

***“Thought for the week” – Rev John Wiltshire***

***Please read PSALM 46***

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

**Dear Friends,**

**Greetings in the strong and precious Name of Jesus.**

**In the strange and difficult days in which we are living I have repeatedly been drawn back to Psalm 46 and I recommend that you read all 11 verses, and then, with Bible in hand, reflect on these brief notes, alongside your own reflections as the Holy Spirit leads.**

**v.1 sets the tone for what follows – “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”.**

**The agnostic writer H.G. Wells said, “God is an ever-absentee help in times of trouble” ! – but he was wrong. I always find the writings of Warren Wiersbe helpful. He explains that Psalm 46 grew out of a marvellous miracle in Israel’s history. Hezekiah was king of Judah when the Assyrians invaded the land – a time of difficulty, indeed of crisis. King Hezekiah took the crisis to the Lord (how we need to do the same!), and the Living God protected his people and acted powerfully in their midst. God gives us now his divine resources so we too can stand strong in 2020.**

**I like the way Wiersbe outlines the Psalm –**

- 1. v.1-3 – God is our refuge; we need not fear**
- 2. v.4-7 – God is our strength; we need not faint**
- 3. v.8-11 – God is an ever-present help; we need not fret**

## **1. God is our refuge; we need not fear – v.1-3**

**The Hebrew word used here for trouble means “in tight places” – difficult situations. But as our refuge and strength, our God is available, accessible and sufficient. I remember the first time I took our then tiny son to the barbers. It was in Enfield where I grew up, and it was to the barbers that my parents took me to when I was young. Amazingly it was actually the same barber who used to cut my hair all those years before, and he had the same board across the chair for a small child to sit on so that they could see the mirror! All through that first professional hair cut the barber kept saying “look up, look up, look up”. In our current situation we need to “look up, look up, look up” – to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ – He does not change and we are not alone. As we look to Him there is the grace and strength we need – now and always, and because of who he is we need not fear. As someone has said “when the outlook is bleak – try the uplook!”. He IS still on the throne.**

## **2. God is our strength; we need not faint – v.4-7**

**v.2 spoke of a turbulent sea. V.4 speaks of a quiet river “whose streams make glad the city of God”. Jerusalem had no river but King Hezekiah built an amazing underground water system that brought water safely into the city, making glad the people. The underground tunnel was, in a sense, a “hidden resource”. We too have hidden resources. The Lord Jesus Christ said in John 7v.37 – “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them”. Wiersbe comments – “When you trust Jesus as Saviour, God puts an artesian well of Living water within you. While the world has only broken cisterns, the fountain of living water**

becomes a river. It is from Jesus that we get the spiritual resources we need” – let’s drink from that river and remember “The Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress” -v.7.

### **3. God is an ever-present help; we need not fret – v.8-11**

v.10 is striking – “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth”. Apparently “Be still” means “to take your hands off and let God be God” – We are not in control – but HE IS and is at work in his world. Then lastly v.11 repeats v.7 – “The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress”. There are no wasted words in the Bible! The repetition is there for emphasis – this is our God now and always.

**With all Best Wishes**

**And**

**Love and Prayers in Christ**

**John Wiltshire, Rev**