removed from this Psalm. We have no need of pride - God alone is our Savior. The Psalm says:

FOCAL Psalms 46:1.... **God is our refuge² and strength**, a very present help in trouble.

² H4268, מְחַסֶּה מְחַסֶּה, machāseh machseh, *makh-as-eh'*, *makh-seh'*, From H2620; a *shelter* (literally or figuratively): - hope, (place of) refuge, shelter, trust.

3. The word refuge literally means a fortress, a place of great walls that you can run to and hide.

In **Psalm 18** the Psalmist further defines God's protective power over His children when He said:

Psalms 18:2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Look at the various words used for God our Savior.

- **Rock** = He is solid, immovable, harder than I
- **Fortress** = Not a wooden fortress than can be breached by fire, water, or rot - but a **ROCK** fortress
- **Deliverer** = He always comes right on time to save me
- **My God** = I have no other God, I will not be my own "god"
- **Strength** = He stands when I cannot
- **Buckler** = The Shield I use to protect me from Satan's fiery arrows
- **Horn** = His trumpet calls the Host of Heaven, a large army of angels to stand at my side
- **High Tower** = No weapon formed shall harm me. He is High and Lifted up, and He is my Tower.

FOCAL Psalms 46:1... **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.**

4. God is **our fortress** - not just mine, but the fortress of *every believer who has trusted Him for salvation.*

When King **David** was delivered from the **hand of Saul** he sang:

2 Samuel 22:2-3 ... The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; (3) The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior; thou savest me from violence.

God reminded His Nation Israel that He loved her and saved her, saying:

Isaiah 43:2-3 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior: I

gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

God saved Israel because He loved her. He cast down entire nations in her defense. Will He not protect you, dearly Beloved, having shed the Blood of His own Dear Son for you? Yes, trials may gather round about us, but we make God out to be *a monster* if we believe that He saved us by shedding the Blood of His Dear Son - and then abandoned us to this present darkness. Oh, My Beloved, the proof of God's love is that He has:

Colossians 1:13-14 ... delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

EMPHATIC God did the *greatest thing* for you at the point of salvation. Which of you, having a child, would sacrifice that child for one of us? Which of you, having a child that you *dearly love*, would allow that child to be beaten over and over, spat on, mocked and shamed, then cruelly *tortured to death for a stranger*? God did this for you and for I!

The Bible tells us that *we who are Gentiles - non Jewish peoples - were strangers* to God. The Bible says:

Ephesians 2:11-12 Wherefore remember, that

ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh,
(12) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Christ died *for strangers*. He did not die for brothers and sisters, for friends and relatives, but He died *for strangers*. God did the greatest thing for us at the Cross we call *Calvary*. Surely He will do the lesser thing now and *protect that which He has redeemed with His own Blood on the Tree*.

FOCAL Psalms 46:1.... **God is our refuge and strength³, a very present help in trouble.**

God is not only our refuge, He is **our strength**, our power, our might. When Israel forgot this great truth God sorely punished her. There was a time when **King David numbered his warriors**. The Bible makes a very interesting statement:

1 Chronicles 21:1-2 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. (2) And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; and bring the number of

3 H5797, שׁוּבָה, 'ôz 'ôz, oze, oze, From H5810; *strength* in various applications (*force, security, majesty, praise*): - boldness, loud, might, power, strength, strong.

them to me, that I may know it.

Be aware, dearly Beloved, that **Satan often tempts us to number, to rely on our own strength and not on His power.**

5. The Devil will *take a Scripture and twist it*, as he did with Jesus in the wilderness (**Matthew 4**). Take heed that you *carefully look at your Scriptural context*, lest Satan be the one who tempts, and lead you to the awful sin of *numbering*. **Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel.**

Satan can provoke even the greatest of Christians. The Bible tells us that God *took away David's strength when he began to trust in his armies and not in God*. The Bible says:

1 Chronicles 21:14-15 So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. (15) And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

God is the strength of the Christian, our Fortress, our High Tower. Let us **have the attitude of Job** in the midst of suffering. Having lost everything but a *nagging wife and several miserable and finger pointing friends* we see this dear Saint:

Job 1:20-21 ... fell down upon the ground, and worshiped, (21) And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Prayer

Father, we come to You now in humble prayer. We, like Job, worship You - for You are worthy of all worship and praise. You alone are our God. You alone saved us from certain damnation. You alone, by the Gracious Gift of Your Dear Son, purchased our salvation. We believe on Thee, dear Lord. We praise You, Heavenly Father.

You are our Father. We hurt, and we run to Your arms. Oh my God, embrace us, calm our hearts, our hurts, shield us as You have promised. We know that You shield us, for You have promised that You would never let us go. We know You embrace us, for You have said:

John 10:27-29 My sheep hear my voice,

and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

We belong to You, dear Father. We are in Your hands, dear Son. You are our Fortress, our Strength. Help us, dear Lord, to hide in You.

Psalms 119:114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

We will not, as dear David did, *number our troops*. You, dear God, are our Savior. You, dear Father, are our only Hope. We pray that You and You alone deliver us from sickness, from debt, from pain. We now pray along with the ancient Puritans:⁴

"I have no Master but Thee, no law but Thy will, no delight but Thyself, no wealth but that Thou givest, no good but that Thou blessest, no peace but that Thou bestowest. I am nothing but that Thou makest me. I have nothing but that I receive from Thee. I can be nothing, but that Thou Grace adorns me. Quarry me deep, dear Lord, and then

⁴ from *The Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers*

fill me to overflowing with living water."

Protect me from my greatest enemy, deliver me from all evil, I pray. In Jesus' Name and for Your glory. Amen!

God Is Near

FOCAL Psalms 46:1-2 .. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (2)

Therefore will not we fear⁵, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; (3) Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

If we believe God to be **near, a very present help in trouble**, then we will not fear. If we believe Him to be *far away, distant, or unconcerned about our needs* the we will begin to fear - and begin to approach the problem in our own power.

Because **David** regarded **God to be near at all times** he alone stood up against the threats of the giant Goliath. This man was *huge!*

6. The Bible says that the *tip of Goliath's spear*

⁵ Qal Imperfect of H3372, **יָרֵא**, yârê', yaw-ray', A primitive root; to *fear*; morally to *revere*; causatively to *frighten*: - affright, be (make) afraid, dread (-ful), (put in) fear (-ful, -fully, -ing). (be had in) reverence (-end), X see, terrible (act, -ness, thing).

weighed about *18 pounds*⁶. He himself was about *nine feet tall*, with muscles to match (**1 Samuel 17:4**). His metal armor weighed about *157 pounds*⁷.

Every warrior in Saul's army refused to fight such a monster. Yet **David**, knowing God to be near, said:

1 Samuel 17:37 ... The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.

If God delivered tiny David from an attack by both a lion and a bear, surely the same *ever present God* would give him power over this gigantic unbeliever. God did cause David to prevail - not just now, but every time he trusted that the Lord was near. David went out, not looking at the *size of his enemy, but he looked at the size of his God*.

Are you looking at the enemy, or at God?

Satan will whisper in your ear:

"You can't triumph - you are too small. Look at the size of the people in this land, and look at yourself *little grasshopper*. These are *giants, the sons of Anak* (**Numbers 13:33**). You cannot defeat them - they are all nine feet tall, just like Goliath was". Too true, Satan, too

⁶ Barnes notes on 1 Samuel 17:7

⁷ see Barnes notes on 1 Samuel 17:5

true! I cannot defeat *sons of Anak*, but God can. They may be mighty, but God is mightier. They may be powerful, but God is stronger. Look not at the giants of life, but look at God. Do not look at how small you are in relationship to your trials, but *look at how big God is*.

The **Prophet Elijah** stood before *450 prophets of a false god called Baal* saying and threw out the challenge:

1 Kings 18:24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.

Elijah knew that **God is near**, and *Baal* is but a *figment of the imagination*. The challenge was made, the false prophets died, and God's true prophet stood. God is near, He is ever near to His people.

FOCAL Psalms 46:2 .. **Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; (3) Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.**

When God is near, the *storms of life* hold no power over us. Forget that God is near, and fear will overwhelm you. Trust that God is near, and

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Fear is a misunderstanding of God's love. **Perfect love casts out fear**. Remember **Moses' mother**? The command was given by the Pharaoh,

Exodus 1:22 ... **Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.**

Kill the male children, kill them all! Yet

7. Moses' mother built a little ark of branches and, knowing that God is near, she put her son in the River Nile (**Exodus 2:3**). While "Fear" says, "kill the male children", "Perfect Love" says "God is near".

Put the child in the water, in the arms of God, and trust Him. God is near!

FOCAL Psalms 46:5 **God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.**

God is in our midst, in the assembly of the Saints. Has

not Jesus promised us:

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Where but two or three Christian gather together, Jesus is in the midst. Jesus is here now, hearing our prayers, listening to our concerns. He has promised if we obediently follow Him, He will always be in our midst. Has He not promised:

John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.

The Lord is here tonight - has He not said so? The Lord hears our prayers - has He not promised? **God is in our midst, in the midst of His Church - she shall not be moved! God shall help His people, and that right early.**

EMPHATIC What does God require of us in the midst of our trials and tribulations, but to *look to Him for salvation?*

He has said:

FOCAL Psalms 46:10 **Be still, and know that**

I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

As we come to Him in prayer, we will **be still**. One day the disciples rode across the *Sea of Galilee*, while Jesus slept in the belly of the boat. A great storm rose up. The disciples, frightened with the tossing waves, wove Jesus up. "Master, do you not care that we perish?" Our Lord rose from His sleep and, with authority, said, "Be still", and the waves ceased. Jesus asked His followers:

Mark 4:40 ... Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

If Jesus is in your midst He will hear your prayers. If God be with you, then who shall be against you? As the Apostle said:

Romans 8:31-32 What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us? (32) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

Be still, and know that He is God. Cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. God is in control of all things. He controls the storm, and He controls the calm. Trust God, believe on Him, and surrender your trials to the Savior.

Prayer

Precious Lord, we praise You that You alone are our Deliverer. I am resolved **not to fear**, but Satan continues to whisper accusations into my ear. He makes me think that You are far away, and trials are so near. He tells me that You do not love me, that You have forgotten me, that I am helpless in the face of this trial or trouble.

He IS a liar, and the father of lies! (**John 8:44**) I know this, and I say this out loud so that he can hear me. Satan, you are the liar, but my Father *never lies*. You, Oh Eternal Creator and God of all, told **Balaam:**

Numbers 23:19 God [is] not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do [it]? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

You have *never lied to me* – forgive me for the times I have doubted You, O Lord. I will strive to listen to You, and not the storm. I will try and learn the lessons of the ancient Saints, who discovered that You are still there. When **Elijah** was terribly depressed, You were still there. The storm came, a great wind blew, the rocks of the mountain failed, an earthquake came and a fire. We listen to the terrors of life, but Lord, help us to hear the **still small voice of**

God telling us that You are still in control (**1 Kings 19:11-12**).

Help us to **be still, and know that You are God**. Let us be still **like the fawn, when the predator stalks us**. Hide us, O Father, in the Cleft of the Rock, as that old song says: **He hideth my soul, in the cleft of the rock**. How I love You, how we love You, Precious Lord.

Look To God

FOCAL Psalms 46:7, 11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. ... (11) The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Let us finish by noting the Psalmist repeats this sentence twice: **The LORD of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge**. C.H. Spurgeon said:

“The Lord rules the angels, the stars, the elements, and all the hosts of heaven; and the heaven of heavens are under his sway. The armies of men though they know it not are made to sub-serve his will. This Generalissimo of the forces of the land, and the Lord High Admiral of the seas, is on our side - our august ally; woe unto those who fight against him, for they shall fly like smoke before the wind when he gives the word to scatter them. “The God of Jacob is our

refuge.” Immanuel is Jehovah of Hosts, and Jacob's God is our high place of defense.”

It is *much better* to be in the Will of God, looking to Him, than it is to be in my will looking toward my own resources. To be a child of God looking to God, this is where strength is. It helps us to remember that the same Jesus Who cast a *thousand demons out of one man* is the same Jesus we now follow. When Jesus said “Go” (**Luke 8:32**) a thousand fallen angels were cast out into pigs. This same Jesus Who has “all power in Heaven and earth” has commanded us to “Go”. Go tell others. Go, live for Him. Go, walk worthy. Go, seek His will in His Word. Go, pray. But He has *never* told us to “Go, fear”. This is Satan's ploy, not God's.

God is in control, so Go with your head held high, looking to Jesus Christ. Go and do as He has commanded, and you will be blessed.

May God bless your hearts with these words.

