

Hello Youth and their Parents,

Since we will not be gathering together in-person on Sunday mornings to study God's Word for the foreseeable future, I have decided to send out a small devotion every Sunday on a few verses from Psalm 46. Psalm 46 was the theme Psalm for the Youth Gathering last summer and it is very applicable to everything going on in the world. I hope these deep dives into parts of the Psalm provide you with encouragement and peace in the coming weeks of uncertainty and changes.

Ps 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength / a very present help in trouble."

Today when I read the first verse of Psalm 46 the word "refuge" stood out to me. A refuge is a place of escape and safety from dangers and pursuit, it is a place of shelter from those things that scare us. While "refuge" is not a word we use everyday, the synonym "shelter" is one being used a lot these days. It is now often used in the media, specifically as "sheltering in place", which is a method to protect ourselves from Coronavirus.

The idea behind "sheltering in place" is to stay home, as much as possible, in order to slow the spread of Coronavirus and protect ourselves from it. By seeking refuge in our homes we can hopefully protect ourselves and loved ones from the physical threat which Coronavirus presents. This is advice which we should all be heeding.

However, while seeking refuge in our homes for our physical health, we ought not to forget seeking refuge in God for our spiritual health. For God is our refuge from our fears and worries, He is our strength in the face of uncertain times and quickly changing situations, and He is our very present help in our troubles. So how do we take refuge in Him? By praying often, diving into scriptures daily, and seeking out the body of Christ (using appropriate social distancing) for encouragement. While we are not meeting in person weekly at Church we still are able (through technology) to contact one another and lift one another up in prayer. We are still able to study scripture and to hear the word of God preached to us by Pastor Mike (found on the church website). In the coming week I encourage all of you to remember to seek refuge in God and to turn to one another for encouragement and support through prayer and (appropriately distanced) conversation.

As a closing thought to ponder this week I leave you with a section from the book of Hebrews: "Let us hold resolutely to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Heb. 10:23-25)

If you have any specific prayer requests that you would like to share, please email them to me and I will included them with next weeks devotion.

With Christ's Peace, Dr. Benjamin Anderson