

## Be Still, and Know I am God

Հանդարտ Կեցի՛ք ու Գիտցի՛ք թէ Ես Եմ Աստուած

### Psalm 46

Today would have been Rally Sunday, when we start our ministries after the summer break. It is the Sunday when the choir would come back with a new anthem. It is the Sunday when the Sunday School would come back. It is the Sunday when we would ask the leadership of the church to come forward for prayer and dedication. It is the Sunday when I would ask all Bible study leaders to present their study themes. And after the worship service, we would continue our celebration in the social hall and encourage our congregation to plug in to our ministries.

Well, we don't have those this year. I realized how many things happen around me over which I don't have any control. This concept is not new, but it hit me lately. The explosion in Beirut, the pandemic in the US and around the world, the California fires and the smoke... you name it. One after each other came and hit us. Ok, so we don't have control over many things.

This Sunday I would also present the yearly theme. Last year it was **Living Right Side Up in an Upside Down World**. Did I predict would be living really in upside-down world? In my heart I was laughing and thinking maybe my theme for 2020-2021 should be the same theme-part 2.

Here is what God on my heart for this coming year:

**“Be Still, and Know that I Am God. I will be Exalted Among the Nations.”**

(Psalm 46:10 ESV)

Wait a minute, Lord. You want me to stay still. Do you want me to freeze?

The Hebrew word for “**be still**” is *raphah*, which means: **to sink, relax, sink down, let drop, to let go, stop striving...**

The picture is clear: **surrender to God. He is in control the situation.**

Does this mean we don't do anything? Do we just sit on the chair and do nothing?

Let us see what we can learn from this psalm.

Eleven verses, divided to three parts, each part ending with word Selah..(musical notation)

The NIV commentary says about this psalm that it is **radical trust in God in the midst of war, turmoil.**

How appropriate is this psalm for the condition we live in. How much control we have over the circumstances we live in? There are many things that happen to us as a consequence of the wrong choices we make. However, there are so many things that are not dependent on our action, events over which we have no control. I believe as your pastor my role is to encourage you and help you focus on God, especially in these times.

We don't know which war or threat the psalmist is addressing. Yet, Israel has seen many wars and much turmoil. So let us look at the sections:

### **1. Radical Trust in God. (46:1-3) Կատարեալ Վստահութիւն Աստուծոյ Վրայ**

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

**<sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,**

**<sup>3</sup>though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah***

Martin Luther wrote his famous hymn “O Mighty Fortress is our God” based on Psalm 46. Things do not look good. There is fear that the mountains will be moved towards the sea... the waters roar and foam... the mountains tremble... there is a chaotic situation. In Genesis, God created order and divided the waters from the land. *Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.”*

Please notice the contrast:

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present (NIV) very present (ESV) help in trouble.” God is our fortress. (46:7, 11)

The Psalmist is describing who God is. Here we find the attributes of God.

-Illustration: When I was walking on the coast with Sevan this last month, we saw a bird comfortably sitting on the edge of the cliff. On the other side, the waves of the ocean were roaring. Sevan took a picture of a bird. Sitting on a rock peacefully watching in the midst of turmoil...

Therefore, will not fear... even though....

Remember who God is.... Therefore, we will not fear...

## **2. God's Protective Presence (46:4-7) Աստուծոյ Պաշտպանող Ներկայութիւնը**

**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 her; she shall not be moved;  
God will help her when morning dawns.**

**<sup>6</sup> The nations rage, 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 fortress. *Selah***

In the first part, waters were dangerous, swallowing the earth. However, here we have streams of water, a river that brings life to the city of God.

The contrast between the first waters and the second is enormous.

At first, the waters present a threat and chaos; in the second part streams of fresh water bring gladness to the city of God.

What kind of waters you are facing, stormy? Are they dangerous and threatening? Or streams of living water as God is in your midst.

The Psalmist is describing Jerusalem as the city of God. And the Temple of God is in the midst of it. God will protect this city. Although you will have attacks (v6) yet God is in the midst of it, in the middle of it.

Now here is something to notice. We should read this psalm in the context of the entire Bible. The Israelites trusted Jerusalem, and the Temple, and forgot that God was the One to be worshiped.

The NIV commentary says: "God is in the midst of her" is an assertion of absolute confidence that could be misleading if not coupled with covenant loyalty and obedience."<sup>1</sup>

Please read Jeremiah 7, where he demands of the Israelites to turn to God Yahweh and humbly worship Him. Jeremiah says: **Do not trust in deceptive words and say, “This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!”** (Jeremiah 7:2-15)

Jesus cried over Jerusalem. Jesus also predicted that the Temple would be destroyed. The way I read this is God built a new temple through Jesus our Lord. He himself became the Temple of God (John 2:19). Then each of us is the Temple of God..... (1 Cor 3:16-17).

I read this psalm and I see God’s presence in our cities, in our churches, in our world. I see God is comforting His people (us) today that the streams of living water can come to each of us and give us new life to our dry souls that need His presence in our lives.

That is comforting to me....

### **3. Be Still and Know (46:8-11) Հանդարտ Կեցէ՛ք եւ Գիտցէ՛ք**

**Come, behold the works of the LORD,  
how he has brought desolations 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 chariots with fire.**

**<sup>10</sup> “Be still, and know that I am God.  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth!”**

**<sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah***

We see here God is stopping the wars, breaking the bow, shattering spear, burning chariots and so on.

How much I cry out to our Lord to bring an end to ongoing violence and war in this world.

So far, the psalm uses the third person to describe who God is. When we arrive to verse 10, it is like, “Attention!” God speaks in first person:

“Be still, and know that I am God.  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth!”

If God is stopping the war, let us use a military term: Attention. Be still. **Stop, relax, sink down, let drop, to let go, stop striving...**

I love to fix things. Here I see God is saying, Nerses, stop and surrender to me; it is my war not yours; “only when we cease our own frantic activity can we begin to experience God’s acting for us. Only then, says the psalmist, can we know that he is God.”<sup>2</sup>

“BE still” does not mean to do nothing.

When I read a psalm like this (which is a song by the way),

I’ll continue to **worship** Him;

I’ll continue to **thank** Him of who He is;

I’ll continue to **pray** daily;

I’ll continue to **know Him** daily in reading **His Word** and meditating;

I’ll continue to **serve Him** daily by seeking His will where and what to do?

I’ll continue **remember his promises** of protection and guidance;

Let us summarize:

We live in an upside-down world. so

“**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 ESV)

1. Gerald H. Wilson, The NIV Application Commentary. P 717

2. ibid. p 721

Աստուած մեր ապաւենն ու զօրութիւնն է.

Նեղութիւններու մէջ միշտ պատրաստ է օգնելու:

<sup>2</sup> Անոր համար պիտի չվախնանք, թէեւ երկիրը փոխուի

Ու լեռները ծովուն մէջտեղը ձգուին,

<sup>3</sup> Թէեւ անոր ջուրերը գոռան ու պղտորին,

Լեռները դողան անոր ուռենալովը: (Մէլա:)

<sup>4</sup>Գետին վտակները պիտի ուրախացնեն Աստուծոյ քաղաքը,  
Բարձրելոյն սուրբ բնակարանները:

<sup>5</sup>Աստուած անոր մէջ է, անիկա պիտի չսասանի.

Աստուած անոր պիտի օգնէ առտուն կանուխ:

<sup>6</sup>Հեթանոսները կը խռովին, թագաւորութիւնները կը շարժին.  
Բարձրեալը իր ձայնը կու տայ, երկիր կը հալի:

<sup>7</sup>Զօրաց Տէրը մեզի հետ է.

Յակոբին Աստուածը մեր ապաւենն է: (Մէլա:)

<sup>8</sup>Եկէ՛ք ու տեսէ՛ք Տէրոջը գործերը,

Որ աւերումներ ըրաւ երկրի մէջ:

<sup>9</sup>Պատերազմները կը դադարեցնէ մինչեւ երկրի ծայրը.

Աղեղը կը կոտրտէ ու նիզակը կը ջարդէ, կառքերը կրակով կ'այրէ:  
Հանդարտ կեցէ՛ք ու գիտցէ՛ք թէ՛ ես եմ Աստուած. Հեթանոսներուն մէջ  
պիտի բարձրանամ,

երկրի վրայ պիտի բարձրանամ:

<sup>11</sup>Զօրաց Տէրը մեզի հետ է,

Յակոբին Աստուածը մեզի ապաւենն է: (Մէլա:)