

**Be Still**  
*Psalm 46*

Introduction

- Every song has a story...
  - A song is more than just a melody, but an experience that comes out of the depths of our soul
  - It resonates with how we are feeling or what we believe
  - Consider
    - Martin Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"
    - Isaac Watt's "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
    - Charles Wesley's "Hark the Harold Angels Sing"
    - Any Taylor Swift song!
- The Book of Psalms was written mostly by King David
  - A gift for worship
  - Danced before the Lord
  - Musically talented
  - A real craft for words
- Whether you are musically inclined or not, the Psalms have stood the test of time because they resonate with a deep feeling within all of us and communicate the faith we all aspire to live by.
  - This is true of Psalm 46
    - Psalm 46:1 (ESV), "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
    - Psalm 46:10 (ESV), "Be still and know that I am God."
  - Take just a moment to allow those words to sink in
    - Like a soothing ointment, it brings healing to the soul
    - Consider the current circumstances, this Psalm is applicable
- When we began this current sermon series, "Where is God?" Psalm 46 was a passage that I referenced.
  - Mainly, because of the familiar words, "Be still and know that I am God"

- Little did I realize that this particular Psalm speaks of God’s presence, especially in times of great struggle.
- So, before concluding this sermon series, I wanted to return to this passage to provide for us further insight into the question, “Where is God?”
- Illustration of Bentley
  - I’ve mentioned before that we have a Labrador Retriever
  - For the most part, Bentley is a very calm dog
  - Occasionally something, like a thunderstorm, will rattle him
  - The calm, rational dog turns into an uncontrollable panic
  - I’ll hold him through the panic and fight with him until I hear him take a big breathe, a sigh of relief
  - This is how I imagine [Psalm 46:10 \(ESV\)](#), “Be still and know that I am God.” It is letting go of what we can’t control, acknowledging the presence of God and trusting everything to his care
  - And when we do, [Psalm 46:2a \(ESV\)](#), “Therefore we will not fear”
- So as we draw to a close our sermon series, “Where is God” today, I hope that you will consider your story and the story of God’s Word as it speaks to our lives.

### God is With Us

- Every song has a story...
- An important story to this Psalm is “The City of God” mentioned in [verse 4](#)
  - Also referred to as “Zion”
  - Throughout scripture this city is a reference to God’s dwelling place
  - It is a place of worship were God’s people commune with God
  - It is the place where God’s word is proclaimed, the nations are drawn and a reference to Heaven.
  - In the Book of Revelation it is the picture of the New Heaven converging with the New Earth.
  - To get right to the point. The question, “Where is God” is answered in Psalm 46. God is with us!
- This is the literal interpretation given to us of Jesus
  - Immanuel- God is with us

- Isaiah 7:14 (ESV), “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
- Matthew 1:23 affirms Isaiah’s prophecy as the angel comes to Joseph in a dream to reassure Joseph of God’s presence through Mary’s unexpected pregnancy.
- Jesus is the embodiment of God dwelling, present with us
- The question, “Where is God” is something Jesus’ followers pondered as they began to process Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension.
  - Jesus promised that he would send the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; John 16:7)
  - The Holy Spirit would empower believers to be his witnesses to the rest of the world (Acts 1:8)
  - Today, according to the Christian calendar we celebrate Pentecost
    - Pentecost is marked as 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection
    - It is the day in which Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled as he spoke to his followers
    - Today we affirm and testify to God’s promise that God is with us by God’s power and presence in our lives!
- The significance of this story is in the prayer Jesus’ taught his disciples to pray
  - “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10 (ESV)
  - The picture of the kingdom is one that breaks forth not when everything is right, calm and perfect, but instead at the exact climax of a storm.
  - God’s presence is a reminder to us of God’s justice and sovereignty
  - We are constantly living in the climax of God’s presence in our lives. The opportunity to witness to God’s kingdom being present as we live out God’s will in our lives. The moment we realize this, then we can begin to lean on God’s promises for our lives.
- Illustration of Belpre from David McCullough’s *The Pioneers*<sup>1</sup>
  - The desire of wanting to move out of the small town for something bigger and more exciting
  - Late 1700’s Belpre/Marietta was considered the place to mark your territory. New life and Beginning. The trail to the west.

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<sup>1</sup> David McCullough. *The Pioneers: The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2019.

- When you consider the historical significance of this area it gives new perspective for where you live no matter how small it may seem
- Sometimes we need that reminder of God's presence in our life. No matter how insignificant we may feel, God's presence is there with us.
- Church Vision Statement
  - "Making Christ the Center of Our Life, Relationships and Service"
  - The vision statement does not strive to make MMBC the center, but Christ
  - Through our fellowship and witness we carry that great light into our community
  - It starts within us; like a song residing within us, resonating within our soul, boiling up to the surface from our heart to our mouth and hands proclaiming a personal experience with the Living God!

### God is in the Storm

- Every song has a story
  - Psalm 46:2, 5
  - An important story to this Psalm is that God's presence is given attention within times of trouble.
  - Many times we struggle to see God's presence in the midst of our trouble.
    - Think about it, if our faith only spoke to the times when everything seemed to work out- what kind of faith would we have?
    - Unfortunately this is the kind of faith that many people have. It is a faith based on their own expectations.
    - Remember what we have said previously in this sermon series: We can miss God's presence when we wait or expect on God under our own terms and conditions.
  - How do we break this cycle?
    - Psalm 46:6 Word
      - With one word God takes control
      - Consider creation- God spoke creation into existence, "Let there be..."
      - Think of the power of God's word. It's why we can find rest in the words of Psalm 46:10 (ESV), "Be still and know that I am God."
      - God's word reminds us of God's sovereignty

- This is why it is so important for us to know God's Word and to speak it into the circumstances of our life.
- Often we get distracted by our circumstances and fear before we consider God's Word. God's Word never takes root in our life.
- **Psalm 46:8a Works**
  - While we wait for God, we need to consider his work
  - The focus is on God's work, not our own
  - What has God done in the past? How has God proven faithful before?
  - Too often we get focused on what we are capable of doing or overwhelmed with what we can't do.
  - Instead we need to consider the works of God.
- Two things to break the cycle of our own expectations: God's Word and God's Works
- We especially need to be focused on God's Word and Work during times of trouble.

### Exalt God

- Every song has a story
  - **Psalm 46:10a**
  - Most well-known part of this Psalm
  - I can't tell you the number of people, sermons and conferences that I have heard this passage referenced as a passage that has helped bring peace to people's lives.
  - Literally, like the story of my dog, it's like taking a sigh in the presence of God knowing that no matter what is going on around, God truly is, "our refuge and strength (vs. 1)."
- Go back to the part of breaking the cycle of recognizing the presence of God only under our own terms and conditions
  - Two Things: God's Word and God's Work
  - When we are still we can put God's Word into practice and see God's Work
- A direct result of **Psalm 46:10a**
  - **"I will be exalted among the nations" Psalm 46:10b (ESV)**
- Worship

- Every knee bowed with an understanding that God is Lord of Lords
- It is our witness, our testimony, our song
- Purpose of Sermon Series
  - “Where is God,” especially in times like these?
  - When we are still, we can focus on God
  - We can exalt God despite the circumstances because we know that God is in control.
- Guiding Principles
  - We may feel forsaken, but God has not abandoned us
  - We find God through obedience
  - We find God as we cultivate our relationship with him, especially when we don’t feel God’s presence
- Series summed up: This is an opportunity for us to bear witness to God’s presence as we trust in God’s promises
  - The essence of being still and knowing God
  - God is exalted, no matter the circumstances!

### Conclusion

- Every song has a story, so what is your story?
- What song have you been singing during these uncertain times?
- Have you trusted in the promises of God and given witness to God’s presence?
- [Read Psalm 46](#)