

I. Review

If you have your Bibles today, I want you to turn to Psalms chapter 46. Last week we saw in Psalms chapter 45 the great doctrinal teaching on the marriage of the Lamb, one of the most misunderstood concepts in the whole Bible. People know the term, they talk about it, but they do not really understand it. I showed you last week how the whole Bible, plus the history of man, is revolving around God inviting people to a wedding for His Son. I gave you the seven people groups through history that make up the dispensations of the Bible that we looked at Thursday night. In fact, the last three weeks we talked about the marriage of the Lamb, and then last Thursday night we talked about the dispensations and we laid those out. The Thursday before that, we talked about the different levels of how to study the Bible, and I took you into a deeper understanding of that.

Now that you have seen the marriage of the Lamb, you now have a very good idea of how it all plays out, how it works out. It will make the Bible even more understandable to you when you see how it is all broken down, the dispensations in the Bible around these seven people groups. Every one of them is called to the wedding. Of course, I showed you the Bride, you and me, the church, the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the attendants of the wedding. But now in Psalm chapter 46, we see again the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and God taking over control of the world. All through these Psalms, I showed you last week, everything is in a proper order. Much of the Psalms will fall into little segments like this. We are in the middle of getting into what we call the Millennial Psalms.

I told you when we started that the Book of Psalms will break down into three aspects concerning the nation of Israel in a doctrinal sense. It will show you the Tribulation Period as the Jew goes through it. It will show you the Second Coming Psalms, that is, when Christ comes back, and then you are going to have the Millennial Psalms. That will be a picture of the Millennial Reign of Christ, which we are moving into now in the next three or four Psalms that we are going to look at. Even though, without a doubt, this Psalm is a Tribulation Second Coming Psalm, it is going to be one of the most incredible Psalms for us as New Testament Christians from an inspirational application. I will show you how it lays out doctrinally first. I want you to have that. Then I want to show you how it applies to you and me in our daily lives.

This will be a Psalm that you will want to hang on to. I call Psalms like this "refrigerator Psalms," "refrigerator verses." These are the ones you want to stick on your refrigerator that you look at every time you open it up and walk through the kitchen. They are incredible Psalms. This will be a Psalm that you will want to keep. In times of trouble, this Psalm will get you through it. Simple as that!

II. Psalms 46:1-11

Historically, it is David going through the tough times that he went through in his life.

Doctrinally, it is a picture of Israel going through their tough time, the Tribulation Period. But inspirationally, as it applies to you and me, it is a picture of you and me in our day of trouble, the things that we are going to go through. This Psalm is one of the greatest promises and principles found anywhere in the Word of God. So let us read it together. It is just 11 short verses here, and then we will begin to put it together for you.

- 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.***
- 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.*
- 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.*
- 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.***

III. Selah – Context will be the Millennial Reign of Christ

You will notice first off, and this is always a giveaway telltale that you want to mark in your Bible, you will find in verse 3 at the end it says the word "Selah." Then down in verse 7, it says the word "Selah" again. Then again in verse 11 at the end of the verse. I have told you this before that the Psalms were originally sung. The word "Selah" is, in the musical world, a rest or a pause. In other words, you would stop and rest before you went to the next part of it. They represent, in a musical term analogy, a rest. But your Bible is put together by the Holy Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit of God never wastes anything to help you learn your Bible. So the word "Selah," which means rest, wherever you find it in your Bible, is going to denote that the context of what you are reading is the Millennial Reign of Christ when the earth is at rest. I cannot explain that

other than this is God's book and that is the way He chose to do it. But you are going to find that every time you find it in your Bible, you find the word "Selah," the context will immediately be the Second Coming of Christ going into the Millennium where the earth is at rest. That is what we have in Psalm chapter 46, and it is a picture of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

IV. Doctrinally – God is Israel's Strength & Refuge in time of Trouble

Doctrinally, what we see here is Israel acknowledging that God will be their strength and refuge in their time of trouble. The time of trouble for them will be the Tribulation Period, which is also, we know, Jacob's time of trouble. Look at verse 2. Verse 2 shows you the turmoil that they are going through. The earth is moved. The mountains are carried into the midst of the sea. Verse 3 says the waters roar and are troubled. The mountains shake. All that will be a reference to the Second Coming of Christ as He comes back to bring the nation of Israel into the time of rest, the Millennial Reign of Christ.

Look at verse 4 and 5. In the midst of all of this, in the midst of all of these trials and tribulations and all that they are going through, look at verse 4 and 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.

The reference to the river here will always be a reference to the Millennial Reign of Christ. If you would go back and look at Ezekiel chapter 40 through chapter 48, you will find that in the Millennium, when God establishes the temple in Jerusalem, there is a river that comes out of that temple and comes down into the Mediterranean Sea. The Bible says that every place the water touches, it brings life. One of Danny's songs that he sings that is one of my favorites is that great song "There Is a River" that flows by the throne of God. I think it is one of the best songs that you could ever sing, and it is based on this verse right here in Ezekiel chapter 47. Verse 6 says,

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

This will be Revelation chapter 19 verse 11, the voice of God, of the earth melted. Verse 7 says,

7. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

That is literally for the nation of Israel, and then the word "Selah," He is coming back for them. Verse 8 says,

8. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

That will be the Second Coming, and He makes the wars to cease. That will be the Millennium.

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.

This will be Isaiah chapter 11, which is one of the great chapters, we will be into it a little bit in the book of Isaiah, about the Millennial Reign of Christ. Then He says in verse 10 and 11,

10. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. (Millennium)

11. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Of course, this will be a reference to Zechariah chapter 14, and again, Ezekiel chapter 40 through chapter 48.

All this, doctrinally, will be the end of the Tribulation, God coming back, taking the Jew into the Millennium. The God of Jacob, the people of God, the nation of Israel. It will be the Second Coming of Christ to the nation of Israel and God establishing His throne on earth in the Millennium. Last week I showed you God's wife was the nation of Israel. Where God has a wife, the nation of Israel, Christ has a Bride, and that is you and me, the church. We laid all that out for you. The theme of Psalms chapter 46, from a doctrinal standpoint, dealing with the nation of Israel, will be for the Jew in the midst of these times of troubles that they trust God and they see Him being their help in their time of trouble. All this after Psalms 44, which we saw the week before, when they returned to God through the ministry of Moses and Elijah. You remember, we have looked at this thing kind of collectively, how they are in the Tribulation Period, they are being persecuted by the Antichrist. Somewhere in the middle of the Tribulation Period, God reveals Himself to them, sends them Moses and Elijah, and they begin to turn back to God. They begin to see what they have done, how they have betrayed God. Psalm 44 was a great picture of that. So I want you to understand how this Psalm fits in doctrinally with the nation of Israel.

V. Inspirational Application for New Testament Christians

Now I want to talk about how it fits for you and me. **Just as Israel goes through their time of trouble and has to face the issues that they have to face, we too will face some tough times in life.** Tough times for us as God's children have to go through. You will find there will be tough times because we get out of fellowship, get into sin, and God, through the hand of chastisement, will bring tough times into our life. That is not always the case. Sometimes there will be trouble because of the loss of a loved one. We lose a mom or a dad or a brother or a sister or a child. Sometimes there will be trouble because of sickness. There will be medical issues, medical problems. People get cancer. People have heart problems. People have all kinds of medical issues. In life, there will be heart attacks. There will be times of distress. There will be some really tough times. **This life is nothing more than a valley of tears.**

God had a perfect plan for man. God had a perfect garden, perfect weather. Everything was absolutely perfect. But man rebelled against God. Man made the wrong choice and took the way of life that brought sin into this world. When sin came into this world, disease came in, sickness came in, funeral homes came in, graveyards came in, hospitals came in, and now life is a vale of tears. Even if you are saved, you see, you are saved and I am saved, that is an eternal thing. But we still live in a world of sin. Just because you are saved does not mean you will not get cancer. Just because you are saved does not mean that you will not have some debilitating disease come

into your life or some heartache. We are all going to say goodbye to our parents who are going to step out into eternity at some point. We are all going to say goodbye to each other. There is grief and grieving in this world because when sin came in, disease and sickness and heartache and all of those issues came in with it.

I hear people all the time, I have heard pastors all my life say, "You know what, when you get saved, all your problems are over." Nothing could be farther from the truth. When you get saved, your problems are not over, but if you do get saved, you have an answer to those problems. That is the difference. Oh, it is an incredible concept. As verse 3 says, like Israel, there will be some times in our lives when the water roars, and we are in trouble. There will be times when the mountains of life shall shake around us. It will seem like the very mountains are carried into the midst of the sea. Our world is set upside down. Yet you are saved; you are on your way to heaven. Yet we have to go through the struggles of this life. When that happens, God will be for us a refuge and a strength. This Psalm will be a great Psalm when you go through tough times. Sooner or later, you will.

We have a very young church. If you look around, most of you are young singles, young couples. We have some oldies, but goodies sprinkled through the crowd. But you young kids, you really have not experienced any trials or troubles yet. Oh, I know your boyfriend broke up with you, your girlfriend. That is nothing. He was a bum anyhow. Do not worry about him. The older you get, someday you are going to realize that nobody escapes it. Young people have a tendency to think, or not think, about the long range of life. They get the idea that they are going to live forever and they are invincible. That is not true. Right now, you young couples, probably almost every one of you does not even think about a 401k. You do not even know what that is. You probably think it is some kind of fast automobile. You do not think of having health insurance, life insurance. I get it. I didn't! Those are things in the short term that are because of your youth and because you have your whole world ahead of you, you do not think about.

➤ The Older You Get the Heartache and Tough Times Will Come

The older you get, the tough times will come. The older you get, the heartache will come. You start to have a family. You start to raise those kids. Heartache is going to come. The older you get, the less you are going to be able to do. Heartache is going to come. You are not going to be able to run the bases like you do now. You are not going to be able to play volleyball like you do now. You are not going to be able to do all the things that you do. The older you get, the slower you get. It begins to set in. You are going to have pain in life when you get older.

Hey, the first 55 years of my life, never broke a bone, never went to the hospital, never really got sick. When I hit 60, they have a room at the hospital with my name on it. You break down. It is coming. Now, I know you do not think it is coming. It is coming. There will be a day when you look around and you do not have any 401k, you do not have any retirement, you do not have any of this, you do not have any of that. You never look long term. Your tough times are coming. Nobody escapes it. Sooner or later, it is going to hit you.

We have our prayer list, you know, and I take it very seriously. I think about it all week long. We have little Emma. I talked with her parents last night. It has got to be a tough time. They are

good people. They are not going through it because they are wicked or in sin. They are good people. But it happens. I think, you know, Christina's mom, Vicki, she texts me every time she gets bad and she asks me to put her on a prayer list, and she is going through some tough times. We all know Steve. He has not been able to come to church, and I do not know that he ever will. He listens, but the older you get, the less you can do. I think of my brother, John, my sister's husband, he may be facing open heart surgery. That is tough. That is tough. I think of Nikki and Sandy Maday, her mom. I have known Sandy for 25 years. Wonderful woman, one of the best Christian ladies, tough as nails. But we could write a medical book about the medical issues that that woman has had in her life. Now she is battling cancer. I think of Herb Koonce, with Alzheimer's. I think of Pat Dean who had a stroke and had to leave the ministry. That had to be the hardest thing. I know Pat. Many of you know Pat. Pat was a fireball. Pat and I went to kindergarten together. Are you kidding me? We grew up together. He was saved as a servant of the Lord long before I was. God used him up there in New York with Mel Sabaka, and then later with Mike Veach, and he led the singing. He was an incredible preacher, great guy. Then one day when he hits about my age, he has a stroke. Can't preach anymore. Can't do the ministry anymore. He has to leave New York and go down with his family so he can be taken care of. That is tough, guys. That is tough.

➤ This Life is a Valley of Tears

I am looking at you right now, and I am going to tell you, it is coming your way someday. I am living proof of it. Some of you will battle cancer. Some of you will battle some other disease. Some of you will battle heart disease. The fact that you are saved and on your way to heaven is an eternal thing and a spiritual thing. **But this life is a valley of tears.** You better have something to get you through. This Psalm will be a great Psalm when you go through these tough times. Many of you are going through it right now, listening to me. I know you are. The people we pray for each week are going through some tough times. I never want us, you young people out there, because you have your health, you have your strength, to forget what they are going through. The reason why you should not forget what they are going through and really pray for them and try to lift them up is because someday you are going to go through it and you are going to want somebody to pray for you.

VI. God as Our Refuge and Strength

Verse 1 says, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" I would be doing this verse a great injustice if I did not tell you that this verse is inscribed on the tombstone of one of the greatest men God ever used down through church history. It is over in Wittenberg, Germany. This verse is inscribed on the gravestone of Martin Luther, who lived 1483 to 1546. He was embroiled in trouble and conflict all his life once he became a child of God in his faith in God for the stand that he took. Luther started out as a Roman Catholic priest, but he was unfulfilled in his life. His life was as empty as the Roman Catholic Church that he was part of. He followed all of the junk that the Roman Catholic Church told him to do to find God. He prayed. He took the sacraments. He went to mass. He took the Eucharist. He was part of the communion and even entered the final order of the Catholic Church, which is the priesthood.

Nothing gave him peace because there is no peace in it. So like many Roman Catholics of the day and even today in certain parts of the world, he turned to self-denial and self-mutilation. There were monks during these periods of time that took a vow of silence, that in their monasteries nobody ever spoke the rest of their lives. Some of them cut themselves. Some of them did incredible things to their body, painful, to try to earn some kind of penance with God, to find some kind of peace with God.

Martin Luther himself, he crawled up 300 steps of the Catholic Cathedral on his knees that were raw and bloody to try to find some kind of peace with God. One day he opened up his Bible and the Holy Spirit of God shone that big old spotlight down over his shoulder and illuminated Romans chapter 1 verse 17 that says,

*17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith.***

Old Martin Luther got saved. What the Roman Catholic Church could not do in 15, 20 years of the heresy of his life, God's Word accomplished in one verse. He became God's champion. God's champion to bring about the Reformation in 1517 and spent the rest of his life in combat with the Roman Catholic Church. He founded the Lutheran Church, which back then was pretty fundamental, not today. He was persecuted beyond belief and he was hated by the Roman Catholic Church even to this day. It was in 1517 in Wittenberg, Germany, after his conversion, and he had many run-ins with the Catholic hierarchy, the Pope himself, that he walked up the same steps that he crawled up on his knees. Except this time, he stood on his feet this time in Wittenberg, Germany, and nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church. I stood in 1985 or 1986 at that very church, at that very door he nailed his 95 Theses, 95 theological arguments against the Roman Catholic Church. Incredible! He was incredible! Without a doubt the greatest thing that ever came out of the Roman Catholic Church. He literally broke the back and the stranglehold that the Roman Catholic Church had on Europe temporarily, but enough time for God to open the door to do what He wanted to do.

➤ **One Man, One Woman, with God as their Refuge & Strength can Change the World**

It is so important to see, and this is what I wanted you to see. One man, one woman, with God as their refuge and strength, can change the world. What a great lesson that is for each one of you. God has brought this church up through the spiritual levels. We have seen many of you now that are at an incredible spiritual level that you know your Bible, and God is opening up the door now to the world for us. We patiently waited and built every part of this church the way that it needed to be built. We did not get in a hurry about anything. Did not try to force anything. Let God's natural hand just bring this church and the people in it to where He wanted them to be. Now look at what God has done with you. I am telling you, Martin Luther was not the only man down through church history that God reached the world through. No doubt in my mind that there are men and women in this church that God wants to do the same thing with you. The same thing with you as he has done with this little Podunk church here on 1600 Smith in the historic section of Blue Springs that God allows us to reach the world. It is because of every one of you.

God wants to reach down in the midst of every one of you and call out the Martin Luthers. It will all come down to the Word of God in your life and how you use it to fight the warfare of the believer. For you and me, as for Luther, this very passage will be the source of comfort when we are faced with trouble on every side, and you will be.

Verse 1, he says, “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*” For us in this verse, we see two great things that we need in tough times.

1. Understand that God is our refuge.
2. Understand that He is our strength.

In combat, there are two items that you always have to have: offense and defense. The Bible says God is our refuge and our strength. So then refuge will be, He is my defense. Because I can run to Him when I cannot run to anybody else. I have Him when everybody forsakes me. I have Him when everything in my life is upside down. I can run to Him and hide in Him and He will defend me. James 4 verse 8 tells me:

8. **Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.** *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. James 4:8*

He is my refuge. I am in Him and He is in me. Great Bible doctrine. You cannot get to me without going through Him. He is my shield. He is my buckler. He is my high tower. You might be able to make a loud noise to try to scare me, but you will never breach my walls because He is my defense. He is my refuge.

➤ Where Refuge will be My Defense, Strength will be My Offense

Then verse 1 says that He is my strength. Where refuge will be my defense, strength will be my offense. Through His strength, I am never defeated and always on the attack, no matter what the opposition. No matter how the mountains are moved, no matter how my life is turned upside down. The verse says that He is a very present help in time of trouble.

Help is no good unless it is there when we need it. You can read story after story in life. Life is filled with stories where help came too late for people. I think back in 1912 when the Titanic sunk, she sank in three hours. The closest ship was four hours away. At flank speed, it would take them four hours to get to them. They were sending out SOSs, shooting up rockets. They were in distress. They needed help. Help came. But it was too late. The ship sank and 1,500 people stepped into eternity.

➤ God will Always be there When You Need Him

I think during World War II, the battle in the Philippines, when we lost the Philippines, and they were in Corregidor in the Philippines as the Japanese moved in, they all had to go to the Peninsula of Bataan. They held out there as long as they could. But help never came. Finally they surrendered. Some 500-600 American servicemen were forced to march 60 miles to a Japanese POW camp, which became known as the Bataan Death March. If you fell down, you got bayoneted, left where you lie. The Japanese soldiers would come up and say, "You sleepy? You

need sleep? I give you long sleep," and bayoneted them. Help came too late. MacArthur took back the Philippines, two, three years later. Too late. Too late. Help is no good if it is not there when you need it. God will always be there when you need Him. He is there through the promises of God, the principles of God, and you let the Word of God dwell in you richly. Colossians 3:16.

16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Verse 7 tells us that "*The LORD of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.*" We sing the song sometimes, or you hear the song, "*His Eye Is on the Sparrow.*" That is based on the place in the Bible where a sparrow falls to the ground and the Bible says that not a sparrow falls to the ground that He does not see it. He sees everything that you and I are going through. "*His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*"

Verses 2 and 3, what a great promise in the midst of the chaos around me, in the midst of the attack against me, and maybe your family. It seems like the earth is moving out from under you. It feels like even the mountains are thrown into the sea and the water roars like a rushing tsunami, mountains shake, and there is nowhere to run. Verse 2 says,

2. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Here is the reason that I should have no fear. In the midst of my ordeal, in the midst of my time of trouble, in the midst of our world falling apart, there is a river that flows by the throne of God. Verse 4 says,

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.

As you read that, most people that are not too familiar with the Bible will read this Psalm and read things like that and say, "Boy, this is really good. This is what I need." But they will never understand how to make the application. You see, I just do not want to teach you the Bible. I just do not want to get up and give you a sermon. My goal is not only to teach it to you, but I want to show you how to use it because I can have all kinds of medicine in my medicine chest, and I do as a matter of fact. But if I do not know how to use it, the medicine does not do me any good. I can have the Bible for you and give you the greatest Book and lay it out and tantalize you with everything about the Bible. But my job is not to tantalize you. My job is to give you the Word of God so you can understand how to apply it to your needs. What good is it if I do not do that? That is why this church is not about money. This church is not about building a big building. **This church is about you and taking the greatest Book the world has ever seen and show you how to put the balm of Gilead on that sore.**

VII. The River – A Picture of the Holy Spirit of God

There is a river that flows by the throne of God. It is a river. To understand this river, we have to go back to Ezekiel chapter 47. I told you before Ezekiel 40 through 48, but in particular right now, the river, Ezekiel 47. Obviously, it is a Millennial context in the land in the Millennium. You are going to find in Ezekiel 47 a river. It is called the river of the sanctuary. In Zechariah chapter 14 verses 8 through 9, it is called the river of living waters.

*And it shall be in that day, **that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem**; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.
Zechariah 14:8*

The first thing I want you to know about this river coming out of the throne of God is this river is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God. In Ezekiel 47:1, it comes out of the throne of God.

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Ezekiel 47:1

When you follow it down through this chapter, it goes down out of the throne of God. It goes down through the desert. This is where the Bible says the desert blooms like a rose in your Bible. It goes into the Dead Sea. In the Millennium, when the river, sanctuary, water of life goes into the Dead Sea, it is not dead anymore. It becomes alive, filled with fish. Comes out of the Dead Sea and goes down and then cuts to the east and goes into the Mediterranean. The Bible says that in Ezekiel chapter 47 verses 8 and 9, wherever that water of life goes, it brings forth life. It is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God moving through our lives.

8. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

*9. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and **every thing shall live whither the river cometh**.
Ezekiel 47:8-9*

When you really look at this story, this is where understanding Psalms that we are in today really begins to make sense. Because in the midst of the trials when your life and my life is upside down, and do not kid yourself, it is coming. When your life is upside down, the mountains shake, the wind blows, and the water roars. There is a river that flows by the throne of God. There is a river. That river is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God that comes out of God's temple, out of God's throne.

Now watch this. You come on down through there, it talks about a man. He has got a measuring rod in his hand. In Ezekiel chapter 47 verse 3, he starts to wade into that river. It says in 47:3, he wades into his ankles.

*And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; **the waters were to the ankles**. Ezekiel 47:3*

It is a fast-moving river. The Bible says you cannot just wade to the other side. It is too wide. In chapter 47 verse 4, he is wading in there, and now the water of this river is up to his knees. In 47:4, as you read on, he keeps going, and now the water is up to his loins.

*Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; **the waters were to the knees**. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; **the waters were to the loins**. Ezekiel 47:4*

Then in 47:5, you are told that you cannot get to the other side. He is out so far. Now it is water is to swim in.

*Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, **waters to swim in**, a river that could not be passed over. Ezekiel 47:5*

You know what you have there? You have a picture when you got saved, your spiritual growth of wading through the Holy Spirit of God, the water, from your ankles, when you first get saved, to your knees. There is your walk with God. To your loins. There is your strength with God. Now water is to swim in. Did you ever see somebody treading water? All you see is their head. In First Corinthians chapter 11, the Bible says the head of man is Christ. When you get immersed in this river, the Holy Spirit of God, water is to swim in, all the world sees is your head, and that head is the Lord Jesus Christ.

*3. But I would have you know, that **the head of every man is Christ**; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 1 Corinthians 11:3*

It is a picture of our spiritual growth. That water comes down out of the throne, and it comes to the point where here is a man with a measure in his hand. He is going to measure his spiritual growth. So he gets into the ankles. That is where some of you are at right now. Then he goes on to the knee. That is where some of you are at right now. Then you go farther into your loins. That is where some of you are right now. Then water is to swim in. Of course, some of you are there right now. Then the flow of the Holy Spirit of God, the river. You have no control. It is a fast-moving river. It is so wide. All you can do, go with the flow. You go with the Holy Spirit of God, takes you, immersed in the Holy Spirit of God from your feet, the legs, the arms, and all men see is your head, and your head is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3).

VIII. Come, Behold the Works of the Lord

Then verse 8, coming back to Psalms here, shows me what my focus should be when I am going through tough times. And you are going to go through them. My focus shall be all during my time of my trouble. Verse 8,

*8. **Come, behold the works of the Lord**, what desolations he hath made in the earth.*

You see, three in the Bible is a number of completion. Nothing is complete without the third part. Your Christian life will be about your focus on three things in your life.

- 1.) What God has done for you.
- 2.) What God is doing for you today.
- 3.) What God is going to do for you in the future.

When tough times come, we have a tendency to think God forgot you. "Why is He allowing you to go through this?" Sometimes all you have is what you are going through because you have never learned to look back at what He did in your life to get you here. Whatever He did in your life to get you here, He is going to continue to do to get you where He wants you to go. But you have got to have all three. You have got to see where you come from, where you are at, where you are going. As the river carries you along, you started with your ankles, and you moved in a little deeper to your knees. You moved in a little deeper. Now up to your loins, and the loins of a man is where his strength is. "*Loins girt about with truth.*"

*14. Stand therefore, having **your loins girt about with truth**, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; Ephesians 6:14*

Verse 8, "Come behold the works of the Lord." He makes the earth desolate, but I survive.

Verse 9, He maketh wars to cease, and He gives me the victory. Verse 9, He breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder, and burns up the chariots. But the Bible tells me in Isaiah 54, verse 17

17. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord. Isaiah 54:17

I like that commercial. I like the guy. I might even use him if I ever got in a car wreck. Mike DiPasquale. Nice looking guy. He has got confidence, and I like that. Sometimes he has got a football. He probably played football in college, and he is a lawyer. His famous phrase is, "Mike's got this." You know what? In your trouble, in your heartache, what you are going through, God's got this! He's got this. It is just where you are at in the river.

➤ Where are You in the River?

I guess that is the question this morning, **where are you in the river?** I know some of God's people. I know guys that have been to Bible college, and they do not go to church anywhere. God's people, they are saved. Do not go to church anywhere. They float around out there like they are some kind of spiritual whatever. Now, I am one of these guys when I used to go swimming. I do not go swimming anymore. I watch people do cannonballs off the diving board. Not me. I am one of those kinds of guys that slowly gets in. Like I am into my ankles right now. "Oh, the water is cold" Now I am going to slowly get up to my knees. You know what the hardest part is now for me? It is getting into the water, and it comes up and it is cold and it starts rising up on you. So, you know what I do? I start splashing water up over one shoulder and then another. Then, finally I get completely in.

You know that is the way some of you get into the water that comes out of the throne of God. You are afraid to get in. Half your life, you just stick your toes and see how the water is. Some of you get into the ankles, you know. Oh, that is pretty cold. You know the tough part for some of you spiritually going into the river of God, under the throne of God? It's from your waste up. Water to swim in.

I am telling you if He can do verse 8 and make the earth desolate, verse 9, if He can make war to cease, if He can melt the earth and throw the mountains into the sea, verse 9, if He can break the bows and burn the chariot, trust me, He can take care of you. It all comes down, folks, to one thing. **How far are you in this river?**

IX. Be Still and Know that I am God

Then the greatest thing here that we can do in our time of trouble, once you get into the river, verse 10,

*10. **Be still, and know that I am God:** I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

This principle is one of the greatest things you will ever see when you are going through tough times. That is really the key to it all, and we all will go through them. Yet it is probably the hardest thing for most people to do, is to simply to be still and know that I am God. Verse 10 says, "*Be still, I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*" He has got this. The hardest thing to do is for you and me to be still and wait for God to come through. You see, when tough times come, we all, all of us, everybody, human nature, have a tendency, instead of just letting God be God, we react and we start making our own choices, and that just complicates the issues. We become our own defense and our own strength. This is what most people do, the importance of having a church, a pastor, who will go through it with you and encourage you in the Lord. As your pastor, I am not just interested in lifting you up. I am interested in holding you up because that is what it takes. This is where the principles of the Bible I give you will most certainly pay off through the examples found in the Word of God.

Look at Exodus chapter 14, if you would. When Israel came out of Egypt at the Red Sea, God delivered them out of Egypt, a picture of the world. Inspirationally a picture of God bringing you out of the world. They start to go on their journey to where God wanted them to go, but they come to the Red Sea and they are trapped, seemingly trapped. Somebody looks behind and sees that Pharaoh has decided not to let them go and he is coming after them to wipe them out. You are going to find yourself in situations like that, that you feel trapped. They are murmuring for Moses to do something. And Moses says,

*13. And Moses said unto the people, **Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord,** which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.*

*14. The Lord shall fight for you, and **ye shall hold your peace.** Exodus 14:13-14*

What do you need to do? Hold your peace. Moses is a type of Christ. They are picturing you and me coming out of the world. He says, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Now, I want you to notice this salvation of the Lord is not a picture of them getting saved. That happened when they came out of Egypt, they put the blood on the door. The salvation here is being saved from Pharaoh. The tough time that they are going through, the entrapment that they are seeing. Just like God saved you and saved your soul, He will save you from the traps of this world, just like He did them. But you have got to stand still, let God be your salvation, and hold your peace.

I will show you another one. First Samuel chapter 12 verses 6 and 7. Again, look at this one. Here we see Israel is in a mess, and God sent Samuel to them. Eli the priest and his sons are totally corrupt and God just killed a couple of his boys. He tells them in first Samuel chapter 12 verse 6 and 7,

6. And Samuel said unto the people, It is the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

*7. Now **therefore stand still**, that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers. 1 Samuel 12:6-7*

You see that? That is Psalm 46:8. The works of the Lord. God in our trouble getting us to stand still, and then through that, what you see, the salvation of Him delivering you, then He reasons with you. You better understand why you are going through what you are going through. We get so emotionally upset, and don't stand still, and God cannot reason with us through it. It is so easy. You know what happens then? You make bad choices.

I will show you another one. Look over there in First Samuel, just a couple pages back. First Samuel chapter 9 verse 27. Here again, great example. This is Samuel to Saul. Now I just have to say this. Saul is always doing his own thing. He is like a lot of God's people I know. A total disregard for the Word of God and its principles. So Samuel pulls him aside, and this is what he tells him.

*27. And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but **stand thou still a while**, that I may shew thee the word of God. 1 Samuel 9:27*

He says to Saul, "Saul, you need to stand still, but I am going to show you what the Word of God says about what your people are going through." You know what? Saul is just like so many of God's people. He never listened. Never listened. He wound up separating from God. When his tough times came, he went to the witch at Endor. He lost the kingdom, in time he lost his life. When you get into tough times, when I get into tough times, when you are told to stand still, Psalm chapter 46, He wants to reason with you. He wants to show you His great salvation, but He wants to show you all of it through His Word. He will be your refuge and strength to get you through.

Standing still and waiting on God and letting Him be the refuge and strength will be very hard for many of God's people. The key to it will be found in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 11, where Paul simply tells us that we are to study to be quiet.

*11. And that ye **study to be quiet**, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 1 Thessalonians 4:11*

You are searching the scriptures. You are studying to show yourself approved in time as you wade through the waters of the Holy Spirit of God from the ankle to the knees to the loins. You learn to be still and be quiet and wait on God. You are here today. You are saved. In the process of spiritual growth through these four levels, the ankles, the knees, the loins, and the waters to swim in, and you knowing that, He will be exalted over the heathen and the nations. Hebrews 13:5 says He will never leave us or forsake us.

*5. 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.** Hebrews 13:5*

X. Summary

Here is what happens today with most of God's people. I told you this earlier. When Adam and Eve fell, they brought sin and sickness into this world. The perfect world God had for man came crashing down because of sin. With that sin came sickness, disease, heartache, death, hard times, everything that the world will throw at you.

➤ Don't Wait till the Tough Times Come to Start Wading in the Water

Now listen to me. I know you are young and you are not faced with tough times yet, many of you, but you will be. Nobody will escape the heartache of life on planet Earth because of sin. We will all face it sometime or the other. Some of them are facing us now. Some of you will face it later. Here is the issue. Don't start wading into this river when the tough times come. You need to be wading in it long before the tough times come. This is what so many people do. They are good people. Don't misunderstand me. They just never took the Bible seriously. They never took church seriously. They never took anything seriously. Now tough times come. Now their world is upside down. The mountains are crashing and everything is roaring. They are trying to run into the water. "Oh God help me." It does not work that way. I am telling you kids, **why do you think I spend my whole life, take every waking moment to give you everything you need about the Bible?** Why do you think I am doing the child training? Why do you think I do this? Why do you take questions on Thursday night? Why do you think I take such time in laying things out for you? **Because I know what is coming your way! You cannot wait till the tough times come to start wading in the water. Start now. Right now.**

Once it happens, you start throwing up the prayer. "God help me. God this. Why me? Why this? Why that? Oh God, why did You do this?" You lost the opportunity for God to reason with you through what you are going through. When you got saved, you never got past the ankles, if you even got that far. You ought to be in a place when the tough times come and it is just coming down on you. You understand this Psalm and you are doing the backstroke and floating. For there is a river that flows by the throne of God. There is a river!

I know people. I know human nature. The greatest example I have ever had of human nature is me. But you all come in a close second. You do not buy car insurance after you have the wreck. You do not buy house insurance after it burns down. You do not sign up for Blue Cross and Blue Shield after you are diagnosed with cancer. In other words, **do not wait until the tough times come to you start wading in the water.** Study to be quiet. Realize that He is your refuge and He is your strength. He is your offense and He is your defense. The only way you are going to get to the point where you are going to get through it is to understand. Now, you young kids, you young couples, you young singles, and even you midlife here. I do not care where you are at. **Start! You have got to get in.** Come on in. The water is fine. Get into your ankles. We will help you. Get into your knees. I am here for you. That is where you walk with God. Now you are walking with Him. Then keep going. Then when you get to the loins, now you have got some strength. Just keep on moving. You cannot get across the river. God never intended you to get across the river. God intended you to get so far in that river that you are lifted right off the bottom. No control. You cannot decide which way you are going to go. You either go with the flow or you drown. This Psalm is one of the greatest Psalms you will ever have in your life. It will get you through because God's got this! The quicker you get into the water, the better off you are going to be.