

Singing Psalm 46

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Preacher: Dave Giesbers

[0 : 00] Psalm 46, this is what Dave will preach from. Now this is the word of the Lord.

! There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter.

He utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. Come, behold the works of the Lord. How he's brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear.

[1 : 24] He burns the chariot with fire. Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. This is God's word. Thank you. Thank you, William. How good. How good to hear the living and true God speak as we read his word together. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you speak. You're not a silent God. You speak as you've done just now. As your word was read, your wairua tapu, your Holy Spirit, speaks and whispers to our souls. Father, we think especially of those amongst us that sit under a dark cloud.

[2 : 33] That are feeling intensely the brokenness of this world. Father, we ask that you would be our refuge. You would shine light into that darkness and that bleakness.

Help us to see you clearly. Our rock and our redeemer. Amen. Well, I wonder where you go for refuge.

Where do you turn for rest? From the struggles of living in a broken world, whether it's just the daily grind. You know, you wake up, you go to work.

Work is hard. Travelling in traffic is hard. Getting shopping on the way home is hard. Sitting exams at uni is hard. Trying to understand lectures is hard.

And, or whether, maybe it's the bigger things in life. When natural disasters strike. When people do things that are awful. And they hurt.

[3 : 40] We need a place of refuge in that moment. A place of safety. Almost a year ago. Just over a year ago, actually. I woke to my wife Rachel's voice.

She said, you're okay. You're in safe hands. You're right where you need to be. This is a photo of me. That's because I'd been in a coma.

Fighting for my life. For five and a half weeks. Now, I was oblivious to all of that. And all I thought I was doing. Was waking up from a nap. And I'm lying there going. Why do I need to be in safe hands?

Like. I'm fine. I was not. The 7th of July. Was a normal Sunday. We had church. We went out to lunch.

With our kind of church staff team. We had lunch together. At Steph's. At their house. And the kids were running around.

[4 : 41] And yeah. Monday I woke up. And I felt tired. And I thought. You know what? I'll just work from home today. And. I went in to see the GP later. That afternoon.

He took one look at me. And he's like. Go to ED. Tuesday. Tuesday. I was transferred to ICU. By Wednesday.

The doctors were sitting down. With my wife. And saying. Chances are. Your husband's not going to make it. He's got a 20 to 30 percent. Chance of making it. I had a ventilator.

Which I think is in that photo. I'm not quite sure how to. Understand that photo. I was asleep. I had a ventilator. That wasn't working. I had ECMO machine.

To do the work of my lungs. And heart. I spent five weeks. In ICU. In a coma. Nine weeks in hospital. A year on.

[5 : 36] And. My watch told me the other day. I have the fitness age. Of a 61 year old. That's good news though. Because. A couple of months ago.

I was 63. So I need to have like. A reverse birthday party. Each time. My watch drops a year. I think. And. One of our friends. Has started calling this.

Season in my life. As my drama. Like. Thank you Hayley. But for five weeks. My wife Rachel's. Life was very simple. She woke up in the morning.

She sent the kids off to school. Simple but awful. And then she went. And sat beside me. While I lay. The whole world falling apart. Where do you. Look for.

Where do you find refuge. In that moment. Because. That's what this psalm is all about. And. Here's the thing. The thing that will offer refuge.

[6 : 33] In this moment. When you look like this. Or this. Sorry. You don't know what I'm pointing to. When you look like this. The thing that offers refuge. In that moment.

Is the thing that. Will offer refuge. Whatever you are going through. Whatever you're going through. So. Let's jump in. And let's explore this psalm together. Read with me. Psalm 46. To the choir master. Of the sons of Korah.

According to Elamoth. A song. A song. And because this is a song. We're going to learn today.

How to sing this song. Together. Are you with me? I won't sing for you. That would hurt. But we're going to learn. How to sing this song together. We're going to start.

[7 : 28] We're going to start. Learning how to sing this song. First. With the sons of Korah. I think we have a slide here. That will show us where we're going. First. We're going to sing this. With the sons of Korah. And what we'll see.

Is that. This song. Has three movements. As we walk through. First. We'll. Each movement. It's marked. It depends on which translation. You've got. With the ESV. There's this.

Little word. Selah. At the end of each. Movement. It's a musical term. Perhaps. Maybe something to give us rest. As we go through. And each. Movement. It swings back and forth.

Between safety. And then danger. And. In the first. Movement. We meet. The God who offers refuge. When everything goes wrong. The second movement.

We meet. The God who gives rest. When everyone. Is against us. And then the final movement. Will lead us together. To respond.

[8 : 26] To this God. In worship. The God who is worthy. Of worship. And once we've sung. This song.

With the sons of Korah. We're going to sing it again. With Jesus Christ. Seeing its climax. In Jesus Christ. The son of God.

And then. We'll consider. How we can sing it here. In Pakaranga. As PCBC English. So let's jump into this first.

Movement. Where we meet the God. Who offers refuge. When everything. Goes wrong. And we start. As I mentioned. We start with safety. So.

Read with me. Psalm 46. Verse 1. God. Is our refuge. And strength. A very present. Help. In trouble. You know.

[9 : 22] Often we look for. Refuge. In. Physically. Don't we. We look for strength. Physically. If it's raining outside. We come into a building.

Out of the. The storm. Here. Though. In verse 1. They're found in God. And refuge is useless. If it's not up to the task.

Isn't it? If it's too weak. Or if it's too far away. But God isn't just close. He isn't just present. This one. He's very present. Right. Here. In times of trouble. It's like. When. A little child. A toddler. Maybe.

Takes. Those first steps.

And the. And mum or dad. A parent. Or an auntie. An uncle. Is kind of just. Just standing there.

Ready. To grab. The little child. As they take their first. Step. Ready to catch.

[10 : 17] Catch them. If. They'll stumble. And that means. Verse 2. Therefore. We will. Not.

Fear. You see. This. That's the safety. Of the first movement. Because. We need to see. The refuge. That God. Offers. And when we've seen.

That refuge. That means. We can then. Face. The danger. The danger. Of the world. Tearing itself. Apart. Let's read. From verse 2.

Again. Therefore. We will not fear. Though the earth gives way. Though the mountains be moved. Into the heart. Of the sea.

Though its waters roar. And foam. Though the mountains tremble. At its swelling. Sell out. See. This is a picture. Of danger.

[11:13] And distress. Isn't it? That mountains. Collapsing. Into the sea. The sea's roaring. And foaming. Massive waves. Storms. So powerful. That mountains. Are quaking.

Buckling. At the force. Earthquakes. Landslides. The awful. Distress. Now. We've seen. The storms. That rip through.

Aotearoa. Haven't we? Roofs. That get. Blown off buildings. Floods. That sweep. Through. Trees. That get. Ripped.

Out of the ground. The imagery. Here. It's just. Full of. Destruction. And distress. This power. That is. So.

Unbelievable. So. Unmatchable. Well. That is. Until. It is. Compared. To God. You see.

[12:07] The strength. Of God. And the refuge. He offers. Means. That we have. No. Reason. To fear. Isn't that good?

Did you notice. The drumbeat. That goes through. The section. Verse 2. Therefore. We will not fear. Though. The earth gives way.

Though. The mountains. Be moved. Into the heart. Of the sea. Though. Its waters. Roar. And foam. Though. The mountains. Tremble. At its swelling. God.

Is our refuge. And strength. When. Everything. Goes wrong. Not. Not just. When everything. Is good. We experience.

This broken world. In so many different ways. Don't we? Danger. And destruction. Loss. And grief. Thank you. For sharing. Your story. Eileen. And it's especially awful.

[13:04] When we feel it ourselves. Isn't it? When the brokenness. Touches. Our lives. My family and I felt it last year.

When I. Slipped into this coma. But we all feel it. Don't we? Loss. Grief. Depression. Anxiety.

The heavy. Weight. That just kind of sits. On your shoulders. As you go through life. In a broken world. And so.

How good. To have a God. Who offers refuge. When everything. Goes wrong. Here's a message. I received. From someone here. At PCBC. It was back in January.

Hi Pastor Dave. How are you doing? I checked. With Pastor William. Earlier today. To see. If it would be fitting. To flick your message. And see how you are. Anything I can keep you.

[14:00] In prayers for. How beautiful is that? How good. To have a dear. Sister in Christ. To be seeking.

Refuge. On my behalf. In the God. Who offers it. How good. That's our first movement. God's refuge. When everything. Goes wrong.

The next movement. We see. God's rest. When everyone. Is against us. And here again. We start in safety.

And the rest. That God offers. That overflows. Into joy. Look at this imagery. In verse four. With me. There is a river. Whose streams.

Make glad. The city. Of God. The holy habitation. Of the most. High. Stunning. Like.

[14:58] Maybe. Riding. Beside the ocean. With water. On both sides. But. Rivers. Rivers. In the Bible. Are not just. A beautiful thing. To look at. Rivers.

Bring. Life. And joy. And. Riches. In the Bible. And so. This river. Here. It brings. Life. And joy. As God.

Dwells. With his people. Did you notice? Verse five. God. Is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God.

Will help her. When morning dawns. You see. This is where. God. Dwells. With. His. People. The city.

This is. The God. Who dwells with. And protects. His people. But God. Isn't. A lucky charm. He's not a vending machine. So this isn't.

[15:54] About the safety. Of a city. Or a temple. Or a church. Building. This is a safety. On offer. For all. Who love God. And have a relationship.

With him. And. And we experience it. In part now. But we. Experience it. Ultimately. In eternity. You see. Safety like.

I don't know. If you know. This experience. Safety like. Having a big brother. Standing beside you. When. The bully comes. Walking past. At school. I have a younger brother. But he's bigger than me. We have safety now. Safety from. A God. Who. Can and does. Answer prayer.

Who comforts. By. His. Holy Spirit. Who supports. And encourages. Through his people. And who sometimes. Chooses to intervene.

[16:50] And we have safety. Safety later. Safety that can never be taken. And eternal hope. That's ours. If we trust in Jesus.

And now. If we've grasped. The safety. In Psalm 46. The goodness of God's rest. Then. We can. Endure the devastating.

And destructive things. That people do. To each other. And maybe to us. Verse 6. Read with me. The nations rage.

The kingdoms totter. He utters. His voice. The earth. Melts. This is a picture. Of terror.

Of war. Coming. To the city. War. Conflict. Special. Military. Operations. Invasion. Danger. And destruction. They fill our news feeds.

[17:53] Globally. Ukraine. Hamas. Israel. Lebanon. Iran. It's devastating. But closer to home. Closer to home. Even in peaceful.

Safe. Aotearoa. New Zealand. Domestic abuse. One in three women.

Will face that. One in three. Misused power. In our workplaces. In our families. Those places. That should be most safe.

And yet we do awful things to one another. Don't we? Devastating. And we're powerless to stop it. At least on our own. Verse six again.

The nations rage. The kingdoms totter. He utters his voice. The earth mounts. You see as God speaks.

[18:52] Earth stops. This isn't this kind of frantic cry. From a. Weak and powerless God. Desperate.

To see something stop. But powerless to change anything. As nations rage. And brutal people do awful things to one another. And as he looks on from a distance. And he can't act. It's not that.

This is the majestic God. Who made all things. Raising his voice. Just above. A whisper. So that's his remarkable power.

That's the power of God. He just says be still. Quiet. Stop. And creation rests. Nations quiet.

That's because our God is. Did you see the refrain in verse seven? The Lord of hosts is with us. God of Jacob is our fortress.

[19:51] Selah. The Lord of hosts. Or the Lord Almighty. Maybe if you have the NIV in front of you. Yahweh. It's his personal and covenant relational name of God.

The God who saves. The God who rescues. The God who loves. And the God who whispers. And evil ends. Conflict ceases.

You know like the school teacher. And it's kind of utter chaos. In the classroom in front of them. And they just raise their hand. And the noise stops. Classroom fades.

To total calmness. What would it look like. To seek refuge in this God. From the awful things that people do to one another.

In this broken world. It starts. By hearing his voice. And asking. Could we. Be doing harm.

[20:52] To one another. Could we. That's a shocking thought. But we all do. Don't we. A harsh word.

Gossip. The things we say. When someone's not around. Or worse. Could we use.

The power that we have. In different places. To control others. Rather than using. Our power to serve. And for their good. Sad to say.

That too often. In a case. That's for me. That's me. Too harsh. With my kids. Too thoughtless. With words.

That I. Say about. Someone. Rather than. To them. Well. If you're like me. We need to hear.

[21:53] God's voice. Today. If that's you. Then. Stop. Stop. Get help. Talk to Pastor William later. If you're. Unsure.

Of where to start. But what about. When we are being hurt. When. The things. That are happening. Are happening to us. What it can't mean.

Is this. It can't mean. That if you follow God. You won't suffer. Because if that was true. Well. It wasn't true for Jesus. Was it? So why would it be true for us?

But what it does mean. Is that when the trouble comes. When the pain comes. God is our refuge. He is the one who will hold us.

Through the pain. He is the one who will give us strength. To endure. The support. To withstand. And sometimes. He will take the pain away.

[22 : 55] More than that. It means that the day is coming. This is guaranteed. The day is coming. When all evil. Will be taken. From this world. There will be no more.

No more suffering. And no more pain. Every tear. Will be wiped. From every eye. Because God. The Lord of hosts. Dwells. With his people. That's our second movement.

God's rest. When everyone. Is against us. This final. This final movement. Leads us in response. Leads us in how to respond. To the God who is worthy. Of our worship. To see. That he is worthy. Come with me.

To verse 8. Come. Behold. The works. Of the Lord. How he has brought.

[23 : 52] Desolations. On the earth. He makes wars. Cease to the ends. Of the earth. He breaks. The bow. Shatters. The spear. He burns.

The chariots. With fire. Come. Behold. Look. See. What God has done. See what he's done.

How. As he judges evil. That's what's happening in verse 8. And as he brings peace. In verse 9.

See. This. This wonderful work of God.

Is something to marvel. At. Verse 9. Breaking the bow. And shattering the spear. Burning chariots. With fire. That's like breaking.

Fighter jets. Shattering drones. Burning tanks. All of these implements. Of danger. And death. And destruction. They'll be gone.

[24 : 47] Do you see. Gone. The God. Who is bringing. An end. To all evil. That is the God. That we need to come. And see.

Here. God. And only then. Can we. We respond. To him. Because he is the God. Who is worthy. Only then. Can we. Be still.

And know. We've just been singing. Haven't we. Be still. And know. That I am God. Verse 10. Read it with me. Be still. And know. That I am God.

I will be. Exalted. In the nations. I will be. Exalted. In the earth. You see. War will end. Peace will come.

But not because we get better. At loving one another. The last few years. Have shown us this right. Can we have those pictures up again. We think.

[25 : 42] We want to do better. We want. To love one another better. And then these images. Fill. Our news feeds. Ukraine and Russia.

Hammering it out. Israel and Hamas. Pakistan and India. Yeah. This is just human selfishness. And greed. And evil. Boiling over. No. No. We can't achieve peace. Ourselves. We can't.

War will end. And peace will come. Only. If our hearts. Are so overwhelmed. By the goodness of God. And how worthy he is.

Of worship. And praise. And glory. And honor. Then we'll finally stop. Do you see. It's only when we get that right.

[26 : 39] Only then will we stop. It will finally be still. And did you see how extensive this worship is.

Verse 10. I'll be exalted. Exalted. In among. Among the nations. I will be exalted. In the earth. You see. God will be worshipped.

Everywhere. That's our response. To a God who gives refuge. And rest. And joy. A God who is worthy.

Of worship. Of worship. God will be holy. but remember this is a song this is a song and songs are for singing they're meant to move us not just for us to dissect like we've done and walk through verse by verse we so we want to pull this song back together now that we've explored it in some detail now i'm not going to sing it i won't do that but can i invite you to close your eyes for a moment though the earth may shake beneath us though all of creation is tearing itself apart i can i will be still though people may rage before us though evil will be done by brutal people i can i will be still the lord of hosts so worthy of worship he ends war he brings peace the lord of hosts he's with us i can i will be still i can i will worship now i think that's a start i think that's a start but this psalm also points us further than the original writers could know these sons of cora the psalm points us to a god

coming in the person of jesus to bring refuge and rest so how could we sing psalm 46 with jesus the son of god and mark begins his account of jesus life with these words it'll come up on the screen mark chapter 1 verse 1 the beginning of the gospel of jesus christ the son of god you see and mark tells us about the life of jesus the life of the son of god who offers refuge and rest even from death for all who believe in him and jesus christ the son of god he lifts his voice and crowds silence he lifts his voice and storms are stilled that is the jesus that came to walk amongst us jesus dies and three days later rises from him but that people like us have an eternity to look forward to that's the power the refuge and the rest that jesus offers and people from every language and nation and tongue worship him because he is worthy of worship do you see so how might we sing psalm 46 with the son of god i'm going to invite you to close your eyes again and listen to this poem though the earth may shake beneath us though all of creation is tearing itself apart i can i will be still though people may rage before us though people though evil will be done by brutal people i can i will be still the lord of hosts so worthy of worship he ends war he brings peace the lord of hosts he's with us i can i will be still i can i will worship

and jesus is his name jesus is his name now i'm not sure that anyone's going to write music for this but i hope you get the idea that we need to we need to dig into the psalm and then we need to sing it so that these words now become the words of our souls and the words to our souls because in jesus this psalm psalm 46 it doesn't just kind of stay sitting here in the psalter in the book of psalms it intensifies you see jesus lifts it out and brings it to bear on our lives in such a rich way and a more personal way because jesus offers refuge from this broken world not just for a moment but for eternity and he offers a closeness while we endure what happens in this broken world so personally and so as we close shall we consider what it might look like to sing this song here in pakaranga because that's what we can do whenever we feel the weight of life in this broken world did you notice there's no i or me or you in psalm 46 look verse 1 god is our refuge verse 2 therefore we will not fear verse 7 the lord of hosts is with us you see this is a song that we sing with and for one another you see when everything is falling apart and when everyone is against us i am still here today yes because doctors and amazing medical tech at but more than that i am here today because god's people sought refuge in the god who offers it when i couldn't i couldn't do it myself so will we let this song of god's refuge and rest change us for good when i was in a coma a friend sent me an email these are the things you find when you wake up a friend sent me an email he said there's pork belly with your name on it time to wake up now i love a good pork belly and um normally that would get me up but it didn't work and it didn't offer you know most days if i've had a bad day and i get a pork belly then i that's refuge right there but um it can't offer refuge and neither can the other things that we look for refuge in right you're looking for refuge in your savings in your career in your insurance and somehow cracking into the auckland housing market good luck with that if these are the things that we are looking for refuge in in the support that my friends will give me my ability to smash every other team in the pcbc basketball competition if i put my if i stake my refuge in that you see rachel had to sit down with our kids when i went into a coma and she had to say we've got four kids theo's turning 13 next year uh so he's 13 daniel's 10

[35 : 21] just about 10 bethany's 8 little nathan's 5 and rachel had to sit down with him one evening and say dad might not be coming home from hospital now what where do you seek refuge in a moment like that where do you seek refuge it's okay because we're gonna have a holiday no it's okay because dad's got life insurance like no no do you know what my wife said she said it's okay because we have a faithful god a god who is with us well that'll do because here's the thing if god offers a refuge in a moment like that and that refuge can hold our weight and the weight of our broken world then the refuge that god offers whatever comes your way best in your worst days that refuge will hold your weight so how might psalm 46 change our prayers for ourselves for the people around us you see we live in a place a time a place in a time actually like every other place in time where people need refuge people everywhere are looking for refuge if we truly have grasped how good our jesus is and how good his refuge is then could it mean that we don't just pray and seek refuge for a few moments a few months you know just in those times of crisis but constantly could it mean that we pray for people all around us to find this refuge refuge from the brokenness of this world and the permanence of death not just for us but the people in our lives you know our uni classes our workplaces and our families it's people who don't know the refuge that jesus offers now if you're sitting here today this afternoon and you're saying you're thinking to yourself

I don't have this refuge yet that's not refuge I have then I hope this psalm gets stuck in your head you know how songs they get stuck in your head my prayer is that this song this psalm gets stuck in your head and it kind of plays on loop for a bit and that as it plays on loop you might see the beauty of finding refuge in jesus that you might see this lord of hosts this lord almighty with fresh eyes and that you might find a way to be still and know that he is the god who saves he offers refuge shall we pray let's pray together lord jesus lord jesus you offer such rest such refuge refuge when everything goes wrong when the world seems to be falling apart around us you offer refuge and when everyone rises against us you offer rest lord jesus would you show us how worthy you are of worship would you overwhelm us with your worthiness to worship you and would our voices join with those from people of every language and nation and tongue and tribe and time lifting their voices in worship of you because jesus you offer refuge not just now but eternally and jesus would you help us to sing this this song together as your people here in pakarana would you give us a heart for those who need refuge refuge from coming death would you have mercy father help us as your people here in pakarana to sing this song for each other with each other as we find refuge in you the lord of hosts amen but what we're going to do now is we're going to continue to reflect on this song and when i woke up from the coma and they took me they put me in this kind of bed chair thing and they took me outside for the first time and sun hit my face and they said is there something you would like to listen to and i asked for this song and i sat there in this chair in the sun and bawled my eyes out overwhelmed yes by being outside for the first time in a while but overwhelmed that god had been a sure and safe refuge so can i invite you to reflect on this as we listen and