TOPIC: New Year's Message, God's Sovereignty

God Is Still In Control
Psalm 46 (NKJV)
(A New Year's Sermon)

Please open your Bibles to Psalm 46, and let's read all eleven verses.

PSALM 46:1-11 (NKJV)

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

6 The nations 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, Who has made desolations in the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

PRAYER
I believe each year at this time all of us goes into the New Year with somewhat mixed emotions.

On the one hand, we enter the New Year with a great deal of **ANTICIPATION**. We wonder what blessings God has in store for us and what opportunities may come our way.

But on the other hand, I believe we also enter this New Year with a degree of **ANXIOUSNESS**. Who will become our next President? Will we face another terrorists attack here on our own soil? What is going to happen to our economy? Will we continue to see a rise in civil unrest towards law enforcement officers?

While none of us has a “crystal ball” to foresee what lies ahead, we as Christians can enter this New Year with the confident assurance that: **GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL!**

In this 46th Psalm David reminds us of three wonderful truths you and I can rest upon as we move forward into this New Year.
Truth #1: Because God Is Still In Control We Can Have COURAGE In Our Times of Trouble (vs. 1-3)

1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3. Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah (Selah- “pause to reflect” or “pause to meditate”)

1. I want you to notice the Psalmist's bold declaration in verse 1........

   v.1   God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2. We are not given the exact circumstances under which these words were written. But they were clearly written in the context of troublesome times.

3. Some Bible scholars believe that troubles were on their way, and the Psalmist made this bold declaration as a word of encouragement and confidence in advance.

Other Bible scholars believe these words were written shortly after the Jewish people had gone through a time of trouble, and the Psalmist is making this bold declaration to remind the people how God had once again proven Himself faithful.
4. Regardless of whether the troubles were yet to come or had already come, the point is this: whenever trouble comes, you and I can have the confidence and the courage that God is going to see us through it.

5. I love those two adjectives the Psalmist uses for God in verse 1. First, he says, “God is our REFUGE.” When we think of “a refuge” we think of a place of safety or a security. God is our place of safety or security we can run to in the time of trouble. He is our shelter in the time of storm. He is our secure fortress into which we can run and be safe from the troubles of this world.

The Psalmist also says, God is our STRENGTH.” As Christians you and I have a strength that is NOT our own, a strength that the world does not know or understand. You and I have the strength of God to sustain us even when it seems the weight of the world is on our shoulders.

6. In verses 2, 3 the Psalmist reminds us that because God is our refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble we have no need to fear regardless of what troubles may come our way. In fact, he uses earthquakes and floods to symbolize the worst possible troubles we may face.
7. None of us has any way of knowing what troubles and problems we may face in this coming year. This could turn out to be one of the greatest years of your life, or it could turn out to be one of the most difficult years of your life. We just don't know.

8. But one thing we do know is that regardless of what troubles may come our way, \textbf{GOD WILL STILL BE IN CONTROL,} and He will still be our refuge and strength, and therefore we can face this New Year with courage rather than fear.

\begin{verbatim}
'Til The Storm Passes By

In the dark of the midnight,
Have I oft hid my face;
While the storm howls above me,
And there's no hiding place;
'Mid the crash of the thunder,
Precious Lord, hear my cry;
"Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by."

'Til the storm passes over,
'Til the thunder sounds no more;
'Til the clouds roll forever from the sky,
Hold me fast, let me stand,
In the hollow of Thy hand;
Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by.
\end{verbatim}
Truth #2: Because God Is Still In Control We Can Have JOY In The Midst of Change (vs. 4-7)

4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

6 The nations 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

1. Here the Psalmist uses the holy city of Jerusalem to illustrate a wonderful spiritual truth.

2. Jerusalem is one of the few ancient cities that was not built on a river. Ancient cities needed water close at hand for their survival, especially in the event of a seizure from an enemy.

3. When Sennacherib the King of Assyria attacked Jerusalem in 700 B.C., he was sure their lack of water would force the Jewish people to surrender quickly.

But unknown to Sennacherib, Jerusalem had a secret water supply. Wise King Hezekiah had built an underground tunnel which brought cool, refreshing water from the spring of Gihon and filled the pool of Siloam inside the walls of Jerusalem. That secret stream supplied all their needs during the siege.
4. What a beautiful picture of the **endless supply of joy and refreshment** you and I have in the Lord Himself.

Jesus told the woman at the well,”**but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.**” (John 4:14 NKJV)

In John 7:37b,38 (NKJV) Jesus said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

5. We live in a constantly changing world, and I have no doubt you and I are going to see a whole lot of dramatic changes take place this year as God continues to set the stage for the dramatic climax of history in preparation for the second coming of Christ.

And we all know these changes can be very unnerving and unsettling. But let me remind you that no matter what changes may come in our personal lives or in the world around us **God's Holy Spirit is the ever-flowing stream within us that will fill our hearts with an endless supply of joy and peace to sustain us** .
Because God Is Still In Control We Can Have **COURAGE** In Our Times of Trouble.

Because God Is Still In Control We Can Have **JOY** In The Midst of Change

**Truth #3:** Because God Is Still In Control We Can Have **HOPE** As We Face The Future (vs. 8-11)

8 Come, behold the works of the **LORD**, Who has made desolations in the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The **LORD** of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

1. As you enter this New Year what worries and fears do you have? What problems are you dealing with? What is keeping you awake at night and torn up during the day?

   Sometimes we carry the burdens from the old year into the New Year without any hope of things ever getting any better.

2. But in **verse 10** the Psalmist gives you and me a command from the Lord to obey. The Lord says, “**Be still, and know that I am God.**”
3. That command, “be still” comes from the Hebrew word, rapha, which means to “let go” or “to release.”

GOD is literally commanding us to “Let go, and let Him be God.” Stop trying to carry your burdens all by yourself. Stop trying to solve all your problems by yourself. Stop fretting and worrying about your situation and LET ME BE GOD!

4. You see, no matter how hopeless or difficult your circumstances may be in this coming year, there is always HOPE if we will just put our faith and trust in GOD and let Him do what He does best.

If God could simply speak a word and bring this world into existence, don't you believe you can trust Him with your greatest problems and heaviest burdens?

ILLUSTRATION

In his book, When God Was Taken Captive, author James Deloach writes about an unforgettable picture he saw years ago.

It was a picture of an old burned-out mountain shack. All that remained was the chimney, of what had been the family's sole possession.
In front of the destroyed cabin stood an old grandfather dressed in his long-johns with his small grandson standing beside him clutching his pair of patched overalls. Tears were streaming down the little boy's cheeks as he looked at the smoldering ruins of what once had been his home.

And beneath the picture were these words spoken by the grandfather to his little grandson, “Hush child, God ain't dead.” (WHEN GOD WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE, p. 24, by James DeLoach, Mutnomah Press, Copyright 1989)

5. Sometimes we need to be reminded of that powerful truth don't we? No matter how heavy our burdens may be........no matter how hopeless our situation may seem, GOD ISN'T DEAD!

6. **BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD!**

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CONCLUSION

Can you imagine what it is like for those billions of people who are entering this New Year without God? Imagine the fear and anxiety people must feel who have put all their hope and trust in money and the material things of this world.

Today you and I can enter this New Year with the confident assurance that GOD is going to be with us every moment of every day and because GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL we can have COURAGE IN OUR TIMES OF TROUBLE........JOY IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE........and HOPE AS WE FACE THE FUTURE. **BE STILL AND KNOW HE IS GOD!**