

The Exalted God is a Refuge for His People

Sermon Text: Psalm 46

Study Texts: Psalm 125

Sermon Recap: The main idea of this week's sermon is: In the midst of a broken world, the LORD of hosts is our help, and His people rest in Him. Take time before your growth group to review the key points you noted from today's sermon.

Sermon Connection: The Bible is telling one grand story of God's redemption through Jesus Christ. As we see in Psalm 46, God stands in defense of His people; He is our refuge, our very present help in times of trouble. It is important for us to take time and really meditate on the truths that emerge from texts like Psalm 46. One such truth is that God is our refuge. While many biblical texts take up this theme, Psalm 125 is particularly concerned with developing this truth for the people of God. Psalm 125 is written to instill confidence in the people God on the basis of God's protection and comfort. Therefore, as we work through it, we should consider how the Psalm applies to us now: our church, our growth groups, our families, and our individual lives.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Goal: To see that our true hope in this world is in God alone.

Lesson Points: Working through the Psalm verse-by-verse.

The Context: Psalm 125 is a Psalm of Ascent, meaning that the Jews would sing it/recite it as they walked up the mountains to Jerusalem. This psalm is particularly appropriate given the mountainous terrain of Jerusalem. As the people labored to climb the mountains around the city, this psalm would have reminded them of God's defense and protection.

Psalm 125

¹ *Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.*

² *As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore.*

³ *For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong.*

⁴ *Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts!*

⁵ *But those who turn aside to their crooked ways the Lord will lead away with evildoers!
Peace be upon Israel!*

Study/Reflection Questions

- What does v. 1 mean when stating, “*Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion...*”? What is Mount Zion? See also Ps. 87:2-6; 99:2; Col. 3:3.
- How does the imagery and geography of v. 2 help to drive home the idea of God’s protection?
- How can the repeating/memorizing of a Psalm like 125/46 help the people of God find comfort in the midst of hardship, struggle, or strife?
- Verse 3 states, “*For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous...*” Knowing that God’s people have experienced times of exile, ruin, and persecution at the hands of the wicked, what does this verse mean in light of the whole Bible?
- How does reflecting on the truth of v. 3 help us to better understand our own place in modern culture? Things like: mainline protestant denominations abandoning the true gospel, the marginalization of the Christian faith in America and around the world, and a generation that is weakening the gospel message, etc.
- Verse 4 is a prayer. What does the content of this prayer and its location in the Psalm teach us about a Christian response to hardship?
- Verses 4-5 compare two types of people. Who are they, and why is this not works-based salvation?

The Big Picture - Peace Be Upon the People of God

The closing of Psalm 125 reads, “*Peace be upon Israel.*” In the context of the Psalm, the meaning is this, “The peace of God—the shalom of God—rests only upon those who love God and have been saved through His redeeming work.” As we zoom out from Psalm 125 and consider the entire biblical message, we see that the peace of God rests on those who have been saved through the gospel work of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, just as the people of Israel would recite Psalm 125 as they looked up to Jerusalem, the City of God, the New Testament Church should recite this Psalm as they/we look to the finished work of Jesus Christ, through Whom we have access to the Eternal City of God which awaits us in heaven.

Application Questions

- How are you trusting in God in times of hardship? How might you need to repent of false trust?
- How are you leading your family to trust in God's salvation?
- Knowing that the Jews would have sung this Psalm together as they approached Jerusalem, how might you lead your family and your growth group to do the same?
- How are you teaching the world that God saves in the midst of your hardship and struggles?