

GOD, OUR REFUGE

by Rev. G. Grant Verdoold

Text: Psalm 46: 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*

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*

Background:

Refuge: machseh, pronounced makh-seh, meaning a shelter, place of safety, place of trust, a hiding place, a haven, a resort, a sanctuary. Note: this is something external.

Strength: ôuz, pronounced oze, from prime root awzaz, meaning to be stout, harden, impudent, prevail, strengthen self. Meaning force, security, majesty, praise, boldness, loud, might, power, strong, fortitude, tenacity, vitality, sinew, stalwartness, virtue, vim, substance.

Selah: a word indicating to the singers of the psalm that a pause for reflection is to be taken.

"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" written by [Martin Luther](#) in 1529

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

The Hook: "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

The hymn, written in 1529 during the Reformation addresses the woes of the era. This was a very difficult time to live, with much poverty and depravity not unlike what is seen in the worst corners of the world today.

Against this we have Psalm 46, and what a Psalm it is!!!!

It encourages all who are truly the chosen of GOD, for all who are called to be HIS own people to exhibit a fearless courage!! "and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4: 7 and should keep the hearts and minds of all who rest in GOD. It is not every man who can sing this psalm!!

Each person must belong to "the believing company", and have GOD as his/her GOD, and must, like Israel, have learned the art of prevailing prayer ("Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. " James 5: 16) or she/he cannot sing the song of peace amid all the commotion and calamity. No-one can truly sing **this** psalm except those who are redeemed from the earth.

Are you redeemed? If so, you should be singing, loud and long, for all to hear!

While this is a psalm for all of Israel, it is specially marked as committed to the Sons of Korah. Korah, Dathan and Abiram perished because of their sins. "The sons of Eliab *were* Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These *are* the Dathan and Abiram, representatives of the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the Lord; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died,

when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign. Nevertheless, the children of Korah did not die." Numbers 26: 9-11

Their escape can be attributed to the grace of GOD, who spared them when the others were destroyed. These Sons of Korah were made signs in the courts of the LORD. Surely, they would sing with heart and soul these words, "Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea".

Can the earth really be moved? Indeed, it can, by a sovereign GOD! This is what they learned.

They saw the earth open her mouth and swallow up the offenders of their household while they were preserved by sovereign grace. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8: 29 & 30

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing but should raise it up at the last day. " John 6: 37 - 39

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6: 44

Surely tears must have come to their eyes as they sang this mighty psalm, and at the thought of the opening gulf at their feet.

My friends, the circumstances under which a person is saved will influence the rest of his/her life. To be saved by GOD from between the teeth of judgement is rescue so special and vivid that the person learns to sing a song so loud even nature reverberates unto The Living GOD.

"And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:" Joshua 3:10

"For who *is there* of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as *we have*, and lived? " Deuteronomy 5: 26

"Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" " 1 Samuel 17: 26

"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm 42: 2

"My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." Psalm 84: 2

"It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God and will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore, lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left." " Isaiah 37: 4 When conversion is so wonderfully remarkable, the music of gratitude is pitched in a high key!!

David sings his songs because he prevailed over persecution. (see Post Notes: 1 Samuel 24: 16 - 20)

What is your song today? Sing of where GOD has brought you! Sing of the salvation, redemption fortitude, strength and hope you have in the LORD! Sing of the regeneration, victory, sanctuary and peace HE has brought you!!

Are you singing, "GOD is my refuge and strength"? (Psalm 46: 1) If not, why not???

Awake all you hearts that follow The LORD!!

Too many see GOD as too small! If we saw GOD as fully mighty as HE is, we would dare to do more to serve HIM and to further HIS kingdom.

The terrible disease at present in North America is that we do not see GOD to be as great as HE truly is!!! (A.W. Tozer in "Essays on Prayer", 1968)

I have 2 points this morning: Our confidence in GOD, and Our courage given by GOD.

The Book 1: Our Confidence

GOD's people have a sure confidence. Other men build as best they can, but they build as on the sand. (see Post Notes: Matthew 7: 24-27) True believers instead build upon the Rock of Ages, the precious, chosen corner stone. "'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.'" Isaiah 28: 16.

Their confidence is beyond themselves. In this Psalm (46) there is nothing about their own virtue, valour or wisdom. Nothing!! "The fool has said in his heart, "*There is no God.*" They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, There is none who does good." Psalm 14: 1

But the believer has a wonderful, truer reliance. The believer knows GOD is.

The word "is" is important the word here. GOD is!!! There is nothing about doubt here!!

Even though the earth be removed he/she is undismayed, and this does not arise from personal self-sufficiency, but from GOD, who is her/his refuge and strength. (verse 1)

He/she is fearless, not because of resolutions of heart, but because she/he has a GOD to shelter and uphold, and because The LORD of Hosts is with us. "The Lord of hosts *is* with us;

The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. *Selah*" Psalm 46: 7

Friends, don't fear calamity! Stand in awe of GOD most high and fear HIM only!

"The fear of the Lord *is* the instruction of wisdom, and before honor *is* humility." Proverbs 15: 33

"And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* this day. " Deuteronomy 6: 24

"Oh, how great *is* Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, *Which* You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men! " Psalm 31: 19

"Blessed *is* the man *who* fears the Lord *Who* delights greatly in His commandments." Psalm 112: 1

"The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy." Psalm 147: 11

"The fear of the Lord prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened." Proverbs 10: 27

Our Psalm today begins with GOD, and, look! It ends with GOD!! ("God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble." verse 1 & "The Lord of Hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. *Selah*" Psalm 46:11) It is a "Big Mac" of hope sandwiched into all of GOD's great promises.

You may be timid as a field mouse, but GOD is still our refuge! We are as weak by nature as bruised reeds ("A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth." Isaiah 42: 3, "A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory;" Matthew 12: 20), but GOD is our strength!

Brethren, we will never know what strength is until our weakness drives us to GOD's holy omnipotence. Trust HIM absolutely, and absolutely trust HIM!!

When all other refuges fail, GOD will not fail! When things look bleak, and the waters of the sea roar and are troubled, hide yourself in HIM!!

Corrie Ten Boom said, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength." She also said, "Never, never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known GOD." That is what we should be doing! Corrie Ten Boom also said, "You can never learn that Christ is all you need until Christ is all you have."

Friends, GOD is our refuge and strength! The LORD of Hosts is always with us! "The Lord of hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. *Selah*" Psalm 46: 7

Let us say with Thomas, "And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!""
John 20: 28

Let us acknowledge and submit to our Blessed Redeemer. Get acquainted with GOD and be at peace. If we were greater students of GOD, how much happier we would be! How is your study going?

Wouldn't it be neat if, when someone asked what your field of study was, you could answer, "GOD".? If someone were to ask, "What about arts or architecture?", you would be able to answer, "HE knows all about it!" If someone were to ask, "What about mathematics and science?", you would be able to answer, "HE created all of it!". I ask you again, how is your study going? Do you know more about God now than you did 2 years ago?

When men and women of GOD study GOD, they soon discover in HIM those things which make HIM a refuge for their hours of danger, a strength for days of labour, and help for emergencies of all kinds!!

We ought to be able to say more about GOD today than we could a few years ago. We ought to recount our blessings, instead of our gripes and grumblings. YES, count your blessings! Be encouraged by reading The Word of GOD daily. This should not be some assigned chore. It should be a delight we cannot resist!!!

The more we know the LORD, the more we should perceive that HE is full of blessings to us! Half our fears are the result of ignorance!

The truth, GOD's holy, exciting, liberating truth would greatly encourage us if we read it and trusted it more!! To know GOD is life eternal with solid peace which no calamity can destroy. This can only come from knowing GOD and must come from GOD!

Can you honestly say what the psalmist says in verse 1? GOD is my refuge and strength? Have you fled to HIM? If so, have you not found shelter in HIM? HE never fails.

Let me remind you of the heart of the English sea captain, Sir Francis Drake who, after having sailed around the world in 1577-1580, was buffeted by a violent storm in the River Thames. "What", he asked, "Have we sailed around the world safely and shall we be drowned in a ditch?" No, we have GOD's protection everywhere, at all times!!

Friends, we have been helped so long, and so often! GOD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore we will not fear!! (Psalm 46: 1 & 2)

Why fear? Our confidence must always be in Christ and HIS abilities!!!

"Remember that without prayer you cannot win, and with it you cannot lose!" (A.W.Tozer)

Billy Graham said, "Courage is contagious!! When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are stiffened!"

The Book 2: Our Courage

The courage given by having confidence in our GOD is very full and totally complete!

"Therefore, we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;" Psalm 46: 2.

It does not say, "Therefore we will run away.", but it says, "We will not fear." It does not say, "Therefore, we will faint and drop in dread.", but it says, " Therefore we will not fear."

The presence of GOD stays and comforts the soul, calms and quiets the heart, and drives the fear and torment away. It permits us to "Be Still and Know" that GOD is GOD. (see Post Notes). We may be perplexed at times, but we are not in despair. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" 2 Corinthians 4: 8 & 9

Listen my friends, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*" Romans 8:1

Listen again, "What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?"
Romans 8: 31

Listen once more, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies."
Romans 8: 33

Who can prevail over a child of GOD? No-One!!!! GOD is our refuge and strength! AMEN!!

GOD is ever-present as the refuge of HIS people. "Fear Not!", Jesus said. "But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! it is I; do not be afraid."" Matthew 14: 27

"Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Isaiah 41: 10

And then there is this to muse upon. No calamity will change GOD's love for us!! Why on earth would we even think it could? "" Isaiah 54: 17

"Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven." Matthew 16: 17

And, Brethren, why can we have such courage? Because "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8: 38 & 39

I am persuaded!! I believe!!! Praise HIM!!! Oh, Sing for joy!!!

My Brethren, GOD is our life, even amid the great apostasy of this age!!!! When the burdens of the day are too big, when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and weigh us down, when the road seems dreary ad endless, when the skies are grey and threatening, when our lives have no music in them, when our hearts are lonely and our souls have lost their courage, flood the path with light, run our eyes to where the skies are full of promise, tune our hears to brave music, give us the sense of comradeship with heroes and saints of every age, and so quicken our spirits that we may be able to encourage the souls of all who journey with us on the road of life to YOUR Honour and Glory!! (St. Augustine)

The Took:

GOD is our refuge and strength (verse 1). We need not fear amid the great apostasy of this age. While GOD lives HIS truth abides with us still!! "" 2 John 1: 2

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1: 14

"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,"
Ephesians 6: 14

"The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."" Isaiah 40: 8

Blessed be my Rock!! The LORD lives and blessed be my Rock! "I will sing a new song to You, O God; On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, *The One* who gives salvation to kings, Who delivers David His servant From the deadly sword." Psalm 144: 9 & 10

"The Lord lives! Blessed *be* my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted." Psalm 18: 46

"*He is* the Rock, His work *is* perfect; For all His ways *are* justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright *is* He." Deuteronomy 32: 4

GOD is our refuge and strength when society tries to trample out all virtue! As long as The Lord lives our hope lives also!! The great clarion call of the Gospel lives, for it is the power of GOD bringing salvation for every age! "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." Romans 1: 16

The church, like Noah's dove will come back to her rest again and bring with her something which shall proclaim eternal peace to a turbulent world!!

GOD is a very present help in time of trouble (verse 1) for every age and every epoch. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 14 - 16

""Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation."" Psalm 91: 14 - 16

Some people dine on horrors and are not content unless a future is set before them spiced with dread! But we have the answer to day's woes and evils!!!! It is to be with the LORD!!!! "Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4: 17

Take Jesus to be your refuge and strength!!! (verse 1)

Take Jesus to be your help in all things!!! (verse 5)

Take Jesus to be the commander of Heaven's Armies!!! (verse 7) HIS Army is unstoppable!!! Do not lose heart!! JESUS will fight for you!! "The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." Exodus 14: 14

"The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up *His* zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies." Isaiah 42: 13

"I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron." Isaiah 45: 2

"For you shall not go out with haste, Nor go by flight; For the Lord will go before you, And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard." Isaiah 52: 12

"Therefore, understand today that the Lord your God *is* He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you." Deuteronomy 9: 3

"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that *is* with him; for *there are* more with us than with him. **8** With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah." 2 Chronicles 32: 7 & 8

Be still and know, REALLY KNOW, that HE is GOD!!!! "Be still and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46: 10

What a joy of the heart we have in knowing that GOD is our refuge and strength!!!!

Sing out as we lean on the everlasting arms of GOD!!! (See Post Notes)

GOD is our refuge and strength!!!! AMEN!!!!

Post Notes:

1 Samuel 24: 16 - 20

"So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "*Is* this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. Then he said to David: "You *are* more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the Lord delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore, may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand."

Matthew 7: 24-27

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

(from Psalm 46: 10)

Be still and know that I am God,

Be still and know that I am God,

Be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee,

I am the Lord that healeth thee,

I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

(from Deuteronomy 33: 27)

by Iris Dement

Verse 1 -

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Verse 2 -

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Verse 3 -

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Chorus -

Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.