

Living with God: Kept by God

Psalm 46,47,48

Psalms pre-amble

Before we read Psalm 46 just want to say a couple of things about Psalms as a whole – and about the historical context of these Psalms

The book of Psalms is the song book of the people of God.

Like a magnifying glass and sunlight – book of Psalms focused and concentrate the vast shafts of light coming from rest of the OT history, law, prophesy, poetry, experience, emotions, despair, joy, longing – focused and concentrated into these collections of poem and songs which have profound depth and beauty

When you're preaching on Psalm (or 3 psalms) it's tricky – don't want to loose the beauty and force of the imagery and artistry by imposing your structure on it!

Let it speak for itself

Historical Context

Commentators think that actually both Ps 46 and this Psalm refer back to the deliverance in 2 Chron 20 – Jehoshaphat is told a vast army is come from Moab and Ammon – he and Israel and Judah are greatly alarmed they declare a fast and pray – Spirit comes and a prophet gets up in front of them all and says trust God he'll deliver The battle is the Lord's - he sends confusion and terror amongst the armies who basically annihilate each other –

Psalms also often can have a now and not yet element to them – so they can refer both to a present situation and looking forward to a future eternal reality too – so this one the city in v4 onwards has a river in it - ancient city of Jerusalem had no river – this is looking forward to another city – the new Jerusalem as its ultimate fulfillment

With those things in mind – let's pray and ask God's help – and lets read Psalm 46

Read Psalm 46

Joe Egg – when lose control –where do we put our hope? 2 q's ask person behind – are they able to support me? Are they likely to help?

One of the things that strikes you as you read the Psalm is the confidence! We will not fear – certain hope and confidence

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Is this Psalmist deluded in a bubble out of touch reality?

I want to suggest he's not the one out of touch with reality – we are!
We've lose sight of ultimate reality

Circumstance become all too big and prominent and God becomes all to small and insignificant

I want us to thin about the **Organics of of hope** from these 3 psalms –

root

fruit

catalyst

The Root of Hope – 'Be still and know' (Ps 46v10)

What is the root of hope? Or Rather – who is the root of our hope?

It's the Lord –

v1 God is our refuge and strength
v5 God is within her she shall not fall
v7 The Lord almighty is with us

Notice it's God himself that is our refuge and strength – not the city, not the army, not wealth or wisdom or circumstances

Complete dependence and confidence in the Lord – whatever the circumstances

Imagery in v2 and 3 pretty intense - mountains fall into the heart of the sea and quake

Catastrophic meltdown and destruction –

If the mountains – the foundations of the earth – the epitome of solid dependability

even if they were to fall into the heart of the sea - the epitome of danger and chaos

Even in the midst of that total complete carnage and chaos – We will not fear – God is our refuge

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He's our mighty fortress! That's basically the message of this Psalm isn't it?

King over Jew and Gentile alike – he's ultimate King

It's v10 I want us to dwell on for a moment

'Be Still and Know that I am God'

Not a fluffy sentimental verse that so often taken to be – not actually something to be put on posters with kittens on

It is a command – literally it's is be limp wristed, flaccid – be weak

It's a word both to any enemy who might try to rise up against the Lord – don't even bother!!!!!!

And to God's people too – don't even try to think you can save yourselves, depend 100% on me –

So do you see what he's saying?

Your hope rests entirely on me – not on circumstances or what you can or can't bring to the table...

The implications of this are massive aren't they

Here in the UK relatively speaking we've got it pretty easy really – we're not oppressed by dictators, or ravaged by famine and disease – sure we've have our problems but unlike large parts of the of the rest of the world we've got food to eat, clothes on our backs, roof over our heads and freedom to meet like this, welfare state to fall back on, democracy, police who can turn up on our doorstep within 10mins of dialing 3 numbers –

In some ways it's easy for us to sing God's praise on a Sunday – to bless his name when the sun shining

But

There's not one of us here today in this room who's lives could not be shattered and turned upside down just by one phone call or knock at the door

What then?

Could we still say the words in this Psalm then?

Will we still not fear and say God is our refuge and strength?

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Because actually if God is not our refuge and strength – but comfort is - or our circumstance are– when we get that phone call and life turns upside down? What then? – we can be consumed by the raging waters...

We need to heed the warning – search our hearts –see what we’re really trusting in

Are we trusting the provider or his provision?

It may be that some of us here have had that phone call – may these words comfort you

Be still and know that I am God – he’s with you

This Psalm makes no promise that life will be easy and pain free – rather the opposite

What he does promise is that God will be with you through the trouble and suffering

The covenant faithful promise keeping God is mighty to save – there is hope – you can depend and trust on him and ultimately he will deliver you

Maybe not here and now on earth – but for eternity he will deliver you - you’re safe

As we’ve said this Psalm –like many Psalms in the Bible has an eternal dimension to it

Apostle Paul describes our troubles here on earth as light and momentary compared to eternal glory that far outweighs them – 2 Cor 4:16-18

Rom 8 Suffering not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed – pains of childbirth

Not being glib or flippant – Paul was shipwrecked imprisoned beaten tortured ultimately martyred

His hope was in God – not in Circumstances – God was his refuge and strength his ever present help – he trusted that God was able to save him - eternally

Fruit of Hope – Clap your hands and shout for Joy

Here’ the fruit of Hope – when we’re trusting wholly in God – fruit = joy thankfulness and worship!

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It just bursts out all over this Psalm – the response to truth about God is joy and praise

Again we see how supreme God is – over all the earth – ultimate control – response? Worship and praise

Notice The praise is all directed to God and His glory

Great Psalm of Thanks and praise – Joy

Throughout Bible thankfulness is the acid test of spiritual growth

Sign of where our hope really lies

If we're trusting in ourselves or anything we've worked hard to achieve – where's the need to be thankful? We've done the hard work, we've earned it?!? What's all the fuss about?

What need do we have to be joyful to God?

So you see the reverse of that – if we realize our need and humbly depend on God – If we are still and know that the Lord is God – then the fruit of that Hope is joy and praise

But if we have truly grasped hold of grace –we've seen what we're really like, what we really deserve and how scandalous and outrageous his grace is – we can't help but give him thanks and praise and be full of Joy!

So in Philippians Paul in prison is able to say Rejoice in the Lord always, I say it again Rejoice!

His hope in God and his understanding of grace enabled him to give thanks in all circumstance

To what extent does joy characterize your home?

To what extent does joy characterize our church?

I chose the word fruit deliberately – as I wanted to make sure we saw this is something cannot be manufactured artificially

Apple tree doesn't produce apples by concentrating really hard – when conditions are right the fruit grows organically

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If we perceive a lack of Joy – maybe it's a sign we're not getting the gospel – understanding it intellectually and confessionally but functionally we're not trusting it – we're leaning on our good works of service or our bible knowledge or whatever

Pray for God to work in us by his spirit do his work in our hard hearts to reveal our sin to illuminate the Lord Jesus – give us a fresh glimpse of his majesty and grace to move us to put our hope solely in him

Root of our hope – God himself
Fruit - Joy

Catalyst for hope – Consider and tell

Pslam 48 tells of God deliverance and the people response to that deliverance 2
Chron 20

The picture then in the second half of this Psalm, v9-14 is the aftermath of the battle and famous victory

Remember what God has done – consider, meditate on His goodness and strength – but not on your own – together in the temple and amongst the city

Remember and encourage one another

New testament picks up the imagery of the temple and applies it to the church –

Peter says temple is not a building made of stone but an organic community of rescued people - a community where God dwells

He says we're living stones built together into a holy temple

Great picture of what church is all about!

When we meet together with other Christians we should be helping one another to consider and meditate and the truth about who God is – remember what he's done – and tell them to one another and to the world

That's what builds our hope and leads to joy!

And that is what rings out to the world around too

Look at v9 of ch 47

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It's what communion is all about that will come to in a few moments

The battle we remember – the decisive victory God won for us – was not against the kings of Ammon and Moab but on the cross at Calvary

As His own Son the Lord Jesus Christ defeated the enemies of death and sin once and for all – so we could have the hope of eternal glory

How are we going to respond to Jesus?

Be Still and Know that I am God

The cross is the ultimate victory God has won
Ultimate demonstration of his character
Shows us how seriously he takes our sin and how much he loves us!

Be still – and know that I am God says Jesus from the cross – don't put your hope in anything or anyone else – don't thinking there's anything you can contribute –

To his enemies – to the devil – Be Still – It is Finished! don't even bother trying to resist the victory is won

So Clap your hands and shout for Joy!

It's all about Him – our salvation and forgiveness depends entirely 100% on him – we don't deserve – we can't claim otherwise

All we can do in response is Clap our hands and shout for Joy!

Consider meditate and tell to each other and to the world

And that's what we're going to do now...

Jesus gave the ordinance of communion because he knew the importance of regularly taking time to remember

It's all too easy for us to slip from resting in grace to trusting in other things –