

Psalm 46

¹ *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

² *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

³ *though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*

⁴ *There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.*

⁵ *God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.*

⁶ *Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*

⁷ *The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

⁸ *Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.*

⁹ *He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.*

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ *He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;*

I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

¹¹ *The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress*

We live in "interesting times" with both the media and daily conversations being filled with talk of the Corona virus epidemic.

But it is fair to say that the world has been shaken not only by the rapid spread of the Corona virus, but the impact it is having on our national life, our social gatherings, our sports meetings, our economy, on jobs, on our financial markets and quite possibly on our schools.

For us as a church we have already been shaken by various health issues, in particular, 2 of our Leadership team, Val Gibbons and Richard Price having severe strokes during the last year.

This psalm talks about the mountains themselves falling into the sea: the things we normally take for granted, as being there forever, symbols of everlasting stability and constancy – no longer being there. But, the psalmist says, even if this should happen, we will not fear. Why?

Because there is one thing that will never ever change or fail us and that is God, *an ever-present help in trouble*. This means that whatever challenges we might face, He will always, always be there. He is our protector from outside threats, because he is *our refuge, our fortress*, the one who *breaks the bow and shatters the spear*. But he not only surrounds us on the outside but he strengthens us from the inside: *He is our strength, He is within us*.

But notice how this whole psalm is written from the point of view of being a community together: *God is OUR refuge and strength...Therefore WE will not fear, The Lord Almighty is WITH US; the God of Jacob is OUR fortress*.

It reminds us that the place where God dwells, the place where God is present, where we find him, is *the city of God i.e.* the community of God's people and for us, that means our church family here in St Mary's. It is in our church family supporting, encouraging, helping one another that we find God's presence and that calming, refreshing, life-giving *river whose streams make glad* our hearts.

The world around us might shake, but God does not and because he dwells amongst his people and is our fortress, our church family will stand firm too.

So says the psalmist, *Be still - don't rush around in a panic, don't quake with anxiety or fear, but know that I am God – remember that God is the Lord*

Almighty, the God of Jacob who rescued Israel from Egypt and the God of Jesus who has rescued you – that's the God who is always with us.

He is *our refuge and our fortress, He is our strength* and He will get us through this present challenge and whatever other challenges we have to face.