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Psalm 46:1-3
"Safety and Security"
46-19 Sermon Series

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Some of you, like me, are old enough to recognize this scene. I recall, as a young child, going through air raid drills at school. The world back then was tense and scared. The two great nuclear powers, our USA and the Soviet Union, were in a Cold War, a war of words and intimidation. I remember learning how to huddle under my desk at school. That was supposed to be our refuge, our protection, in case of a nuclear attack. Not much safety and security, in reality, under that desk, was there?

Finding safety and security, in this troubled world, isn't easy. Today's children have their own safety drills at school, and we grownups are all dealing with family troubles, health troubles, marriage troubles, financial troubles. The world we live in is home to wars, crimes, terrorists, hurricanes, earthquakes, human trafficking, illnesses, suffering, death, and so many other troubles.

Where is our refuge? Where can we find, in 2019, safety and security?

Psalm 46 talks about refuge. This beautiful psalm addresses our need for safety and security. And I love that this portion of the Bible -- like so many others -- doesn't ignore the reality of our troubled world. Psalm 46 doesn't ask us to stick our head in the proverbial sand, as Christians. The troubles around us? Real! But so is our refuge.

Let's read together verses 1-3: *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains*

be moved into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling."

Those last two verses read like a scene from a Hollywood disaster movie, with computer-generated special effects. But the world we live in has plenty of real troubles, doesn't it?

Psalm 46 tells it like it really is. Our world today in 2019 is full of troubles. And sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we can't fix them, can't avoid them.

I can quickly think of specific troubles, just in my own little family, that weigh on me heavily. My grandson, my brother, my daughter, my sister-in-law. I desperately wish I could fix or resolve their very real troubles. But I can't. What I can do, though, is tell them about a very real refuge. What I can share with them is a place of safety and security that they need, that I need, that we all need.

Psalm 46:1. Read it with me again, please. "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" God is our refuge. Not some flimsy school desk, like back in the 60's. Not a thick city wall, made of big stones, like back in the days of Nehemiah and the people of the Bible. God is our refuge.

Not medicines or healthy eating. Not regular exercise or hot yoga. Not money or savings, family or friends, or any of the temporary things of this world. God is our refuge. God the omnipotent. God who controls the universe and governs the galaxies. God who watches rulers, nations, and civilizations rise and fall.

God is the ultimate place of safety and security. And Psalm 46, the very word of God, proclaims today that our God doesn't have his head stuck in the sand when we deal with

troubles. He knows. He understands. He sees. He cares. God is a very present help in trouble, an immediate presence. And God provides a refuge, a place of security and safety, for you.

God has always provided refuge for his people. Think of Noah's ark, and the dry land in the middle of the Red Sea. Think of Jonah's whale, and the Jerusalem Temple.

But then the ultimate refuge was provided. God sent his Son into our troubled world to be our refuge. God took on our flesh, and in Christ Jesus, he lived our life. He faced real troubles, trials, enemies, injustices. He grieved. He cried. Jesus experienced the joys and thrills of this world, but its tumult and turmoil, too.

Read these words of Jesus (John 16:33). But be warned, they're not entirely comforting. Jesus doesn't promise to brush away all of our troubles, and lay rose petals on our paths. But what does he say? He speaks these words to his disciples in the Upper Room, on Maundy Thursday, the night before he is crucified for sinners. Let's read together: *"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*

Just like Psalm 46. Jesus tells it like it is. He's not ignoring our troubles, or brushing them under the rug. Instead, for our sake -- for our safety and security -- Jesus becomes our refuge in this troubled world.

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." Jesus enters our world. He enters our troubles. And, in a very real way, Jesus is our safety and security.

Think back to that Upper Room. Maundy Thursday, the last supper. Jesus takes the bread, and what does he say? *"This is my body, given for you."* He takes the cup of wine, and says, *"This is my blood, shed for you."* Jesus invites his disciples that night to participate in the meal, but really to participate in him. He is their safety, their security.

And today he makes the same invitation to you. The Lord's Supper is a tangible way of Jesus being your safety and security. *"My body, for you. My blood, for you."* God himself offering you a place of refuge. Refuge from the guilt of your sin. Refuge from shame, from fear, from worry, from anxiety.

"Does God really love me? Really care? Does he really forgive me? Does he know how messed up I am inside, how unfaithful I've been?" He does. He knows. And he says, *"This is my body, my blood, given and shed for you."*

Finding safety and security like that isn't easy. But our Lord Jesus has such great love for you that he entered our world of troubles, so you could have refuge forever in him. Just believe. Just trust. Just put your faith in him, in Christ your eternal refuge.

Let's close by joining our voices with the faithful people of God through the centuries. We confidently proclaim once more these eternal words of God for today's troubled world.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling."

Amen.