

God Is our Refuge and Strength!

Sunday, 10/28 – 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 10/29 – 7 PM

Reformation Day (Observed) – 2018

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Try to imagine this: *You discovered the cure for cancer, all cancer!* Then, *as you tried to share that cure with others*, those with cancer were very happy, but others – *like hospitals and drug companies* – were very unhappy; in fact, they were *SO UNHAPPY* that they even tried to have you arrested and put to death.

I made-up that story about a *physical cure*, but, for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, *his life is a true story about a spiritual cure!* 500 years ago God worked through the Bible to open Martin's eyes to Jesus, *who is the spiritual cure for all sin!* Then, *excited and wanting others to know and benefit*, Martin boldly told others; those who had been crushed by their sins were very happy, but others – *who used sin to gain money* – were very unhappy; in fact, they were *SO UNHAPPY* that they wanted Luther captured – dead or alive! *But God permitted Dr. Luther to write and preach for another 25 years!*

Therefore, today, we observe the 501st anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his *95 theological statements* to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church – *hoping to spark a theological debate and ultimately bless many with God's saving truth!*

Today, we focus on Psalm 46, *a favorite of Martin Luther*, and the basis of his famous hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God!*

1. **Confidence In God:** When trouble comes into YOUR life, where do YOU turn for help – family, friends, police?

Turning to such people is not wrong, *but let us especially turn to the Almighty God!* Even though family, friends, and police can help with some things, *only the blood of Jesus can wash us clean of our sins – thus making us holy in God’s sight and members of His family!*

- a. **God is our refuge** [*shelter*] **and strength, a very present help in trouble.** // Life on earth can fill us with distress in various ways – *mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally*; at all such times, *God invites us to rest in the safety of His almighty arms, which are always* ♦present, ♦ready, and ♦able to help us!
 - b. **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. Selah** // Are you fearful? Then think about the awesomeness of God, *who spoke the universe into existence!* Then, *in the face of all natural disasters, wars, and earth-shattering events, let us not fear such things, but trust in the One who made us and loves us!* Verses 3, 7, and 11 of Psalm 46 end with the word, “**Selah**,” which probably means to *THINK* about the previous words *WHILE* listening to a musical solo!
2. **The LORD Is With Us:** Moses told the descendants of Israel, “...the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31:6 NIV). Jesus said to His disciples, “...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20 NAS). Here, *in this world of sin and death*, the LORD is with us to ♦save us, ♦provide for us, ♦keep us as His own, and ♦much more!

- a. **4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.** // As we understand that water is essential for physical life, so let us understand that the Word of God is essential for spiritual life (Matt. 4:4); God is at work through the congregations of the Church to spiritually sustain His people through Word and Sacrament!
- b. **5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.** // Even though the enemies of the Church, of the people who trust in Jesus, are many and powerful, Jesus said that "...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18 ESV). Why? God is not far away, but ever-present in the midst of the Church!
- c. **6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.** // As God helps His people, their enemies are enraged but they cannot stand against Him! Since God is for us – His holy children in Christ, no one can stand against us! God's voice is powerful to destroy, but also to ♦create, ♦make alive, and ♦forgive all sins through Jesus!
- d. **7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah** // To be in trouble and completely alone can leave a person feeling ♦helpless, ♦hopeless, and ♦depressed; therefore, knowing we are saved – BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, and knowing that the Supreme Commander of all the heavenly armies is with us to protect us, let us rest in Him and be at peace!
3. **The LORD Settles the Matter:** Take a look at the world today: Can you see how God is defeating the forces of evil more and more? NOT REALLY! Internet, TV, and

newspapers generally conclude that there is no God or, *if there is*, He and all of His followers are losing! So what is essential for our mindset? We know the Bible is true, so ♦God is God, ♦God loves us, ♦God sent His Son, and ♦Jesus has defeated sin, death, and hell! Therefore, *even though evil continues and the future looks bleak*, we know BY FAITH that **WE WIN through JESUS**, and we know that someday *we will see the reality of God's total victory!*

- a. **⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.** // God has already defeated many evil nations and proud men!
- b. **⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.** // As God has made the horrors of many wars cease, so He has already defeated our greatest enemies – *sin, death, and the devil!*
- c. **¹⁰ “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”** // When Jesus comes, *every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (Phil. 2:9-11)*; therefore, God wants everyone to ♦know that now, ♦stop opposing Him, and ♦receive Jesus as their Savior!
- d. **¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah**

Let Us Pray: Dear LORD God Almighty, by Your power we live, *and by Your love You have redeemed us through Jesus*, so be our stronghold through this valley of sorrow *until we are in Your glorious presence forevermore!* In Christ Jesus we pray!

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