



Message **Transcript**

Never Fear...God Is Here!

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Well, thanks for choosing to worship with us today. Let's go before the Lord, and let's ask him to speak clearly to us through his word this morning. Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, honor and praise. We gather here because of the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, who died in our place for our sins, who rose victoriously from the dead, who ascended into heaven and sent his holy spirit into the hearts of all of us who believe. And, Lord, we gather here to give you praise.

Lord, we want to hear you this morning from your living and your active word that's sharper than any two edged sword that penetrates to divide both soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the attitudes and the thoughts of the heart. Lord, penetrate us this morning with your word, Lord, let us hear directly from you. Lord, conform us into the image of Jesus Christ. And Lord, for what you're going to do in advance, we give you all the glory that is rightly yours, all the honor, all the praise, and it's in your mighty and matchless name, Jesus, that we pray.

And all God's people agreed and said, amen. Well, we are continuing this morning with our series called Summer in the Psalms. And I've really enjoyed going through these because the psalms really go right into our heart. They're very emotive. They stretch us, they let our feelings get all out on the table.

And one of the themes that we've seen throughout this summer is God's presence with us, that wherever we go, there God is. And this morning I wanted to look at psalm, chapter 46. Psalm, chapter 46. And while you're turning there in your Bible, I'll just tell you, knowing that God is going with you and knowing that God is with you wherever you go is a very, very comforting fact. And in Psalm, chapter 46, this is really the theme throughout the entire text.

And because it's so short this morning, I'd like to read it to you, and then we can unpack it together. And there's really three things. We'll break it down into three different sections this morning to take a look at what God would have to say to us about his presence. Here's how the psalmist writes. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

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, 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 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. 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. Now, as we look at this short psalm this morning, I want to talk to us about why God's promise that he's with us is so valuable.

And we'll take a look at three reasons for that. And the first is this. The promise that God is with us provides strong protection that eliminates fear during times of chaos. Knowing that God is with us, it provides strong protection. He provides strong

protection that eliminates fear during times of chaos.

Notice how the chapter starts. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Now this word refuge and strength, this word protection and strength, they're really, the psalmist is really trying to put them together. He's not really talking about two different things. He's talking about the strong protection of the Lord.

And with that he says, therefore he 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. He's really saying this. No matter what happens, I'm not going to be fearful. Now, when you read through the Bible, you'll hear people say this all the time, fear the Lord.

Fear the Lord. And then you'll read passages that say, do not fear. Do not fear. You're like, what's going on with that? There's really two different kinds of fear the Bible talks about.

One is a very healthy kind of fear. It's a reverence and a love and an awe of the majesty of the Lord and who he is. And the more you know about the greatness of our God, the more you will bow your name and be like, wow, he's awesome. He's incredible. He's huge.

I'm small, he's great. I'm nothing. I'm just made of dust. And God is glorious and he holds all things together. There's fear in that because he's such a great and powerful being.

And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It's fearing the Lord that teaches us how to live a righteous life. That's a healthy fear. But then there's the fear of circumstances and the fear of man and the fear of things that happen in this world that are unhealthy. I've been told by several different scholars that in the Bible, and I've never taken the time to count, that do not fear is listed 365 times, one for every single day.

Why? Because we tend to be pulled in a direction by people, circumstances, and

we can be in trouble when we start looking at the way the world is unfolding in several different ways. Now, I know what life is like. Life ebbs and flows. I mean, sometimes life, you know, circumstances are on a high, and sometimes they come back down low.

And honestly, in a crowd this size, I don't know where everybody is. And it would be presumptive of me to say, hey, we're all on a high, and it would be presumptive of me to say, we're all on a low. It'd probably be fair to say we're all somewhere from a high to a low, and in between, and I don't know where we are. But here's the truth. Knowing that God is with us makes all the difference in the world.

No matter what you've dealt with this week, this day, this past month, no matter what, knowing and experiencing the truth that God is with you makes all the difference. John Wesley, the great evangelist, in the 17 hundreds, the last morning that he died, when he was laying in his bed, they journaled about him and said he barely moved all morning. He barely spoke, he barely said anything. And at some point in time, when he was basically on the equivalent of the 17 hundreds experience of hospice, he sat up in his bed and he said these words. These were his last words he ever said.

The best of all is that God is with us, and he laid back down and died. It's knowing that God is with us that eliminates fear. Now, I don't know what makes you fearful. The Bible says the fear of man proves to be a snare. But there's a lot of things in this world that can make you fearful.

There can be calamity, stress, anxiety. All you need to do is open a newspaper or read your favorite Internet news source or listen to the radio or watch television. And if you focus on that, I promise you, you can live in fear. As a matter of fact, most of the shows, and I don't care whether you would call yourself more of a liberal or you call yourself more of a conservative. All talk radio is geared to build fear in you so that you'll tune back in to listen to what their answer is.

But let me tell you, regardless of whether you're conservative or liberal, what I've never heard the answer being on any television or radio program is that the Lord Jesus Christ eliminates fear. I never hear that. It's tuned back in. Because if you'll do what I'm saying and you'll listen to what I'm doing, everything will go away. Listen, the world's ripping at the seams.

Did you know that? I mean, people text me all the time, hey, what do you think about Britain pulling out of the European Union? What do you think about this? What do you think about that? I think that Jesus is still on the throne and I'm not bothered at all.

If Jesus wasn't on the throne, it would concern me. You look at the world and you see, hey, what about all these mass shootings that you see going on? Aren't you worried? I said, no, the world's ripping at the seams. I'm not worried.

My God is still on the throne and I love him and he walks with me. There's truth, if you look in the world, that there's some things we could be afraid of. That's why we need to know that God is with us. That's why the psalmist writes, God is our strong protection. God goes with us.

And notice what it says. He's a very. What? Present help in trouble. Where's God right now?

He's right with us right now. God's not one that we have to call on and hope that he arrives sometime in the future. He's a present help. He is available now. Many times we wonder, well, where's God?

He's right here when you call upon him. He's. He's strong. That's who he is. All throughout the psalms, we read this in psalm, chapter 18.

Psalmist writes, I love you, o Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I'm saved from all of my enemies. In psalm 116, the psalmist writes, how much he loves the Lord, says, I love the Lord because he heard my cry for mercy, and he turned his ear toward me and he rescued me. The snares of death encompassed me.

The pains of Sheol laid hold of me. I suffered distress and anguish. Then I called on the name of the Lord. O Lord, I pray, delivered my soul. I mean, all throughout the psalms.

One of the reasons I love the psalms is you see people that are in trouble, and what are they doing? They're calling on the name of the Lord. They're calling on his reputation. They're calling on what they need from him in the moment. And here's the truth.

No matter where you are, no matter what circumstance you're going in your life, God can be your strong protection in that moment during times of chaos or calamity or stress or anxiety. And you think about all the scriptures that would testify to this, both old and New Testament. Think about the New Testament. We talked last week about Peter getting out of the boat and walking on water, taking his eyes off Jesus. Seeing his circumstances, he falls.

Do you remember what he cried out? Lord, save me. And what was the Lord? A strong protection, a present. Help reached down and grabbed him.

How quick? Immediately. That's who our God is. That's who Jesus Christ is. In

the Old Testament, we see the same thing.

You remember when the Israelites were leaving Egypt and after God took the birth of the firstborn and they plundered Egypt and Israel got out. Then God hardened Pharaoh's heart again. And here comes the strongest army in the world against Israel. And Israel's panicking. They're like, what the heck?

Here we go again. Was there not enough graves in Egypt for us to die there? Why'd you bring us out here? And remember what Moses said in Exodus, chapter 14, verses 13 and 14? Moses speaks to the people, and here's what he says.

Fear not. Stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. My translation is, fear the Lord and shut up.

Open your eyes and look. He's got this right. I mean, that's what Moses is telling

them. And was he telling the truth? Yes, because God did all the work with the pillar of fire and with the cloud.

All Moses had to do was hold his staff out. And God parts the red sea, and they all go through. And it's really interesting, because as all of Israel goes through, by the time the pillar of cloud is removed and Egypt starts following them, here's the testimony of the Egyptian soldiers. I mean, here's Navy SEAL Team Six for Egypt going through the red sea. Here's what they're saying.

Let us free from before Israel. For the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians. What was the testimony of the Egyptian soldiers? Let's get the heck out of here. Their God is fighting against us and we're going to lose.

And they did because God swallowed the whole sea and took the whole army out. And Israel rejoiced. Why? Because God was with them. God's always with his people.

We need not fear. Never fear. God's here, he's present, he's among us. Why would the psalmist spend so much time talking about it? Because we forget that he's near.

We think God's out there. We think God's over there. We think God's with other people, that we're alone and that we're isolated. Never. For those of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and that he's been resurrected from the dead.

He sent us his holy spirit to be in us, to work through us. And he's only one call away. Now. We can't always see this. That's why one of my favorite stories in the Old Testament is found in two kings, chapter six.

You may remember the story, but when the opposing armies of Israel were trying to come against them at the time, you remember Elisha was the prophet. And everything that Elisha heard from their general, he told Egypt, hey, or Israel, hey, don't go over there. They're going to set up a siege over there. Hey, don't go over there. So

much so that the opposing army's general said, hey, which of you guys is for them?

How come they always know what we're doing? And one of the guys had the courage to stand up, said, hey, sir, it's not us. It's this Elisha guy over there. He's a man of God. Everything you whisper in the ear in your bedroom, he knows.

So they decide one night they're going to surround Elisha and they're going to take him out. Now, it's kind of a bad battle plan because if he knows what's going on, he's going to know what's going on. And so it's really interesting because that very night, here's what happens. All the enemy armies come and surround Elisha and his servant. And so his servant goes out in the morning, and behold, there's an army with horses and chariots.

They're all around the city. And the servant said, alas, master, what are we going to do? We're doomed. There's two of us. And look at all of them.

And in two kings, 616. Here's what Elijah says. Do not be afraid, for those who

are with us are more than those who are with them. Say what? I mean, Gehazi is looking around like, say what?

There's armies, and then there's us. They're against us. And Elijah is like, don't be afraid. Don't be fearful. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.

And then he prayed, Elisha prayed and said, o Lord, please open his eyes that he may see. So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. I mean, this is the first story. Dun dun dun dun dun dun.

Remember that movie chariots of fire? That's what was going on. So this guy goes from, we're doomed to all of a sudden, ah, we're all right. They are outnumbered. We outnumber them.

And here's the truth. When you walk with Jesus Christ, you and Jesus Christ always outnumber, whatever your circumstances or foes are, always 100% of the time. Now, the devil doesn't want you to know that. And because you can't see it all the time spiritually, the devil wants you to believe that you're alone in this. And that when you're dealing with family or you're dealing with difficulty at work or you're dealing with your finances or you're dealing with health, that you have to deal with it by yourself.

The truth is, you know what? You and Jesus make a majority, and it's greater than whatever opposition you're coming against. That's always the facts. He's your strong protector. And if you know that he's got your back, you need not be afraid.

You need not live in fear. Though the world may fall away, though mountains may tumble into the sea, though isis may be on the rise, though shootings may come, I will not fear. Why? Because the Lord is my strong protector, and me and Jesus are a majority. So that's where I'm gonna stand.

That's what the psalmist is telling us. It's the same thing we read in psalm 145, verse 18. The Lord is near to all who call upon him. To all who call upon him. In truth,

it's the New Testament equivalent of James four eight.

Draw near to the Lord, and he'll draw near to you. I mean, God is here. God is here. He's with us. Now.

We need to know this. Now, I remember when I was a little kid, I remember they had these things called records. Do you remember what records were? They had like a 33 and a 45. You know the difference?

And I remember you play this record, and it had a picture book. And I remember I used to listen to the story of the three little pigs. Remember that story where the big bad wolf would come and huff and puff and blow the house down? And I remember in this book, the picture of the big Bad Wolf was ugly and he was mean. And I would listen to the guy that was narrating on the record, and it would scare me.

And every night I would go to bed, I was scared that the big bad wolf was going

to come get me. So when I get tucked in by my parents, here's what I'd have them do. I'd have them check under the bed. I'd have them look in the closet. Why?

Because I didn't want the big bad wolf to come and huff and puff on me, right? And it was real. It felt real. It's silly now, but it felt real. Now I have kids, and now I'm checking under beds, and now I'm looking in closets.

And now they want me to lay with them for five or ten minutes. I mean. And I get it. Why? Because they want to know that somebody that's stronger, that can protect them, is with them.

Now, as we grow, here's what we need to understand spiritually. That's our God. That's why when David writes in psalm 23, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear, for you are with me. He doesn't say, even though I go into the valley of the shadow of death to die, he goes, even though I walk through it. I'm going through this thing.

But the reason I can go through this is because I know that you're with me.
Friends, where are you in your life today? Where you feel alone? Where are you in
your life today? Where you feel like nobody understands?

Where are you in your life today that are discouraged, depressed, hurting,
anxious, frustrated and sad. Here's the good news. God is with you. He's only a call
away. Call to me and I will show you great and mighty things that you do not know.

God is with us. It's the best news. We serve a living God. We serve a God who's
come, who's died, who's Rose. He's with us through his spirit.

We're not just going through religious activities in hopes that one day when we
die, that there is a God out there. We are walking with the living God. Who walks with
us in every circumstance that we're in, when you wake up tomorrow morning, he'll be
there. He walks with you. That's why, if I can just say this to you, be careful about
what you feed yourself.

Just be careful. I'm not telling you don't watch television, and I'm certainly not telling you don't listen to the radio, and I'm not telling you don't use the Internet. I'm just saying be careful to the amount of time and who and what you listen to. Because if all you do is listen to talk radio all day long, regardless of what your convictions are, you're gonna live in fear your whole life. Feed yourself with the word of God.

Know that his presence walks with you. Right? Know that God is for you. And when you own that, it'll change everything. When I live knowing that God is my strong protector.

And no matter where I go, there he is. You know, I like to tell you this, the Matthew 16 passage for where two or three gather in my name, there am I, which has absolutely nothing to do with God's presence and everything to do with church discipline. Here's the truth. Wherever you go, there God is you and God walking by yourself. There he is.

He walks with you. You go into a business meeting and you're the only christian

there. You outnumber the non christians because Jesus is with you. You're in your home and you're the only Christian in your home. You outnumber the nonbelievers in your home because God is with you.

Right? You go to a church and you're the only believer in the church. Find another church. Okay. So God says, never fear, he's here.

He's your strong protector. But then notice what else he says. The promise that God is with us. It provides us gladness. He provides gladness that endures during times of opposition.

Gladness. Did you hear that word? Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing. Notice what the psalmist says.

He says, 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 will 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. There's really no stream that ran through the city of God, which is Jerusalem. He's using a metaphor here to talk about that God's presence, is that like a refreshing life giving river.

I mean, that's what God's presence is like. I mean, have you ever had that experience where it's been a while since you've had an opportunity to take a shower? Like maybe you've been on a camping trip, or maybe you've been. Maybe you finished working out or something like that. Don't nudge the person next to you.

It's not like a chance to tell them he's talking about you. But you ever had that experience where finally you get in the shower, it's just so refreshing as the water hits your body and you just feel cleansed and refreshed and layers of sweat come off. It's like, ah, that's what God's presence is like for us. Because when we walk alone, we can get stale, we can get dry, we can feel like everything's up against us. But it's refreshing to know that the Lord's presence is with us.

Even during times of opposition, the city of Jerusalem was always under siege. It seems people were always coming against God's people, and God was always protecting them up until the point where he decided to remove some of his presence on purpose to discipline them. But then God still has shown a love for Israel and bringing them back into the land and prophetically promising to do what he was going to do. The truth is, God walks with all of us. He's with us even in times of opposition, even when people and circumstances seem to be coming against us.

And what do we experience during those times? We can experience gladness. See, for some of us, as Christians, we think when we're being blessed, it's the time to smile and praise God and tell everybody how awesome Jesus is. And when we're going through tough times, for some reason, somebody somewhere taught us that it's spiritual to whine and moan and complain, oh, I'm such a Christian. I'm just going through a tough time right now.

If you knew how bad it was for me. I'm just suffering for the Lord. And we think that's spiritual. It's not spiritual. It's okay to suffer.

It's okay to be sad. It's okay to be angry. It's okay to have emotions. But to consistently have a woe is me victim mentality is nowhere found in the scriptures. I mean, you think about the ministry of the apostle Paul for just a second.

I mean, nobody would want that calling. I wouldn't want that calling. Here's what his calling looked like. Ananias, go tell Saul how much he must suffer for my name. Here's his calling.

Now that you know me, you're gonna suffer for the rest of your life. That's your calling. How about that? That's why people are. I can't wait to meet the apostle Paul.

I don't really necessarily want to meet him. I want to meet Jesus. But when I see Paul and I read about all of his exploits and what he's done, I don't read Paul saying, woe is me. I'm in prison again. Everybody's beating me.

I'm writing a letter to my congressman. This is ridiculous. I don't read that. I read this. Hey.

Even though I've been shipwrecked, even though I've been beaten, even though people inside the church are against me and people outside the church come against me, and I've been. All these things are going on, and I'm shipwrecked. Here's what I know. These light and momentary afflictions are nothing to be compared to the weight of glory that's coming. I love the Lord.

Lord. Hey, Paul, you might be beheaded today. Hey. For me to live as Christ, I'm in joy right now. To die is gain.

It's even better. But I'm convinced that I'm going to remain in the body because it's good for you that I can come impart some spiritual wisdom into your life. And for that reason, I think I'm going to continue to live. And I'm so excited about Jesus. If there's anybody that would have had any reason to be, woe is me.

Life stinks. Can't wait to die and go to heaven. It would have been Paul. And yet Paul's like, hey, I love the Lord. This is awesome.

I have a chance to share, and guess what? I'm in prison. But praise the Lord. It's become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and everybody else that my chains are for Christ. I'm witnessing.

Praise God. That's his heart. When you go through tough times and you have the Lord's presence with you, you can experience gladness. If you don't invite the Lord's presence into those circumstances, you can live days or weeks or months on end in misery, wondering, well, where's God? And how come I have to go through this?

And why am I dealing with this? I can't always answer the why. The only why I've ever found in the Bible is in Isaiah when he says, for my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts. I mean, what I read about God. When I'm asking the why question and I don't know the answer when I don't know the answer to what it is.

Here's what I know. I know that God does and that God is still with me and that God will one day reveal what he's doing and that what he wants me to do is serve him with gladness. He wants me to sing to him. He wants me to praise him. He wants me to love him.

And guess what? Whatever you're going through right now, he loves you. Nehemiah 8:10 says, the joy of the Lord is my strength. The apostle Paul said it this way in Philippians 4:4, rejoice in the Lord always. I'll say it again, rejoice.

He doesn't say, hey, when I'm preaching the gospel on Mars Hill and people are coming to Christ, that's when I'm rejoicing. He's saying, always, no matter what my circumstances are, I'm rejoicing in the Lord. Why? Because it makes a difference when you know that God is walking with you. I remember being in India one time, and I was with a kid in my youth group, and we had gotten separated from our crowd.

And we were walking all alone on this back road, and it was late at night and I

didn't know where we were, and I didn't know where we were going. And just so you know, when I'm in India, I stand out, okay, not many bald white guys walking around. And we're going through this kind of weird, shady looking area, and everybody's still staring at us. And this young kid looks at me and he's like, hey, do you know where you're going? Are we okay?

And I lied and I said, yeah. I said, we're totally fine. I know exactly where we're going. And I remember watching his shoulders, like, shrink back, like, okay, cool. Because he goes, because I was scared.

Now, I was still scared, but I didn't let him know that I was still scared. Why? Because I wanted him to know he was going to be okay and that I had him. Here's the truth about our God. When he says, I'm walking with you and it's going to be okay, he's walking with you and it's going to be okay.

He has all power and it's going to be okay. He has all knowledge and knows what's coming, and it's going to be okay. He's greater than anyone you could have walk with you. That's why God wants us to call on his name because he's the

refreshing water. He's the one that restores our soul.

He's the one that leads us into the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. The Bible says in one John four, four, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. You're not alone. You're just not alone. There may not be anybody in the world, any human being that understands your situation or problem.

There may not be any. But there is one who is, and his name is Jesus Christ. And he understands, and he is walking with you. And let me just tell you why this is so important. Because when you lose sight of God's presence in your life, that's when you begin to drift and wander.

Now, you think about some of the greatest sins that you've ever sinned. And if you can't think about them, just ask your wife or husband after church. They'll help you with it. But you think about some of the greatest sins that you've ever sinned. And I'm not asking you to dwell on them for shame, because Jesus has forgiven all of them.

They're washed away. You're renewed. But let me tell you something. My bet would be this. That in those places where you become short with people, you become rude, you become insensitive.

You've done something. You're like, why did I ever do that? There are times in your life where you don't recognize that God's presence is walking with you, that he's right there. I mean, this is why it's so important. I mean, you think back in the Old Testament, I mean, Elijah.

We read about Elijah and the prophets of Baal and how he called down fire and slayed 450 prophets of Baal. And it's like this awesome story because he's like the man of God and he's so strong. And then Jezebel gets word that night that he's killed everybody. You know what she says? The queen?

If by tomorrow at this time, I haven't killed him, you know, may the gods be angry with me. So what's this man of God that's just seen God perform the greatest miracle in his life? What's he do? He flees. Because this woman threatens his life.

He flees, and he gets all the way out in the wilderness, and he's all by himself. And then God shows up in a wind and in a kind of an earthquake and in fire, and God wasn't in any of those things. And then God came in a still, small whisper and said, elijah, what are you doing here? You're not alone. There's another 7000 people back there that haven't bowed their knee to Baal.

I'm walking with you. What are you so afraid of? Even if you're the most spiritual giant, you're the most spiritual godly woman ever in the history of the church. You're the most spiritual godly man ever in the history of the church. We still need to recognize God walks with us.

Because the moment we forget that he walks with us, what happens? We start to drift and we start to feel like we're alone. And we start to ask those natural questions like, hey, where's God? God walks with us so that we can have a strong protection in times of chaos, even gladness during times of opposition. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our fortress. For those of you that grew up lutheran, in your tradition, you'll know the hymn, a mighty fortress is our God. This is the psalm that Martin Luther used to pen that hymn. But then when you talk about never fearing that God is here, here's the biggest reason. Because God's presence promises victory that demonstrates his lordship over all creation.

It promises victory that demonstrates his lordship over all creation. Notice what he says. 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. Now we study and we read world history, and we celebrate different generals or military leaders that had great strategy or great wisdom or great fighting prowess, and they did certain things and they won. But when you peel back all of world history, here's what you're going to see. That the Lord Jesus Christ is behind all of it.

And God has used all things for his glory. And one day, God is going to reign and rule on this planet. Now, how many have heard this? First part of verse ten? Raise

your hand if you've heard this.

Be still and know that I am God. How many have heard that? Okay. Most. Everybody's heard that.

It makes a great plaque in your house. But most people won't be able to tell you what the next part says. Why should we be still and know that he's God? Because I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.

God is declaring his victory. God is declaring that one day he's going to reign and rule on planet Earth. The angel said in acts chapter two, in the same way, you see him go. You will see him return. Revelation, chapter 19, verse eleven talks about the return of Jesus Christ and how swift and majestic and victorious is going to be when he comes back with his saints to establish his kingdom on this planet.

And when you live with the understanding of knowing that we're going to win, it

changes everything, right? I mean, I love sports. I love to watch sports, right? And there's certain different sporting events I've watched over and over again. One was when I was a senior in high school.

We ended up winning the state championship by three points and had an undefeated team. And I've gone back and watched that video now, when we won, the reason we won the state championship, we won 29 to 26, because my friend blocked a field goal with 4 seconds to go. So we won. And I remember what it was like at that moment, kneeling on the sideline, trying to watch and see, are they going to tie it? Are we going to go into overtime?

I remember all my emotions racing, and I remember exactly how it felt when he blocked that field goal. I'm like, well, do we won? We're undefeated state champions. And I've gone back and watched that. It used to be a vhs tape.

Do you know what that is? Okay, I have it on DVD now, and I'll go back and watch that. And now in going back and watching it, I don't have any of the emotions I had while I was playing the game. You know why? Because I know we win.

Because I know that my buddy's gonna block the field goal every time he's blocked. The field goal every time I've watched it, he's blocked because it's amazing. I know right when it's gonna happen. So I don't get nervous because it's already happened. Here's what Jesus wants you to know.

His victory has already been completed because of his resurrection from the dead. And he is coming back to establish that he will be exalted among the nations and that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. It's as good as done. You are on the winning team. You don't need to wonder what's going to happen.

What's going to happen is this. We win. It's as good as done. The only promise I see in the bible of Jesus not fulfilling is I'll be back. And I think he's more reliable than Arnold Schwarzenegger.

I think he will be right. He's coming. He'll be here. He'll establish his kingdom now

here's what I want you to see because this is what God wants us to focus on is psalm, chapter 46, verse ten. I want to read it to you because you don't know what it means.

Be still and know that I am God. Now you think you know what it means, but you don't because most of you were born and raised in America and have lived in America your whole life. So let me tell you what be still is because you don't know what it means. I don't know what it means. You know what be still means.

Stop, pause, stop striving. Slow down, take a breath.

You don't know what that means, do you?

Most of us, if we're going to do that, we schedule it. I got ten minutes here. I'm just going to schedule a quick nap. That's not standing still. That's not being still.

That's not pausing. It means I am going to purposely shut down my life. See, we live in a culture like if we want to get together, if we want to do something, we want to grab dinner, we want to grab a meal, we got to schedule it sometimes 2345 weeks in advance because you know why I'm so busy now? The reality is we're not as busy as we think we are because most of the things that we're busy with, we're choosing to be busy with. Now, I'm not saying that they're wrong things.

If you have kids growing up, I know you're busy because you're choosing to do several things. You're choosing your entertainment, you're choosing your relaxation time. You're choosing your. Most of us are getting the opportunity to choose. We live in a generation that has more options than anywhere else and yet we're so, so busy.

We're really not as busy as we think we are, but we busy ourselves and it makes us feel good when we're busy. Here's what God says. Just pause for a minute. Just slow down long enough to take a deep breath. And every time you take a deep breath, think about this.

God gave me that breath. God's the one pouring into my life. Everything I see

belongs to him. He is going to be victorious. This situation that I'm dealing with is not nearly as big as what I think it is.

Yeah, it's a big deal. And yeah, this hurts me. But I just want to be still and be reminded in light of how awesome and vast and big and strong and victorious our God is that he has this be still and then know that he is God stop striving. I mean, even in the church, do you know we can strive. We strive.

Like, I'm all about gathering for corporate worship because I think it's important to hear the word of God and to worship the Lord. I think it's important to have a community of people that you're able to express your life with and pour into. I think it's important because you have a gift to serve. But do you know even that can become a work. I got to go to church.

I got to go to group. I got to serve. I got to go to group. I got to serve. I got to get my kids in it.

And that can feel like a work. And God says, just pause it a second. Just be still for a moment and recognize why you're doing those things. It's because I'm God. I'm allowing you to do those things.

I want you to be with other people that are pausing to love me, too, because in this world, you need others. And I've given you a gift so that you can serve others, but don't make it a burden. Stop for a second. Stop striving and just know that I gave you those gifts so that you could be full of me. Just pause for a minute.

Stop for a minute. This should be an ongoing thing in our life. We, as a culture, we don't do that very well. We pause long enough just to get through whatever we needed to. Pause long enough so we can start hitting the ground running again.

Do you know we're the worst culture in the world at grieving, we're the worst culture. I mean, a lot of cultures, when somebody dies, they spend a week or two, and they just cry. They just pause. They just grieve. Why?

Because when you lose somebody that you love, it hurts. What do we do? We spend an hour, and then we have a meal, and then we think, okay, now we move on. It's time to crank it out again. No, it hurts.

Be still. Pause. And then what? Know that I'm God. It means to recognize.

It means to encounter the living God. It means to know him intimately. It means to take that paused time to seek his face and to recognize that he's the Lord. That's what God wants us to do. Be still and know that he's God.

And when you begin to pause and think about the victory Jesus has won on the cross, realize this believer. If you trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and believe that he's been raised from the dead and that he's coming back, you don't need to strive anymore to please God, ever. You've never been impressive to him. God the Father is impressed by the son, not by us. And now that you're a Christian, you don't need to strive to please God.

Well, I'm gonna study. I'm gonna do this. I'm gonna get involved here, and then God's gonna be really pleased. God's pleased because of his son. God's pleased with you because Jesus died for you and rose for you.

Stop striving, even religiously. Experience him, because when you get to just be with Christ, you'll want to worship, you'll want to be with other Christians. You'll want to use your gift. It's not religion. Then it's fun because I know I get to do this because God is, and he's alive and he loves me.

And notice what it says. It said this a couple times in the scriptures. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. Now, hosts is simply armies.

The Lord of hosts. It means the captain of the Lord's armies. It means Jesus Christ as Lord over all and all his armies. That's who's with us. It's not just like a buddy.

It's not just somebody who's strong. It's the one that commands the angel armies of the Lord. It's the one who every knee will bow to. That's the one who's with you. And notice what else it says next.

The God of Jacob is our fortress. Now, I love this. I love this. If there's any character in the Old Testament that's lousy and no good, it would be Jacob. I mean, he'd certainly be a contender, right?

I mean, the guy's a swindler. He's a trickster. He's a manipulator. He's a liar. He's also of those things.

As a matter of fact, even after he wrestles with God and God gives him the new name, Israel, that God is with you, God is with Israel. The Bible still refers to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Bible never refers to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. You know what that tells me? God is the God of the messed up.

God is the God of the one who's blown it. God is the one of the liar. God is the God of the liar. God is the one who. God's the God of the sinner.

Why does God love Jacob? You ever wonder that? The Bible tells us because he chose to, because of his grace. I'll have compassion on who I have compassion on. If God loves you, it's because of his grace.

It's not because you're awesome. It's because God is awesome, and God is loving because. Let me tell you something, believer. Here's what many of you think. As long as I'm doing good and I'm doing what God wants, and I'm being faithful with my tithe, and I'm going to church and I'm being religious, God's walking with me.

Do you know, even if you don't give your tithe, and even if you aren't walking with the Lord and even if you're trying to be wayward, that God still wants to walk with you? Do you know that I thought God only loved me if I was righteous. No, the whole gospel is God loved you when you were unrighteous. How much more now, having believed in Jesus, does he love you? He loves you because of who Jesus is.

He walks with you no matter what. I mean, it's great news. You have victory in Christ. So just pause and be still and take the time to realize his incredible love that he's lavishing on you. And not only this, it's not just that you gather in a worship experience over the weekend where he says, I'm with you.

And then for the rest of the week, you have to pursue him, hoping he comes. He'll walk with you every moment of every waking minute, all week long, as long as you have life. If you just call upon him. And when he's walking with you, you and Jesus are the majority because you know you have the victory, so you can serve the Lord with gladness, and fear goes away because God is with you. How awesome is that?

I mean, we see this all throughout the Bible. One of my favorite stories in the Old Testament is found in two chronicles, chapter 20, when Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, which, by the way, I just love that name. If some of you are having kids soon, you know, having a son, put Jehoshaphat on the list. That'd be cool. So Jehoshaphat is the king, and Jehoshaphat knows the promise of God.

And he starts praying to the Lord, saying, lord, you told us if we were in trouble to call out to you. Well, there's three armies coming against us. So I'm calling out to you, lord. I'm seeking your face because I need your help, because I can't do anything about it. And in two chronicles, chapter 20, in the middle of verse 15, one of the prophets that's prophesying says to Jehoshaphat, thus, the Lord says to you, do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

The battle is not yours, but God's. In verse 17, he says, you will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm. Hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem, do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. I mean, that's their battle plan.

It's very similar to what the battle plan was against the Egyptians for Israel. Stand firm in the Lord. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Trust that he's going to do the work. You won't even need to fight against these three armies.

You know what happened. Two chronicles, chapter 20, verse 22, says, and

when they begin to sing and pray, so they're praying to the Lord, and now they're praising the Lord. And there's something powerful about prayer and praise when they come together, that when that happens, God shows up, it says, and when they did that, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. Those were the three armies who had come against Judah so that they were routed. Check out how this happened.

For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction. So two of the armies went against the third army and routed them and killed all of them. So that's how the whole battle got started. And then check out what happened next. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped destroy one another.

So these two armies destroy Mount Seir, and when Mount Seir is destroyed, they fight each other, and they all die. So in verse 24, when Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground. None had escaped. So check this out. There's three armies coming against Israel, and every single soldier dies so that by the time Israel makes it to the battle lines, they look out and everybody's dead.

Pretty good battle plan, right? Why? Because the Lord fights for you. That's who our God is. See, so often, we think we need to fight our battles for us.

We got to fix this person. We got to change this. We got to. That's just not the truth. God is the one who fights all our battles for us.

God is the one who does all these things. God is the one that makes all these things possible. And guess what? He's present for you. He's available for you.

You lift your eyes up to the Lord. Where does your help come from? It comes from him and he will not delay. He's your refuge and he's your strength. When?

Always, always. I will not fear. His promise is true. My God will come through.
How often?

Always. Always. That's who our God is. You will win. You're on the victorious team.

You're on the victorious side, right? So the Lord says, whatever you're going through right now, he says, I don't personally, as your pastor, know what you're going through. You know what you're going through. God's available to you as a strong protection amid all the chaos, amidst all the things you'd see in the earth. God wants you to serve him with gladness and experience him with great joy during these times.

And guess what? He wants you to be reminded you have the victory. He'll fight your battle for you. What is it you're stressed out about with today? What is it you say?

I wish that this was taken care of. Call on the Lord. Tell him, hey, I'm done fighting. I just want to enjoy you. I want to be still and know that you're God that will take care of this for me.

And, Lord, as I pray to you and as I praise you and as I seek you, I'm going to trust you. Take care of the circumstances you need to take care of, because you're my God and I'm resting in you and I'm going to enjoy you. Is that good news or what? That's our God. He loves you.

He cares for you. The psalmist promises us, as throughout the entirety of scripture, the best news is the best news of all. God is with us. Amen. Amen.

Would you stand with me, Lord Jesus, we just sing your praises. We seek your face, Lord, you know our hearts. You know right where we are. And, Lord, today, as we close with this song, Lord, let this be a testimony of our trust in you, that you're our God, always and always. In Jesus name.

Amen.

