

God's Promises to Cling to in 2020

Psalm 46

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Introduction

Good morning Lighthouse. Are you ready for the Word of God this morning? I am honored to give the first sermon in the pulpit as the new decade has begun. We can talk about all the bad or the good that happened in 2019, but today that is not the focus. Although, I believe the Lord did great things here in 2019. We had new members added and we saw many come to know Jesus as their Savior. What is there to look forward to in 2020? While I do have 2020 vision, I do not quite know everything to look forward to, but I know we'll have a new presidential election and many anticipated films will come to theaters. However, what I should and we all here today should look forward to is what the Lord is going to do in 2020 and what we can do for Him, amen? God has given us a new year for a reason, and we are going to make it count. As the new decade begins, there are promises from God we can cling to.

Background

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Psalm 46 has many significant aspects to it. While the human author of this Psalm is not confirmed, it is believed to have been written by King Hezekiah during the time Assyria was invading Israel. In the book of Kings, there is a pattern you read when it comes to many of the king's reign; "_____ did that which is evil in the sight of the Lord." There are few kings though where you'll read "_____ did that which is right in the sight of the Lord. Hezekiah, king of Judah was one who did right in the sight of the Lord. We're going to do a bit of reading first in 2 Kings before we get into our main text this morning.

(Note for booth, I will make comments in between the passages that will not be in the notes)

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2 Kings 18:1-7:

(1) Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

(2) Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

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(3) And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

(4) He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

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(5) He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

(6) For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

(7) And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

As time went on into King Hezekiah's 14th year of reigning. Judah was surrounded by the army of Sennacherib, King of Assyria. Forty-six towns and villages in Judah had been destroyed. Over 200,000 residents had been taken captive, along with much spoil. 185,000 recorded troops surrounded Jerusalem, and it looked like only a matter of time before the city fell. But proud Sennacherib did not consider the fact that Hezekiah's God is the living God who will not be mocked.

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2 Kings 18:17-37:

(17) And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

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(18) And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

(19) And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

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(20) Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

(21) Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

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(22) But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

(23) Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

The King of Assyria's official made mockery of Judah and their God and urged them to not trust in Hezekiah's leadership and their God, he then continues his mockery to the Jews in their language.

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(28) Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

(29) Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand:

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(30) Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

(31) Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern:

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(32) Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us.

(33) Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

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(34) Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?

(35) Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?

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(36) But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

(37) Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

This is the response from Hezekiah when the message was brought to him:

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2 Kings 19:1-7

(1) And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

(2) And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

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(3) And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.

(4) It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

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(5) So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

(6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

(7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Hezekiah did what every wise man ever in times of helplessness. He took it the Lord and laid it all down.

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2 Kings 19:14-19

(14) And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

(15) And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

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(16) LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

(17) Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

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(18) And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

(19) Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

Hezekiah prayed, God spoke, and in one night the angel of the Lord defeated Sennacherib by killing 185,000 of his soldiers.

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2 Kings 19:32-36

(32) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

(33) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

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(34) For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

(35) And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

(36) So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

Now, this brings us to Psalm 46. I forgot to mention this is basically two sermons into one. Many of the other psalms begin with a description of the psalmist's crisis. In Psalm 46, the poet begins with God's provision. He looked to God for help in difficult times and found it. He could say these things by experience. This Psalm starts with the title "To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth." The sons of Korah were Levites associated with temple worship. Alamoth is a transliterated word from Hebrew meaning "young women," as for reference to music, it would be the soprano voices for this Psalm.

Scripture

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Psalms 46:1-11

- (1) God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- (2) Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
- (3) Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

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- (4) There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.
- (5) God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.
- (6) The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

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- (7) The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.
- (8) Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.
- (9) He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

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- (10) Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
- (11) The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Outline

What promises can we cling to in 2020?

We can cling to the promises:

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I. The Lord God will be your Protector, vv. 1-3.

A. The threefold declarations, v. 1.

Psalm 46:1

(1) God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

1. God is our refuge.

- a. The word refuge means a shelter, hope, trust. It speaks of a place of safety.
- b. Many OT saints sought refuge in the Lord. David always found refuge in the Lord when his enemies sought his life. Saul pursued David for many years, yet God always protected him. David knew that the Lord was watching over him.
- c. Hezekiah found refuge in the Lord in our background today when all hope seemed gone.
- d. In times of difficulty, and as we go through the year, we can find refuge in our God.
- e. Israel had a wall surrounding them, but ultimately it is God who is their refuge.

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Proverbs 18:10

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

2. God is our strength.

- a. Hardships and many activities in our life drain our strength, but God is to be our strength.
- b. Hezekiah is a perfect example of one not doing things of his own strength.
- c. Since God is our strength, we do not have to depend on our own efforts.

- d. Don't give an out-loud answer, but do you often feel like you cannot go on? Tired and weary? How often do you ask the Lord for strength?
3. God is a very present help in trouble.
- a. God's help is "very present" in trouble.
 - b. It is both always available, and accessible to His people.
 - c. The word help means to succor or assist.
 - d. God provides refuge and strength to His people. But He also helps us in our trials.
 - e. Furthermore, does God help us from a distance? Not a chance. He is right there with us to help us in our troubles.

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Hebrews 13:5-6

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

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B. The application of God's declaration, vv. 2-3.

Psalm 46:2-3

(2) Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; (3) Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

1. The application is to not fear.
2. The Psalmist applied the logic of faith: If God is a real refuge, strength, and help to His people, then there is no logical reason to fear – even in such crisis

as the earth being removed and mountains carried into the midst of the sea.

3. The psalmist is not picturing a common earthquake, or even ones that cause significant catastrophe. This description is an earthquake so big that the mountains get swallowed up by the sea! He is saying that in the worst disaster we can imagine, God is sufficient as our refuge and strength so that we need not be terrified.
4. The Psalmist takes the most frightening phenomenon and shifts to the truth that God is greater than it all. Even though these are to come, God is our refuge, our strength and our very present help.
5. This section then ends with the first strophe, *selah*. This psalm is worthy of pause and careful thought. (Musically this would be an interlude.)

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II. The Lord God will be your Provider, vv. 4-7.

A. The Lord's provision is as a river vv. 4-5.

Psalm 46:4-5

(4) There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. (5) God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

1. The psalmist pictured the abundant, constant provision of a river for Jerusalem, the city of God.
 - a. The image is significant because Jerusalem does not in fact have such a river, only a few small streams.
 - b. Yet the prophets anticipated the day when a mighty river would flow from the temple itself.

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Ezekiel 47:12

(12) And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

2. The city is glad – guaranteed water is life giving and the best defense for a city.
3. All the blessing and provision of the city of God comes because of God's presence. Because of His presence she is more firmly set than the earth which may be removed as seen in verse 2.
4. The city is so established because God shall help her.

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B. The Lord proves His power over opposing nations, v. 6.

Psalm 46:6

(6) The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

1. The "heathen" is referred to Gentile nations that oppose God.
 - a. Consider all the powerful nations that opposed God – Egypt, the Philistines, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, and even Rome.
 - b. Who was victorious?
2. God pays no regard to the rage of the nations. At His voice the earth melts away.

C. The Lord's titles to prove His power, v. 7.

Psalm 46:7

(7) The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

1. He is called the Lord of hosts: Jehovah Saboath.

- a. The idea behind this title is He is the commander of armies, both the army of His people and the armies of heaven.
 - b. The title emphasizes His glory and might, connecting it with the idea that this glorious God is with His people.
 - c. It was the angel of the Lord (a Christophany) that destroyed the army of the Assyrians in one night.
 - d. The same Lord of Host is with you. Both as your protector and provider. Not even the most powerful military forces can stand against.
2. He is called the God of Jacob.
- a. Jacob was not a man of great character. He was a deceiver who wrestled with God.
 - b. This title not only emphasizes the aspect of covenant, but also grace considering Jacob's character. This gracious and merciful God is an open refuge for His people.
 - c. Jacob was also a personal individual. This shows our God is a personal God.
 - d. The God of Jacob is also our "refuge."
 - (1) The word for refuge here and in verse 11 is different than word in verse 1.
 - (2) In the Hebrew language, the word here images that of an impenetrable fortress or stronghold.
3. The section ends again with "Selah." (Pause and T=think on that.)

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III. The Lord God will be glorified, vv. 8-11.

A. The Lord exalted in His sovereignty, vv. 8-9.

Psalm 46:8-9(8) Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. (9) He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

1. The Psalmist now shifts his attention to God's glory in the Day of the Lord.
2. He commands us to behold the power of God to execute judgment. The wicked may stir up strife for a time, but God is ultimately in control. He will have the final say.
3. God is mighty to make desolations or to enforce peace, making wars to cease. The idea may be that God's people are invited to look over the field of battle after God has completely routed His enemies, and their instruments of war are scattered, broken, and burning.

B. The Lord exalted in all the earth, vv. 10-11.

Psalm 46:10-11

(10) Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. (11) The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

1. One of the most profound statements in Scripture: "Be still, and know that I am God."
 - a. Be still – literally, "hands off."
 - b. How many times do we miss out on the glory of the Lord and fail to see what He is doing? We always tend to be on the move; always in a hurry.

c. The call to “be still” is not matter of stop everything and live a life of nothing, but to cease from all opposition. This is done in recognition of God’s glory and greatness, as mentioned in the previous verse.

d. Be still, surrender, and let the Lord do His work.

2. The Lord will be exalted in both among the heathen and all the earth.

a. This Lord is none other than Jesus.

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Philippians 2:9-11

(9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

(11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

b. The Lord invites everyone to submit willfully and joyfully. Don’t let it be too late and be among those who don’t know Jesus. They will bow to Him and see Him as their righteous judge.

3. The Psalmist then ends with the same strophe as verse 7.

46:11 “The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah”.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we know God is our refuge, He is our strength and He is very present help in trouble. It is not too late to start the year off right. I truly hope no one here has this crazy idea “I messed up already, well, 2021 will be my year.” I do not know the hearts of anyone here today. Maybe this is time where you stop running from the Lord and be still. Maybe this is the time where you quit trying to earn your way into heaven. All of us fall short of the glory of God and our best efforts and deeds are as filthy rags in comparison to His perfect standard. I want this to be clear for everyone: You will never be good enough to earn favor with God and make your

way to heaven. The good news is that is just fine. The Lord knows you will never be good enough. That is why Jesus took your place on that cross. He is the only that could be considered good enough. Salvation is offered to you with no basis of you being good enough. It is a salvation that is depended on Him. Everyone here today that knows they are going to heaven knows it is not because of anything they did, it is because of what Jesus did. All you have to do is trust Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you and thou shall be saved." As God, He will be exalted and glorified in the earth. He wants you to exalt Him by submitting joyfully to Him through your trouble. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. We glorify Him when we defer to Him as our ruler in times of trouble. This coming 2020, here are few promises we can cling to: The Lord will be your protector, provider and He will be glorified.

*****Prayer*****