

“God Our Refuge” - Psalm 46:1-11
Pastor Burt Garwood – November 12, 2017

Psalm 46:7 *“The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”*

- I loved to build forts when I was a kid. Some forts were inside. A sheet draped over some dining room chairs. A large box with a door carved out of it. Pillows piled like sandbags to keep the bad guys out.
- Forts outside were more work. First a foxhole dug into the dirt. Then wood piled and propped around and over the hole like a beaver’s den.

Remember back to when you built forts...

- There is something comforting about a fort. It’s your space.
- And in your mind as a child, you’re safe there. Four walls surrounding you, keeping the bad guys out.

Some forts are a place we go to when life has hit us on the nose. We need a physical place for refuge and safety.

Other forts are people we run to.

- I remember one night as a kid growing up in the Philippines, I saw the shadow of a coconut palm branch waving outside my window. It may as well have been a horrible monster from my vantage point. I lay there stiff as a board, unable to move. After what seemed like an eternity, I finally eked out the name of my hero: “Dad!” He was there in a flash to rescue me.
- I get to do that now. One of my kids will yell mom! And I’ll just lay there pretending to be sound asleep.
- But if they say my name, “DAD!” Suddenly I’m wearing a cape and I’m faster than a speeding bullet. I’m their hero. I would never want to disappoint or damage their trust in me for not coming through.

Psalm 46:1 *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”*

- When we sin, we have a tendency to run away from God instead of toward him. That’s because our view of God is wrong.
- We wrongfully put too much emphasis on an angry God who is ready to punish us and cast us out of his presence.
- In reality, God is our fortress and foundation.
- And although your sin separates you from God, he is waiting with arms wide open to scoop you up, dust you off and forgive you of your sin.

I want my kids to know that they can approach me when they’ve done something wrong. No, I want them to know that they can run to me! And that I won’t turn them away.

- That I am their refuge and strength. That I will forgive, instead of push them away. That I am always waiting, with daddy’s strong arms.
- That no matter what tough things they are dealing with in their lives, that they can run to me.
- That should be our picture of our Father in Heaven. A healthy view of their father solidifies in them a healthy view of their Father-God.

READ: Hebrews 4:14-16

- Jesus has been through life here on earth with all the pain and temptation and wounds. He was victorious over all of it.
- God is not oblivious to our pain. He is intimately familiar with it. And this only makes him all the more accessible. He wants nothing more than to rescue you from your sin.

It may seem like he’s watching from afar.

- But he’s only as far away as you make him.
- Because in all reality, when you stop holding him at arm’s length, you discover he has been right there with you the entire time.
- If you will just let him into the fortress you’ve built around your heart and allow him to become your refuge and strength.

READ: Psalm 46:1-3

- This is a triumphant confession of fearless trust in God. The earth could crumble to pieces under our feet, but we will be safe in God our refuge and strength.
- No matter what happens around us, no matter what is happening to us, we can run to God. That’s what the ancients who wrote this Psalm believed.

However, we tend to think that if we believe in God that nothing bad is going to happen.

- It’s one of the reasons why our faith is so shaken in difficult times. It’s why we find ourselves questioning God and doubting his presence and strength in our lives when bad things happen. But look at verses two and three again.
- The ancients who wrote this Psalm were fully aware that suffering is real and that bad things happen to good people all the time. They understood that they lived in a world that is harassed by satan and full of sin.
- None of this however made their faith waver. They ran to God for refuge. He was their fortress.

What about you? Where are you at with God on this?

- Do you find yourself running from God or toward him in times of pain and struggle?
- What needs to change in your view of God to see him like a dad who dons his cape and comes to the rescue of his children?
- Not that God fixes everything and takes away all the pain. Because that will leave you disappointed when God chooses not to fix it right away. (John 16:33)
- But a faith that knows your loving heavenly Father is with you every step of the way.

This is the faith of the ancients who wrote this Psalm.