

**Slide 1**

# **A Place To Run To**

## **PSALM 46:1-11**

### **Introduction**

1. All of us have experienced this from one side or the other.
2. On one side, we perhaps can each remember a time when . . .
  - a. We skinned a knee or elbow through some mishap (i.e., bicycle wreck, skateboard, tripped on the sidewalk, etc.).
  - b. We were hit by some flying object (i.e., ball, bat, rock, etc.).
  - c. We felt threatened by someone (i.e., a stranger, a bully).
3. To whom did we go? Mom, Dad, another trusted adult?
4. Why? We felt safe with them.
5. On the other side, you were that adult to whom your child ran when faced with one of these experiences.
6. Why? Again, because your son, daughter or another child felt safe and protected when with you.
7. They knew you would take care of whatever was wrong.
8. We have all seen the toddler who immediately ran and hid behind Mom or Dad when a stranger approached them.
9. That skirt or pant's leg was a place of refuge.
10. Now, the majority of you are adults. Where do you go when faced with the difficulties of life?
11. I would like to encourage you to make God your refuge, the One to whom you run in times like these.

**Slide 2**

12. Listen to the words of one of the sons of Korah which we find in Psalm 46,

specifically the first three verses:

“God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change  
And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;  
Though its waters roar and foam,  
Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.”  
(Psalm 46:1–3, NASB95)

[Tonight, I would like to start with the same thought as the psalmist . . .]

**Slide 3**

## **I. Why Make God Our Refuge?**

### **A. HE IS STRONG**

1. Twice in this psalm (vv. 7, 11), God is referred to as our “stronghold” (NASB95, HCSB) or “fortress” (ESV, NIV84).
2. The Hebrew word used here, which the KJV & NKJV translate as “refuge,” is a word which literally means “high place”.
3. The psalmist repeatedly used images of rocks to symbolize God’s strength:
  - a. “I love You, O Lord, my strength.”  
The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,  
My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;  
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”  
(Psalm 18:1–2, NASB95)
  - b. “In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge;  
Let me never be ashamed;  
In Your righteousness deliver me.

Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly;  
Be to me a rock of strength,  
A stronghold to save me.”

**(Psalm 31:1–2, NASB95)**

- c. “On God my salvation and my glory rest;  
The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.”

**(Psalm 62:7, NASB95)**

- d. “In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge;  
Let me never be ashamed.”

(Psalm 71:1, NASB95)

“Be to me a rock of habitation to which I may continually come;  
You have given commandment to save me,  
For You are my rock and my fortress.”

**(Psalm 71:3, NASB95)**

**Slide 4**

**B. HE IS UNCHANGING**

1. All around us the world is changing, and it is happening faster every day.
  2. Each of us long for something that does not change, something or someone who is constant.
  3. That someone is God.
  4. The fact that He does not change provides us with someone in whom we can put our trust.
- a. David sought refuge in God’s “steadfast love” (ESV), “unfailing love” (NIV84), “faithful love” (HCSB) (Psalm 36:7).

“How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!

And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.”

(Psalm 36:7, NASB96)

**Slide 5**

- b. He saw God as one in whom he could always put his trust and pour out his heart (*Psalm 62:8*).

“Trust in Him at all times, O people;

Pour out your heart before Him;

God is a refuge for us.”

(*Psalm 62:8, NASB95*)

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- c. He knew that God is always good (*Psalm 34:8*).

“O taste and see that the Lord is good;

How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”

(*Psalm 34:8, NASB95*)

- 5. It isn't enough to say “God is a refuge.”
- 6. The real question is, “Is He your refuge?”

**Slide 6**

## **II. When Should We Make God Our Refuge?**

### **A. IN DIFFICULT TIMES?**

- 1. You and I have two choices when we find ourselves in difficult times:
  - a. We can listen to our doubts.
    - 1) “This is out of control!”
    - 2) “God must not love me!”
    - 3) “I can't handle this!”
  - b. We can choose to believe the truth —
    - “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”
    - (*Psalm 46:1*).

2. Does this mean that our heartaches or questions will disappear? No.
3. What we do find is that, as Scripture teaches us, we can trust God to take care of us.

“The Lord will protect you from all evil;  
He will keep your soul.

The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in  
From this time forth and forever.”

(Psalm 121:7-8, NASB95)

4. Then, because we have trusted Him, we are able to surrender our need to be in control.
5. Only then do we enter our place of refuge . . .

“And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings”  
(Psalm 36:7, NASB95).

. . . where we find comfort and assurance in our time of crisis.

#### Slide 7

### **B. IN GOOD TIMES?**

1. Can we find refuge in God that satisfies our souls when all is well in our lives?
2. Look again at Psalm 36.

a. We just saw in verse 7 that David said, “the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings” (Psalm 36:7, NASB95).

b. In verses 8-9, he indicates this refuge is for the best of times:

“They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house;  
And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights.  
For with You is the fountain of life;  
In Your light we see light.”

(Psalm 36:8-9, NASB95)

3. In Psalm 62:8, David tells us that refuge in God is something we should seek not just in the difficult times we face, but in all times, even the times of prosperity.

“Trust in Him at all times, O people;

Pour out your heart before Him;

God is a refuge for us.”

(Psalm 62:8, NASB95)

#### Slide 8

### III. What Can Rob Us Of Our Refuge?

#### A. THE CARES AND OCCUPATIONS OF THIS WORLD

1. In the parable of the sower, Jesus spoke of the seed which fell among thorns:
  - a. It represented those individuals who heard the word of God.
  - b. However, “the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth” choked the word so that it became unfruitful (Matthew 13:22).
2. Things such as busyness and worry can rob us of our refuge.
3. Our culture is constantly providing us with false comforts which don't give us the refuge we need — things such as television, novels, food, items we are convinced we need, even other people.

#### Slide 9

#### B. THE PROBLEMS WHICH ORIGINATE IN OUR HEARTS

1. Through His prophet Jeremiah, God once said, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9, NASB95).
2. In Proverbs 3:5-6, it was Solomon who said,

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart

And do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He will make your paths straight.”

(Proverbs 3:5-6, NASB95)

3. Often, however, in the face of daily challenges we instinctively rely on our own understanding rather than trusting in God.
4. We become so focused on our problems that we lose sight of God.
5. We focus on what we need to do; who we need to consult and how we can make each problem disappear.
6. To be honest, going to God is the last thing we think to do — so, we end up distressed and overwhelmed.
7. Only when we let go of our own self-reliance and turn to God can He replace our anxious thoughts with hope-filled peace.
8. Tim Challies in his book "*Seasons of Sorrow*," chronicles his struggle with grief in the year following the death of his son, tells of a time when he went out on a very large lake in a small sailboat with his uncle.
9. The wind picked up so much that they could not make it back to shore with the sails up, so they pulled down the sails and Tim rowed while his uncle steered.
10. Tim pointed out that the entire time he was rowing, he could not see where they were going.
11. Instead, he had to trust his uncle to guide the boat to a safe haven.
12. The same is true with the problems we face. Only by trusting in God and allowing Him to direct us will we reach that safe haven in our own lives.

**Slide 10**

## **IV. What Are The Benefits Of Our Refuge In God?**

### **A. PROVISION**

1. Are you facing temptation?

God provides “the way of escape also, so that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

2. Do you find yourself weary in service?

“... whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies” (1 Peter 4:11, NASB95).

3. Are you confused?

God provides wisdom — “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5, NASB95)

4. Fighting against Satan? God supplies the armor (Ephesians 6:10-17)

**Slide 11**

**B. ENCOURAGEMENT**

1. When we seek refuge in God, He gives us encouragement and hope which are eternal (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.” (2 Thessalonians 2:16–17, NASB95)

**Slide 12**

**C. COMFORT**

1. You and I serve One who is “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3).

2. He “comforts us in all our afflictions so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:4).

**Slide 13**

#### **D. ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE**

1. Our refuge in God allows us to view our circumstances from His eternal perspective.
2. He reminds us that this life isn't all there is by allowing us to see through the eye of faith our unseen hope.

“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16–18, NASB95)

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1, NASB95)

### **Conclusion**

1. Are there times when you find yourself distressed and overwhelmed?
2. Is it because you are seeking refuge in the wrong things?
3. It is God who guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus with an incomprehensible peace (Philippians 4:7).
4. He is the One who strengthens our “inner man” with “power through His Spirit” (Ephesians 3:16).

#### **Slide 14**

5. Tonight, take to heart God's exhortation to you which we find in Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:10, ESV).