

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “Be Still” from the “Rest for the Stressed” sermon series

Scripture: Psalm 46:1-11

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- The Book of Psalms is a part of Biblical wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). These books are: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Book of Wisdom, Book of Sirach (which is a part of the Apocrypha).
- For this week’s reading in Psalms, we read about God always being there to help and provide refuge to us in our time of need. God is the ultimate authority in all areas of our life and is our source of peace. We can have confidence in God’s power and victory over our troubles in life. God will rescue and provide security to those who love Him and place their faith and trust in Him.
- In verses 1-3, we see a reference to creation and God’s activity in nature and being the source of our refuge. Creation is a result of God creating and bringing order out of chaos and continues to do so in nature.
- Verse 2 says, “Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...” No matter what may happen, God is always in control and is our help and refuge.
- In verses 4-7, God is our help and sustainer. The “city of God” in verse 4 refers to Jerusalem, which does not have the water source and river banks as the other great cities in this region in antiquity. Nevertheless, the “river whose streams make glad the city of God” is the presence of the living God. There is also reference to New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-5.
- In verses 8-11, God is our hope and these verses focus on the future in which “wars cease to the ends of the earth.” Verse 10 says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”
- According to the NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible commentary, “This verse (10) might record a direct speech from God given to a temple priest or prophet.
 - However, because of its brevity, this verse is more likely a citation of a well-known prophetic saying (see Hab. 2:20). The force of this command is probably directed to the worshipping community; the people are encouraged in the context to rest in God’s power to save them from warfare (37:7).”

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- The key verse for today's message is from Psalm 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."
- It is easy to forget the faithfulness of God and live in fear, however, committing this verse to memory will help us during these times.
- Fear robs us of joy, peace and the ability to experience love in our lives. This is not a new phenomenon, as all throughout Scripture God's people encounter fear and doubt. We see this prominently in the Book of Psalms. Psalm 46 lists many things that people can be afraid of. The focus is not the fears, but on the faithfulness of God to see us through these fears.
- The Psalmist points to two ways to know how God is faithful: (1) through God's character; (2) through God's actions.
- As the Psalmist is reciting God's character and actions in these verses of chapter 46, something interesting happens in the Psalm. The narrator of the Psalm changes! Instead of the Psalmist praying these things to God, God breaks in and speaks in v. 10: "Be still and know that I am God."
- Be still: "Being completely alone with nothing but our thoughts can be frightening, so we will use anything to distract us from experiencing the soul-healing that comes in solitude." -John Ortberg
- It is hard for us to "be still" because it is an act of "surrender" in a world that seeks control. Being still is a practice in which God's presence meets us and ministers to us.
- We understand that faith without works is dead, but this Psalm helps us to get the order of things right. It is important to be still *before* we move into action.
- An example of this is in Exodus 14 where Moses tells the Israelites to not be afraid but be still and know the Lord will act on their behalf. God then parted the Red Sea and delivered His people.
- We can begin to be still by starting small..."...take a vacation from being god and let Me be God for a change?" -Pete Greig *How to Pray*
- Look to the life of Christ as a model of being still before acting.
- When we stop all of our striving, and are still before the Lord, God's Spirit will meet us and begin to give us what we need.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- In verse 4, the Psalmist writes: “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.” What do you think this means?
- In what ways can you seek refuge in God? What does this look like?
- What is the significance of Jerusalem not having a river or water source in this chapter? What does it mean for us?
- In what ways can we know that God is faithful from these verses in Psalm 46?
- What is the significance of verse 10: “Be still and know that I am God.”? What does it mean to “be still”? Why is it hard for us to “be still”?
- What is the importance of being still before we act upon something?
- Take some time this week to begin the practice of being still. It does not have to be long or planned out. Just set aside short periods of time to be still with God.

