

## **“Be Still and Know that I Am God”**

### **Psalm 46**

At the beginning of August, I was able to take ten days of vacation. However, since Elaine was in America visiting family, I was by myself. It wasn't such a great time. I was by myself and could do what I wanted, but it was also lonely. I came to understand how singles feel.

During that time, I rented a cabin at our mission's property near Lake Yamanaka, and did a lot of windsurfing. However, that was by myself too.

However, every night the missionaries staying in the cabin next to me invited me over for the meal. Without doing anything, I enjoyed eating with them. Everyday, that missionary would come to me and say, "Please come over tonight. We have a place at the table for you." Through that I learned what true rest is. True rest is having community with others and being part of a family. I want to experience this with you.

Returning to the subject of windsurfing, the way you do it is to stand on the surfboard, get your balance, lift the sail and catch the wind. If there is no wind, I won't go anywhere. Instead, I just fall in the water. So, for example, when I get out into the lake and the wind stops, I don't go anywhere and eventually fall into the water. What do I do?

I used to panic. "Oh, I can't get back," I would think, and be so anxious. But I have learned to relax and wait for the next wind to come. Usually, it does. And while I wait, I drop into the water and let my life jacket hold me up.

Recently, when I was out in the lake waiting for the next wind, I dropped into the water and just relaxed. While I was doing that, Psalm 46:10 came to my mind. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Especially "be still and know that I am God."

Instead of panicking because of my situation, I can sit back and rest in who God is, and that he is God. He doesn't change. What kind of a person is God?

The first verse of Psalm 46 says: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." He is our present help in our trouble.

Think about this. Meditate on this. In my trouble, God is a present help. Even though I couldn't swim in the water, my life jacket held me up. God is my life jacket. He won't let me drown. When I trust my life jacket, I don't fear. My life jacket helps me not to panic.

The writer of this psalm says in verses two and three: "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."

Even in the biggest crises of our lives, we don't have to fear. God is in control, even in these most frightening circumstances. When I look at the waves, or when the waves of emotion come, I can be overwhelmed. I can feel a sense of dread. I can be overcome with grief.

Recently, when I went windsurfing, there were waves and even whitecaps. I got scared. But there was good wind, the best wind I had experienced. The windsurf really moved, and the surfboard sliced right through the waves.

The waves of emotion in our lives may cause us to panic. However, when we catch the wind of God's Spirit, His power helps us to slice right through those difficult circumstances. He is a refuge in our loneliness. He is strong in our weakness. He is our help right now in this need. He is my life jacket.

"Selah." Think about this. Meditate upon it. It is important for us to do this in prayer meetings where we have a tendency to ask God for things. Be intentional about exalting him for who he is, our refuge, our strength, our present help in trouble.

Let's read Psalm 46:4-7.

"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. Selah"

In the days when this psalm was written, cities were besieged by the enemy. They would surround the city and cut off all supply of food and water. Even today we see some of this going on in places like Ukraine. The enemy seeks to starve the people in a particular city, and then take over that city.

These verses talk about the city of God, which is where the Most High lives. This city has a river flowing through it, which makes it impossible to besiege and conquer. Since God lives within her, she will not be moved. God will help her.

There will be wars. Kingdoms will fall. But when God speaks, the earth melts. This God is with us. This God, who was also the God of Jacob, is our God.

Stop and think about this. This river is the power of God within us. God lives inside of us by his Spirit. Therefore, in spite of opposition and warfare, we will not be moved. We can rest assured that God is with us.

And not only that, the best is yet to come in the heavenly city. Listen to these verses from John's revelation, 21:2-4. "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their

God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

We have this hope.

Let's read verses 8 and 9. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire."

The works of the Lord include desolations. But it is also within His nature to rescue us and to save us. The weapons needed for war will be destroyed. What are the weapons needed for war? Bombs, tanks instead of chariots, soldiers. But something completely different is also needed. The truth is that in order for conflicts to happen, there must be hate, bitterness and greed, and stubbornness. The truth is that we are all born with those traits.

That is why we have conflict. That is why we can't get along. That is why we have difficulty working together. That is why we have broken relationships. And, even if you don't have a broken relationship right now, chances are good that you have a difficult person in your life. Someone with whom you don't get along. Your styles differ. You do things differently. You clash in your opinions.

What do we do? We try and get away from that person. We avoid them. Or we try and control them. The interesting thing is, that even though we get away from a perceived difficult person, no matter where we go, even if we get a divorce or abandon a parent/child relationship, there is always another difficult person. Why is that?

The answer is: we ourselves are difficult. We ourselves possess hatred, grudges and stubbornness. I will forever be clashing with people. And being alone is not the solution either. We will destroy ourselves.

Well that's not very positive thinking. What shall I do? Verse 8: "He makes wars cease." Stop and know that since God is God, he can stop wars; He can stop fighting. He can solve conflict.

How does he do that? Jesus Christ, his Son. By dying on the cross for our sin, our hatred and bitterness and stubbornness is replaced with love, forgiveness and humility. God, through his Son Jesus, has freed us from the fundamental sources of conflict.

Remember, I said that God is our life jacket. Otherwise, we would drown in our stubbornness and conflict. There is a river that will make us glad. It is the power of God that cuts through the darkest hour. Jesus bore our sins in the darkest hour anyone ever had. Be still, and know this. Believe this. He will also free us from the vices of our conflict, that which tears people apart.

Let's allow God to stop the conflict, the battles within us. Our tendency to try harder, to gut it out, to depend on our own style or gifts or control. Let's lay it down at the feet of Jesus.

Let's pray.