
The Church in Prayer

Victory Life Sherman / Online

Sunday, August 23, 2020 — Psalm 46 - “Violent Times”

Faith is *not* manipulative or transactional

Faith is covenant relationship and cooperative obedience

Prayer is one of the most powerful and important things the church can do

The primary purpose of prayer is relationship,
and in that relationship we are transformed

Prayer must be primarily about being *with* God,
not primarily about asking something *from* God

Psalm 46:1-11 (ESV)

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

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

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

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

Come, behold the works of the Lord,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”

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

Genesis 6:11 (ESV) Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence.

“[In prayer] violence is taken seriously but kept in perspective. God requires my attention even more than the violence; in attending to him, I see His city taking shape in the catastrophe.” ~ Eugene Peterson

- ▶ Violence in nature (v. 2-3)
- ▶ Political violence (v. 6)
- ▶ Military violence (v. 9)

Prayer reminds us that our circumstances are not ultimate reality or have the final word, God is and God does.

Psalm 46:7 (ESV)

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

He is both the powerful God (“Lord of hosts”) and the personal God (“God of Jacob”)

We get intimacy with the powerful, warrior God, and defense and refuge with the personal God of relationship.

Psalm 46:4-5 (ESV)

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.

God sets up His habitation right in the middle of this violent world.

The city of God is glad by God's presence and His provision.

Psalm 46:5-6 (ESV)

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.

Creation is not safe,
civilization is not safe,
but God's presence is.

In addition to God's presence bringing safety, God *helps*.

1. "Come behold the works of the Lord" (v. 8)

Everybody else is noisier than God.

Prayer is beholding the works of the Lord.

2. "Be still, and know that I am God" (v. 10)

When we are in a hurry, our souls diminish, and our lives become a mess.

When we are noisy, busy, or impatient we are short-circuiting intimacy.

The best "knowing" is the knowledge that is thorough and personal.

Intimacy precedes fruitfulness

John 1:4-5

John 1:14

John 7:37-39

Colossians 2:15

John 17:3 (ESV) And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Hebrews 12:18-28 (NLT) You have not come to a physical mountain, to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai. For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking. They staggered back under God's command: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, "I am terrified and trembling." No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel. Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain. Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.