

A Mighty Fortress is Our God: Overcoming the Anxiety Around Us by Feeding Our Faith, not Our Fear

The collective breath of the world has been arrested by government-enforced lockdowns, school cancellations, social distancing, fears of getting sick, and rising death tolls. COVID-19, the highly contagious virus spreading across the globe, has made most of our lives feel out of control and confusing. Anxiety may feel as natural as breathing under the current circumstances.

Knowing how to respond to our COVID-related anxieties requires accurately assessing the type of anxiety we are experiencing. **Not all anxieties are the same.** What do I mean by that?

** _____ vs. _____ **Anxieties**

Factual anxiety is an emotional response to something that actually happened. Hypothetical anxiety is an emotional response to something that might happen.

** _____ vs. _____ **Anxieties**

Rational anxieties are an emotional response to something that is possible (not necessarily probable). Irrational anxieties are an emotional response to something that is impossible or highly unlikely.

** _____ vs. _____ **Anxieties**

Temporal anxieties highlight the discomfort of the situation. Ultimate anxieties despair over a lack of hope or meaning in life. If we are not careful, we have a propensity to treat temporal anxieties (aversion to discomfort) as if they are necessarily ultimate anxieties (doubting God's goodness and faithfulness in hard times).

Here's what experience teaches us during times of crisis: _____.

What we need are eternal truths for troubled times - **Psalm 46.**

Psalm 46 was written out of the experience of extreme adversity from which God had provided deliverance. It relates to anyone who is in a time of trouble, or to anyone who will face trouble, no matter how extreme. It tells us that when trouble strikes, God is sufficient to get you through.

Before us is a Psalm of hope and confidence for troubled days. For this morning, we will study the opening 3 verses under the heading **of**:

I. The _____ of God: He is our _____; therefore, we will not _____. (46:1-3)

A. His presence is _____ (46:1)

Please note the use of the words '*our*', '*we*', and '*us*'.

B. His presence is _____ (46:1)

In just the very first word of this verse (God), the writer establishes the authority of the one to whom he is referring.

1. The _____ communicated in His name (46:1a)

The name of God that is used here, is known as the Hebrew name "**Elohim.**" The name '**Elohim**' is used over 2,500 times in the Old Testament. It is '**Elohim**' who is mentioned in **Genesis 1:1**. Therefore, we see the God, the Psalmist is referring to, is the mighty one, the strong one; and, His authority is communicated in His name.

2. The _____
granted to His people (46:1b)

The Psalmist uses key words to describe what God provides.

a) _____

By this word, he shows that God's ability is seen by us in times of danger. **Question:** who do you turn to when facing what seems like insurmountable circumstances? Who do you turn to in moments of crisis?

b) _____

The Psalmist not only informs us that He is "our refuge," but He is also our "**strength.**" Thus, His ability is not only seen by us in times of danger, but His ability is shown to us in times of demand.

Two types of help our envisioned in this verse. The **first** type of help points to God as a stronghold into which we can flee. Sometimes God shields us from what is going to happen around us. In such times, God is our fortress...our **refuge.** **Secondly,** the type of help is referred to as a source of inner strength by which we can face calamities. You and I will face times of affliction and suffering. During these times, you and I can experience the presence of God and enjoy His **strength. But wait...there's more!!**

c) _____

The phrase: "**an ever-present help in trouble,**" as the NIV renders it, or "**a very present help in trouble**"(KJV), indicates an experience of God's help. You see, it matters not what we face, because His presence always supersedes the need. It is not a mere average presence, not is it an adequate presence. But it is "**an abundantly available presence.**" Therefore, since we will always live in the present, we will always live with His presence, for He will always be present!

C. His presence is _____ (46:2-3)

Please note the phrase '**we will not fear**'. Why is His presence precious? Because it provides comfort and confidence no matter what may be happening around us or even in us thanks to the unchanging character of God.

The psalmist introduces cosmic and nature language to further confirm the all-encompassing promise of God's presence and provision.

1. 'Though the _____ gives way'

2. 'Though the _____ be
moved into the heart of the sea'

Though we face unsettled times, we have not an unsettled God. This is the testimony of the **Bible.**

- **Psalm 102:26-27**
- **Malachi 3:6**
- **James 1:17**

Everything in the universe changes except God.

What can we take with us this morning?

GODISNOWHERE...What do you see?

How your answer might just reveal whether you're feeding your faith or feeding your fear?

God is _____ or God is _____

Psalm 46 reminds us that...

1. _____ will strike the godly

Psalm 46 shows that when trouble strikes,

2. God is _____ to get you through

As our refuge, we can flee to God and find relief and comfort. As our strength, we discover that His strength is made perfect in our weakness as we trust in Him (2 Cor. 12:9). And, God's protection and strength are immediately available ("**a very present help**") the instant we turn to Him. While He may delay delivering us to show us our absolute need for Him or for reasons we can't understand, we can always have immediate comfort and calm when we flee to God for refuge and strength.

Here's a key thought: **a crisis does not make a person; a crisis _____ a person.**

For you to experience God's sufficiency in a crisis, you must be experiencing it each day. If you aren't learning to depend on Him as your refuge, when things are going smoothly, you won't know how when trouble strikes.

God is in control of everything, even when things seem uncontrollable. Therefore, we can overcome our anxiety with this truth and trust God's perfect control of all things in the days ahead of us.