

# Stilled in Christ!

Michael J. Nielsen / General

Still; Christ; Suffering / Psalm 46:title-11

That the hearers would be comforted to know that Christ alone is our fortress.

---

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The world is crumbling around us! Look at the newspapers! Open your internet browsers! Maybe the push notifications on your smart phones keep you updated. This is a scary time we live in! And we get this news instantly! We get the news of what's going on in our backyard, we get the news of what is going on neighboring states and the rest of the country. We even get the news from around the world. It's the news of death and destruction and violence. It's the tragedies and terror that we read and is becoming more and more a reality.

I could guarantee you that you could open your smartphone browsers and you would find lasting stories of Hurricane Michael, the Barron County Wisconsin double homicide and missing child case. You would find news of civil wars, sickness, genocide, and so much more disturbing news that causes our hearts to shrink and live in fear!

Dear friends in Christ, King David writes a Psalm about how the world is becoming undone at its seams. And today, the world we live in is nothing new! There is idolatry, faithlessness, immoral behavior, political corruption, greed, poverty, mass unemployment, injustice, terror, tragedy, scandal. This is nothing new! It was around when David was King. It was around long before David was King. It began all the way back in the garden of Eden!

From that moment when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, there was corruption, and fear and terror and tumult. This isn't new news today, this is OLD NEWS. It's not even FAKE NEWS...this is the reality we live in. Do you remember that once Adam and Eve sinned, they hid in fear, in terror at the sound of mere rustling leaves? Ever since that moment of sin, the crushing blow on creation, every human being has lived in the reality of sin and corruption. And we lament! We cry out to God in fear!

David writes this Psalm as one living in fear and terror. He knew it! HE lived it! He lived in corruption. He lived in the reality of pagan nations breathing down his neck seeking his life. Not only that, but he knew his own corruption. He knew his own sin. In Psalm 51, David writes a Psalm of Confession, a confession of sin of his adultery and murder. It was after Nathan,

David's pastor opened up his eyes, that David lived in fear and grief and terror....it was then that he penned that Psalm...Create in me a clean heart o God. David knew the terror of being separated from God.

It wasn't just David that knew the terror of being separated from God. Today, on this Reformation Day, we remember Martin Luther who we point to as the Father of the Reformation. He lived in fear of God for quite a bit of his life. After beginning the Reformation, many sought his life. Many wanted to kill him. Terror was around him.

As Luther was reading the Scriptures, he came across the great Psalm of David. This Psalm that confesses the at the Lord our God is our refuge and strength in our time of need. And for Luther, for David, and for you the time of need is now. For you, God is our refuge and strength.

Going back to Luther for a moment, why did he find such great comfort in this Psalm. The Holy Spirit worked true faith in his heart and even when he was a marked man for pointing out the sins of the people, preaching the pure Word of God, He knew God was with him. He knew that God would protect him. The thing is Luther feared God more than man. His fear in God was a healthy fear that moved him to preach Christ Alone!

And Luther knew the comfort! He heard the comfort out of the hopelessness, the chaos, the terror, the death around him. He heard the stillness of the voice of God. He heard the gospel promise. No matter what, I am with you!

He hears this:

**English Standard Version Psalm 46**

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

**English Standard Version Psalm 46**

The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

And as Luther hears this Word! And hearing this Word he is inspired to pen the battle hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress."

It's a hymn of complete trust in God as our Fortress. Now with all this talk of Luther, I'm not here today today to give you a history lesson of the Reformation, but the history is helpful, not our focus. The focus today is what Luther focused on, what David focused on. The focus is on the unbreakable, unchangeable, unconquerable peace of the Almighty God. There is nothing new. This reality is true of the terror, death, and pain that has plagued creation since the

fateful day in teh Garden. It's also the reality of Gospel peace, that puts to death those fears and terrors and doubts.

This hymn that we sang, this Psalm that you heard me read, gives you a clear and terrifying image of the world that is crashing down around us. It's a world that you are familiar with. It's a waorld that you call home. The earth is giving way, the mountains are being moved to the sea. The waters roar and foam. The mountains tremble. Nations are raging and warring and fighting. It's not just nations, its individuals It's all of creation that is in turmoul, and this Psalm is written 1000 years before Christ! These things David writes about could be front page headlines today! The world is changing, change is before us, but yet many things stay the same!

In midst of this terror the Psalmist numerous times tells us that God is our refuge, that he is our fortress. He's unshakable. He will not be moved. And out of this fear, this terror, this darkness, this chaos...He comes out and tells us... "Be Still and know that I am God!" "Be still!" Have you ever thought about that. This command...its a clear command. Be still, take some time and realize what the God Almighty is doing! That he is with you.

And the thing is this is more than a simple command. This is God's Authoritative Word...it's more than a mere suggestion. It's the same word he spoke to a storm... "Be Still!" And it was! God created out of nothingness by His WORD ALONE! He created out of chaos! As the world is caving in around us...in the news and in your personal lives, as it seems that all hell is breaking loose around us, God's Word pierces the darkness and and brings peace.

The Word of God does what it says! It brings peace! The Word alone is working in this world no matter what is going on, no matter how dark or difficult things are...

And Luther as he talks about About God being our Mighty Fortress who breaks teh cruel oppressors rod. He pens how God is freeing us from every need that is overtaking us. He pens how the old evil foe means deadly woe. He then goes on tell us that its not our might that fight, we can't be the valiant one whom God himself elected. So Luther pens this question that we sang, "Ask ye, who is this?" and gives us the answer! "JEsus Christ it is, Of Sabaoth Lord, And there's none other God; He holds the field forever." Luther tells us that in Christ Alone, the Prince of this world cannot o'er take us! Christ Jesus gives you peace!

He gave you peace amongst a darkness. Not just physical darkness, but the darkness of hell and agaony. Jesus Christ and his performative word rang out in darkness on the cross. On that wretched tree of the Cross, Jesus Christ hung as the cursed Lamb of God, and he humbly submitted to the Father's wrath and anger for sin...yours and mine and the sin of the world. This is the day that the sky turned black, this is the day that the earth shook and the mountains trembled. It's out of the terror that and death and destruction that Christ Jesus pierces the darkness with His Word... "MY GOD, MY GOD WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

Christ faithfully calls out to His God...while suffering the full wrath of His Father for sin! He was suffering hell..he was experiencing the ultimate separation from God and being left utterly helpless and void of love and grace. No one else on this side of eternity has faced that, but Christ did...for you! He never lost faith in what He came to do, despite the troubles he face, the darkness, the trouble, the kingdoms waging war against him, and ultimately death! When the payment was made to save us, He cried out great words of victory that pierced the darkness once again... "IT is FINISHED!" The bright beams of the mighty fortress of God's grace, mercy, forgiveness, and life shone bright! IT towered over all humanity so that all could hear and see of his mighty love for the fallen and sinful creation!

Amidst your terror, amidst your pain, Amidst your fear, Jesus Christ gives you peace! He gives you hope...He gives you life! He stills you with His peace. Yes, the reality is there...the earth is melting away! This reality is also there...God is our refuge and strength a very present held in trouble. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

The Gospel promise is true...I am GOD! Even if life is wrenched away, evil cannot win the day with Christ Alone in our loves. Jesus Christ won your victory, He fights for you and with you. He is your rock, he is your fortress and there is coming a day when wars will cease, he will break the bow and shatter the spear, he will burn the chariots with fire. This happened at the cross, but on the Last Day, he will ultimate put an end...and you will ultimately know the stillness in Christ...but I plead with you no matter what life throws at rest in God's peace...Take time to be still.

And it's in the stillness that you hear the performative Word in real and tangible ways, "Take and eat, Take and drink. Be Still. Be at peace. Your sins are forgiven. It is finished. It's simple, it's powerful. It's your reality, here and now. It's your reality Because Jesus Christ lives! The Victory's been won!

In Jesus Name. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amne.