



## Psalm 46

- <sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth  
should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of  
the sea;
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its  
tumult.
- <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the  
city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- <sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be  
moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.
- <sup>6</sup> The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms  
totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.
- <sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works of the LORD;  
see what desolations he has brought on  
the earth.
- <sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.
- <sup>10</sup> "Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth."
- <sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

"Be still, and know that I am God!"  
How difficult is it to be "still," even though we trust that God's hand is the ultimate creator and shaper of all that exists? We are programmed, instinctively, I think, to want to be in control, to want actively to create our own reality and actively to pursue those things we desire to be a part of our lives. When parts of our foundation are knocked out from under us, as they have been in the past year and a half, we grow restless, annoyed, anxious, fearful and even angry. We don't want to live our lives this way, surrounded by uncertainty and confusion. This long COVID siege has taken its toll on all of us, regardless of our personal beliefs in what course

of action we should take as individuals, communities, congregations, a nation and a world. We hear different "experts" offering different solutions, yet we remain in the seemingly endless spiral of trying to live our lives faithfully in the midst of a virus which doesn't give up.

I don't know what tomorrow will bring. I don't know what actions our congregations or members might take in the upcoming days, weeks or months, let alone what actions our authorities will take. I don't know if the pandemic situation will improve or get worse. You might have more certainty than I do regarding some of these questions. My one request is that we continue to pray for our congregations and our leadership as we continue this journey into the future.

I am certain, however, that the Psalmist who wrote Psalm 46, seemingly in the midst of some type of trial or strife, is a comfort for me and others as we face our own difficulties and problems, with or without COVID. Even in moments of upheaval, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Even if the earth changes, though the mountains tremble and shake in the heart of the sea, we will not fear, claims the Psalmist. While nations may be in uproar and kingdoms may totter, God's word is sufficient, the God of Jacob is our refuge, who is with us always.

We are tasked with proclaiming this truth in all we do and in all we say as congregations. Our confidence is in a God who may not change every detail of our reality to suit our preferences, but who will continue to claim us and redeem us. Our hope is in a God who will not necessarily shape the world in ways we would like it to be, but in a God who moves the world to fulfillment, and in doing so, partners with us to touch the lives of others with the abiding love God has given us through Jesus. "Be still, and know that I am God!" Sometimes, it benefits us to recall these words, to still our hearts and minds, and to reconnect with our God of promise, who shapes the world ultimately and who, especially in Jesus, is a presence for us revealing to us His hope, his love and his life.