

GOD AT YOUR SERVICE

TEXT: PSALM 46:1-7

Psalm 46:1-7

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

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

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

4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

6 The heathen 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.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. GOD AT YOUR SERVICE

1. What an incredible testimony of promise we discover in the words of the psalmist.

- a. God is our refuge and strength!
- b. He is a very present help in time of trouble!

- (1) Literally, that means that God is a very accessible help – He is one easy to be found.

- (2) In II Chronicles 15, Azariah told Asa:

- (a) God will stick with you as long as you stick with Him.

- (b) If you look for Him, He will let Himself be found...

- (c) Then he explained that when Israel got in trouble and turned to the Lord, ***“He was found of them”*** (verse 4).

- 2. Somebody needs to latch on to the promise of the Lord that we find in this particular passage...

- a. Never again do you need to fear or be afraid.

- (1) It doesn't matter if the whole world is in turmoil.

- (2) The earth may quake, the oceans may swell, and the mountains may crumble into the sea.

(3) Everything around you may be in a total uproar – complete chaos...

(a) But, with God as your protector and provider, you'll have peace like a river!

3. Listen to Pastor:

a. God's Word promises us that He is available to us at any time, day or night!

4. From The Message, our text reads:

a. Psalm 46:1-7 –

(1) *God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need Him.*

(2) *We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom, courageous in seastorm and earthquake,*

(3) *Before the rush and roar of oceans, the tremors that shift mountains...God fights for us (and) protects us...*

(4) [Then in verse 5, it says,] *God lives here, the streets are safe, God at your service from crack of dawn.*

B. COMPREHENDING GOD'S PRESENCE

1. To be frank, I am not certain that we comprehend this truth fully.
 - a. Most of us would very likely admit that our concept of God's abiding presence is inadequate.
 - (1) It is my belief, however, that God wants to open our understanding of this divine concept.
 - (a) He knows we all face deep needs and terrible troubles.
 - (b) We all encounter turmoil, temptations, and times of confusion that cause our souls to quake.
 - 1) His message for us here in Psalm 46 is meant for just such times.
2. If we give in to fear – if we become downcast and full of despair – we're living absolutely contrary to His present reality in our lives.
 - a. But if we learn to trust Him even when we can't trace Him, He promises to be our refuge and our strength!
 - b. He promises to be easy to find and ready to offer any help we may need.

(1) Therefore, if we live in faith, He will be at our service morning and night.

3. Peter writes in **II Peter 1:4**, *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.”*

a. Supernatural peace is a part of God’s divine nature.

(1) Tell your neighbor: *“God lives here, the streets are safe!”*

4. Of all his wonderful promises, Psalm 46 is the one word we need to obtain His peace like a river.

a. Let me share with you three things that we can glean from this passage.

II. BODY

A. EVER-PRESENT EVIL

1. The first thing we learn is that just as there is an ever-present help, there is also an ever-present evil.

a. Paul attests, *“When I would do good, evil is present with me”* (**Romans 7:21**).

(1) In **Ephesians 6:12**, Paul declares, *“We wrestle not*

against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

- (a) Listen, there is a very real enemy of our souls, and this enemy is at work against us, day and night.
- (b) Paul wants to make sure we understand this.
- (c) If we don't — if we're ignorant of what our battle is and who we're fighting — then we'll surely be defeated.

2. From the Gospels to the Epistles to Revelation, the entire New Testament warns us not to be ignorant of Satan's devices.

a. This doesn't mean that we are to fear or magnify the devil's power; but Satan is still “prince of the power of the air,” (Ephesians 2:2), and he rules an evil empire of demonic powers.

(1) These principalities do his constant bidding, continually harassing God's people.

3. It's extremely dangerous to be blind to Satan's ways.
 - a. We simply have to accept that our present battle isn't a human one.
 - b. It doesn't matter what struggle we face, what besetting sin we wrestle with.
 - (1) We have to realize, it's not merely about some flaw in our character.
 - (2) It's not some habit to be worked out in our flesh.
 - (3) Our conflict is no less than a supernatural battle that's unfolding in spiritual high places.
 - (4) And our foe is an ever-present enemy.
 - (a) Satan's powers and principalities never sleep.
 - (b) They never let up in their lying, conniving, and working of evil against us.
 - (c) Their one goal is to destroy our faith and bring us to destruction.

4. This is why Peter urges us in **I Peter 5:8-9**

a. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion,

walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith.

(1) Peter experienced this firsthand.

(a) Jesus had warned him, *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat”* (Luke 22:31).

1) Christ knew the devil wanted this apostle.

2) And Jesus gave Peter ample warning about what was to come.

5. You can be sure of this: if you no longer settle for a Christian life that is merely status-quo, and if you’ve stepped out to give your all to the Lord, you can expect to be assaulted by an ever-present evil.

a. If this describes you, Satan and his helpers will come after you with accusations, hindrances, lies that flood your thoughts.

(1) You’ll be tempted, persecuted, interrupted in your prayers.

(a) You must know that it’s all a conspiracy of evil, aimed straight at your faith.

6. Paul understood what this was all about.
 - a. Every day of his life, Satan dogged the devoted apostle with harassing attacks out of hell.
 - b. We have a record of these assaults in the book of Acts and in Paul's own epistles.
 - (1) We see him being buffeted at every turn, in body, mind and spirit, even to the point of physical death.
 - (2) At one point, Paul states very clearly, *"Satan hindered us"* (I Thessalonians 2:18).
 - (3) Yet, through it all, Paul says, God supplied him with a more sufficient grace.
7. Satan won't bother harassing his own children because he has no controversy with them.
 - a. Jesus says of such people, *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do"* (John 8:44).
 - (1) No, the devil's weapons are aimed at a select few.
 - (2) He's after those who have set their hearts to seek Christ.
 - (3) These saints have a passionate love for Jesus, and they've shut

themselves up in the secret closet of prayer to pursue him.

(4) They're determined to walk in the Spirit and to obey his every Word.

(a) If you're one such believer, there is something you must realize: **you will never be free from the devil's assaults.**

(b) Satan has one thing in mind, and that is to undermine your faith.

(c) He wants you to doubt God's faithfulness.

(d) So he'll bombard you with troubles and trials until finally you wonder, "How could the Lord be with me in the midst of all this?"

8. There are many today – many who have lived for God for most of their lives – that have begun to doubt the Lord in the midst of their trial.

a. They simply don't understand what they are going through.

b. And what they are going through is a spiritual assault!

- (1) **Make no mistake:** the enemy's attacks are especially fierce in these last days.
- (2) Such attacks simply aren't going to let up until Christ returns.
 - (a) Of course, we'll experience seasons of grace because of our merciful Lord.
 - (b) But the reality is, we're in a constant battle; and we must recognize it as such.

B. EVER-PRESENT GOD

- 1. Second, just as there is an ever-present evil, there is an ever-present God!
 - a. God has promised us that, "In your time of trouble – when you face a persistent, unrelenting, and ever-present evil – I will be your ever-present help!"
- 2. We've already established that the phrase "ever present" means, "always here, always available, with unlimited access."
 - a. In short, the abiding presence of the Lord is always in us!
 - (1) And if He's ever-present in us, then He wants continual conversation with us.

(2) He wants us to talk with him no matter where we are:

- (a) On the job,
- (b) With family,
- (c) With friends,
- (d) While we're hunting or fishing,
- (e) When we're on vacation,
 - 1) Just remember, he is always with us and He wants a relationship with us.

3. I refuse to accept the lie Satan has thrust upon so many of God's people today: that the Lord has stopped speaking to his people.

a. The enemy wants us to think God has allowed Satan to grow in power and influence, but that he hasn't equipped his own people with greater authority.

(1) No, never!

(a) Scripture says, *“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).*

1) It doesn't matter what the devil brings against us.

2) God's power in his people will always be greater than Satan's assaults.

4. This verse from Isaiah actually refers to the flag-bearer who rode ahead of Israel's army.
 - a. The Lord always led his people into battle behind his own mighty standard.
 - (1) Likewise today, God has a glorious army of heavenly hosts who ride forth under his banner, ready to execute his battle plans on our behalf.

C. EVER-PRESENT PROBLEM

1. Finally, along with the ever-present evil and an ever-present God, we have an ever-present problem of unbelief.
 - a. This is the only thing that is hinders some from an intimate walk in the Spirit.
2. Israel never did learn to trust God's ever-present help.
 - a. The Lord led them through the wilderness with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

b. These supernatural works were visible reminders to God's people of his constant presence with them.

(1) He was at their right hand every hour of the day.

(2) And he led them like a gentle, caring shepherd.

(3) When they obeyed him, they were safe and at peace, no matter what obstacles they faced.

3. Yet, in spite of God's loving guidance, *"They believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven.... Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble"* (Psalm 78:22-23, 33).

a. Do you see what the Psalmist is saying here?

(1) He's connecting the supernatural cloud and fire with God's salvation.

(2) Trusting in those signs literally would have saved the Israelites' lives.

(3) But because they didn't trust in God's work on their behalf, they ended up lost, wandering in confusion the rest of their days.

III. CLOSE

A. BRINGING IT HOME

1. Now I want to return to where we started, with Psalm 46.

a. I believe this Psalm is a picture of the New Testament “promised land.”

b. Indeed, Psalm 46 represents the divine rest referred to in Hebrews:

(1) **Hebrews 4:9 – *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.***

(a) Psalm 46 describes this rest to God’s people.

(b) It speaks of His ever-present strength, His help in time of trouble, and His peace in the midst of chaos.

1) God’s presence is with us at all times and his help always arrives on time.

2. Yet Israel rejected this rest: ***“They despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word” (Psalm 106:24).***

a. Sadly, the church today is much like Israel.

- (1) In spite of God's great promises to us — his assurances of peace, help and full supply — we don't trust him fully.
 - (2) Instead, we complain...
 - (a) Where is God in my trial?
 - (b) Is he with me or not?
 - (c) Where is any evidence of his presence?
 - (d) Why does he keep letting these hardships pile up on me?
3. How does he react to our unbelief?
- a. He said of Israel's murmuring...
 - (1) **Hebrews 3:10, 17-19** – *I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways....*
 - (2) *With whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?*
 - (3) *And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?*
 - (4) *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

- (a) Likewise, we are warned in **Hebrews 4** (vv. 1 & 11):

1) Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it....

2) Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

B. ALTAR CALL

1. Today, I hear the Lord asking his church...
 - a. Do you believe I still speak to my people?
 - b. Do you believe I desire to give you my help and guidance?
 - c. Do you truly believe I want to speak to you daily, hourly, moment by moment?
 - (1) Our response has to be like David's.
 - (2) That godly man shook all of hell when he made this statement about the Lord: ***“He spake, and***

*it was done; he commanded,
and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:9).*

2. Here is God’s covenant promise to every generation who would believe his Word that he desires to speak to us:

- a. Psalm 33:11 – *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*

- (1) The Creator of the universe wants to share his very thoughts with us!

3. Scripture makes it clear: our God spoke to his people in the past, he’s speaking to his people now, and he’ll continue to speak to us till the very end of time.

- a. More to the point, God wants to speak to you about your problem today.

- (1) He may do it through his Word, through a godly friend, or through the Spirit’s still, small voice, whispering, “This is the way, walk in it.”

- (a) Yet, no matter what means He uses, you will recognize his voice.

- (b) The sheep know the voice of their Shepherd. And he is faithful to “*(preserve) the souls of his saints; he*

*delivereth them out of the
hand of the wicked”*
(Psalm 97:10).

4. Won't you come?