

## The Secret Place

Psalm 46

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Title: **The Secret Place**

Before we unpack Psalm 46, I want to draw your eyes to a term we will see repeated throughout this Psalm. The word ‘Selah’ appears in the Psalms 71 times and has weight in and of itself. If you are like me, you grew up just reading right over it being okay with not knowing what you don’t know. But there are a few different theories on what this word selah means. The Septuagint translates the word to “Daplasma” meaning “a division”. Other Selah theories- are that it is *s\_lah*, “to praise”; or *s\_lal*, “to lift up.” Another commentator believes it comes from *salah*, “to pause.” For today, I want us to think of selah as such...

**Selah- “To carefully weigh the meaning of what we have read or heard, lifting up our hearts in praise to God for His great truths.”**

**Amplified Bible says- “Pause and calmly think about that.”**

**Psalm 46- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah**

These are BIG words! When you look at this you see reverence and glory that comes from personal experience and first-hand knowledge of a God who saves. There are 11 Psalms attributed to the ‘Sons of Korah’ and Psalm 46 is one of them. I can tell you with great certainty- you cannot pen the words they did without an intimate fellowship with God. No one who doesn’t personally know God (more than knowing about God...it is knowing *of* God! See the glory of God is that He has made Himself available to be *known* in Christ. It’s His revelation given to us so that we may know Him more than mere acquaintances, but to know Him as He desires to be known.

All of Scripture points us to the person and work of Jesus Christ so that we may KNOW Him- in Spirit and in Truth- so that we may live a life of unbroken fellowship with God through His son Jesus. This intimate knowledge is readily available for **you** today- regardless of where you are positionally (meaning you have turned your back from God and walked back into the life of sin He set you free from) or circumstantially (whether your life has born trial after trial after trial and your patience is stretched as thin as it can and you feel like there is no way out... The Eternal God whose love is unconditional and whose name is HOLY desires to be known by YOU.)

Looking at the context of Psalm 46. Here is what most scholars believe took place before it’s composition. Keep your finger there and turn back to 2 Kings 19. Here is what is going on. Around 931 B.C. Israel had a civil war and split into two Kingdoms. In 701 B.C. Hezekiah is reigning as the king of Judah, the Southern Kingdom- and he is a good king who fears the LORD.

**2 Kings 18:5-7- He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.**

The king of Assyria was advancing against Jerusalem and had already wiped out every other nation and army. They were undefeated and unchallenged. Jerusalem would've felt like the Dallas Cowboys against anyone- HOPELESS!

But God delivers them against the first attack. A second time Sennacherib comes against Hezekiah and taunts him saying-

**2 Kings 19:10-11- "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered?'"**

What does Hezekiah do? He takes the scroll containing the message and brings it into the Temple of the Lord. (CONTEXT FOR THE TEMPLE).

**2 Kings 19:14- 19- <sup>14</sup>Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said: "O Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. <sup>16</sup>Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. <sup>17</sup>Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands <sup>18</sup>and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore, they were destroyed. <sup>19</sup>So now, O Lord our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone."**

And God does what only He can do. You can read about at the end of chapter 19- the angel of the LORD comes and strikes down 185,000 Assyrians without any help from the people of Jerusalem... the king wakes up, sees this, and returns home without capturing Jerusalem. What happened? God responded to the prayer of His people with HIS PRESENCE.

**Psalm 46- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah**

The same God who is our refuge on the outside is our strength on the inside

Matthew 6:6

Here is where I want to camp out for us today. This is our application and truth. You won't have the confidence to say that though the earth gives way and the mountains be moved into the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling- therefore we will not fear

**Psalm 27:3- Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.**

And where does David, the Psalmist, get the courage to write such a bold truth? Right here in verse 1- look.

**Psalm 27:1- The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

Unless you are actively spending time in the very presence of God who serves as our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble, you won't be able to stand firm in your own strength against opposition. In our own 'self' we lack all adequacy to prevail and find victory. Think about it church... we aren't the ones who tell our heart to beat or our brain to function... The question for us today is where and how do we get into the presence of God? What does it look like for us in 2024 going into 2025? Surely the presence of God hasn't changed nor His desire to be with us! In that case, what does it look like for you and I to spend consistent time in the intimate presence of God?

**Matthew 6:6- But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.**

Greek word for room in Matthew 6 was used to describe a **storeroom where treasures were kept**. This reminds us that there are treasures waiting for us in our prayer closet! But if we are honest- we don't always choose what's better for us especially when it is hidden from everyone else. But Jesus talks about this to the pharisee's and His disciples...context of Matthew 6.

**John 5:44- How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?**

What He is teaching here is the doomed to fail outcome of seeking the approval and applause of man over God. Jesus says this is a huge reason why many people fail to believe in God and trust His word! They aren't actively seeking and waiting on God's approval or favor. It's a whole lot cheaper to get the approval and favor of man! And if we aren't careful, we will find ourselves drifting away from God and holiness, and into personal desire and sin's deception. I put it to you this way- I never accidentally do something holy. I don't 'lean' towards holiness. I drift towards sin every time when I put the cruise control on.

Pastor Jarrett shared this a while back in one of his sermons during the '7:14 series' and it has stuck with me ever since. I love this quote about seeking God in the secret place by author Daniel Henderson-

**“God’s face is the essence of who He is. God’s hand is the blessing of what He does. God’s face represents His person and presence. God’s hand expresses His provision for needs in our lives. I have learned that if all we ever do is seek God’s hand, we may miss his face; but if we seek His face, He will be glad to open His hand and satisfy the deepest desires of our heart.”- Daniel Henderson**

**Psalm 16:11- You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore**

**Psalm 16:5-6, The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.**

Earlier this year I finished reading a book about the life of Hudson Taylor. He was a missionary who went to China and established one of the most effective missional models for reaching different people groups with the Gospel. He was cutting edge in terms of strategy and fruitfulness in Kingdom work. Look at what he writes about in the intimate presence of God-

**“The sweetest part, if one may speak of one part being sweeter than another, is the rest which full identification with Christ brings. I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize this; for He, I know, is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me; for in the easiest position He must give me His grace, and in the most difficult His grace is sufficient. It little matters to my servant whether I send him to buy a few cash worth of things, or the most expensive articles. In either case he looks to me for the money and brings me his purchases. So, if God should place in serious perplexity, must He not give me much guidance; in positions of great difficulty, much grace; in circumstances of great pressure and trial, much strength? No fear that His resources will prove unequal to the emergency! And His resources are mine, for He is mine, and is with me and dwells with me.”- Hudson Taylor**

Where do His resources come from? How does God supply His people for their needs? His work will never lack His supply.

**Psalm 46:4-5, “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.”**

**John 4:13-14, Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

**John 7:37-39, On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

David knew this truth and looking at his life we can tell where he learned the nearness of God. As a shepherd, alone in the wilderness with his sheep, removed from the hustle and bustle of society and the elegances of the rich. Displaced from others and by vocation, forced to a life of loneliness. But David wasn't lonely. Furthest from it! As we said earlier he had learned that **“in your presence there is fullness of JOY and at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore... the LORD is my chosen portion and my cup”** ... David would've known what it meant to be in fellowship with the Lord more than a great deal of others because fellowship with the Lord was his greatest desire- look at Psalm 27.

**Psalm 27:4- One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.**

**Psalm 27:8- You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, Lord, do I seek.”**

**Psalm 46:8-11, Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns**

**the chariots with fire. “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah**

You know what ‘Selah’ looks like for you and me today? It’s Matthew 6:6. Going away to the secret place to meet with our Father in prayer. Prayer is a relationship. Prayer is sharing the same space with God. It’s God-consciousness, being aware of His presence. It is reverent and still. It’s calm.

I promise you... if you seek the Lord in secret and do it with the right motives, you will hear the Lord speaking to your heart saying,

**Psalm 46:10- “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth!”**

And you know what will happen? Fear will melt away. Anxiety will cease. Peace will abound. Joy will be evident. Love will be more real to you than the air you breathe. You will be able to say this-

**Psalm 46:1-3, “God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.” Selah**

Hear is how I want to end tonight- and end the semester. I’m calling it the Psalm 46 challenge.

**Psalm 46:10 challenge: spend 10 minutes in silence and prayer before reading your Bible**

Let me tell you what will happen. You will experience a wave of thoughts and emotions in the stillness. Wait. Wait on the Lord. Be patient. Choose Him. Give those thoughts over to God. Be very still... and wait. It may feel uncomfortable because we don’t sit still very much anymore with all the stimulation around us. And maybe that’s the point... maybe that’s what God is trying to get your attention with. Business. Rush. Hurry. It’s VAIN.

10 minutes... go to your room, close the door, get away from distractions, turn on a worship playlist - I like to use ‘Soaking in His presence’ personally. And be still. Wait on God and watch... learn how to be in His presence. Let the Scriptures guide you. Stored up in your heart.

**Isaiah 30:18- Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.**

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