

Sermon - Psalm 46:10 - "YO! CHILL!"

By Dr. Mark D. Liederbach
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Psalm 46 (NASB)

¹God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; ³Though its waters roar *and* foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah. ⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. ⁶The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted. ⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah. ⁸Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. ⁹He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.

¹⁰ **"Cease *striving* and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."**

¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

Psalm 46:10 - Sermon

Greetings:

A. Greetings

I bring you greetings from North Wake Baptist Church where I am a member and whose authority I am under as I bring this message to you today.

And I also want to thank Dr. Akin for the opportunity and the privilege to open the word with you this morning.

B. Welcome Guests

I also want to recognize the folks that are here today attending our Sabbath Rest & flourishing conference.

With a special welcome to Dr. Matthew Sleeth and his wife Nancy who have been gracious enough to come and lead us in this conference event.

C. Plan of Sermon

1. Our Text of focus for Today is Psalm 46:10
2. However, in order to understand and communicate the meaning of the verse we need to spend some time in the entirety of the Psalm 46.

Read the Text

Slowly and Profoundly

Hit Crescendo at verse 10

PRAY!

Hook: Diagnosing the Problem

A. Hurry Sickness

1. In his very Insightful Book entitled *The Life You've Always Wanted*, Pastor and Author John Ortberg makes the following observation:

“Hurry is the great enemy of the spiritual life in our day . . . for many of us the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied that we will settle for a mediocre version of it.”

2. Ortberg goes on to describe this chronic problem of the American as “Hurry Sickness”

a. we want our pizza delivered in 30 minutes or less

b. We line up at restaurants during lunch hour not because the food is good, but because it is fast.

c. we are addicted to devices that promise to enable higher efficiency and give us more time for other things, and yet study after study shows that the more we use them the less time we actually have for the most valued things in life.

IN FACT, JUST LAST WEEK I READ AN INTERESTING ARTICLE IN YAHOO NEWS THAT INDICATED THE RESULTS OF A STUDY THAT SUGGESTED THE #1 THING YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CELL PHONE TO IMPROVE INTIMACY IN YOUR MARRIAGE IS.... TURN IT OFF

d. Ortberg goes on to point out that all of our efforts to get more done in less time have not produced what we are after. He points out that while

“American society is rich in goods, it is extremely time poor. Many societies in the two-thirds world by contrast are poor in material possessions by our standards but they are rich in time. They are not driven or hurried. They live with the sense that there’s adequate time to do what needs to be done each day.”

B. Living in a culture of Stress, worry and anxiety

1. Cultural of Anxiety

a. We are living in a culture and era riddled with Anxiety

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, some forty million Americans, nearly one in seven of us, are suffering from some kind of anxiety disorder at any given time, accounting for 31 percent of the expenditures on mental health care in the United States.

According to recent data, the “lifetime incidence” of anxiety disorder is more than 25 percent — which, if true, means that one in four of us can expect to be stricken by debilitating anxiety at some point in our lifetimes....

A study published in *The American Journal of Psychiatry* in 2006 found that Americans lose a collective 321 million days of work because of anxiety and depression each year, costing the economy \$50 billion annually...

In 2005 ... Americans filled fifty-three million prescriptions for just two antianxiety drugs: Ativan and Xanax.

<http://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/08/my-age-of-anxiety-stossel/>

2. Two Key Factors in Causation of Anxiety

- a. In an interesting article published in *Psychology Today*, Dr. Kevin Chapman notes that Diagnosable anxiety appears to affect Western society, in particular us Americans, more than other cultures.
- b. Chapman notes two cultural factors that tend to give rise for increased anxiety in Western Culture:
 - i. Normalcy Bias – “The common thread in those of us who succumb to the normalcy bias is attempting to live above our means, trying to keep up with others who *appear* more successful, that money is the key to happiness, and that I will be accepted if I have more *things*.”
 - ii. Need for Achievement: “The need for achievement can be construed as a social need that directs people to strive for success and excellence, accomplishment and influence. No one could argue against the notion that most Americans are conditioned to be very high in achievement motivation, with many of us learning over time” this math equation {high achievement = happiness.}
 - iii. Chapman goes on to say that “The biggest issue is that many of us place our...[achievements] the most important parts of our identities.¹

D. As Evangelical Christians, we are certainly not immune from these tendencies, and in ministry we often camouflage or Baptize our tendencies to rush, rush, rush, in the garb of what otherwise could be healthy and important questions to ask about a church.

1. How many people are at church?
2. How many are coming to home-group?
3. How many hours do you work a week?
4. How many baptisms?
5. How much giving is taking place?
6. What titles do I have by my name?
 - a. I look at the tag line of my own email signature and I think – What am I trying to prove?
 - i. It makes me sick because I have so many things I am responsible for AND
 - ii. It makes me sick because I advertise them like a badge of honor!

* The problem isn't asking these questions, it is allowing these questions to define our understanding of success before the Lord and then chasing them with reckless abandon to the point of crash and burn.

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-color-anxiety/201201/why-american-culture-is-plagued-anxiety-two-good-reasons>

5. JOKE - Running To Church

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!

Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again!

As she ran she once again began to pray, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late...But please don't shove me either!'

And isn't this the problem: We feel like God is behind us pushing us to run faster and faster and faster... when in reality he is often telling us the exact opposite and perhaps trying to tell us that we are measuring "success in ministry" by the wrong measuring tape!

E. But in the midst of all this Hurry and Rushing God has a specific message for his people that rumbles through the pages of both the Old and New Testament but perhaps has one of its more thunderously clear expressions 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."**

Book #1 - Context of Psalm 46

A. Context

1. Psalm 46 has some affinities with [Ps. 48](#); [76](#); [84](#); and [87](#), which are called "Zion Songs."
2. Matthew Henry comments that Psalm 46 was likely penned upon occasion of one of King David's military victories over a neighboring nation ([2 Sam. 8:1-18](#)), and the rest which God gave him from all his enemies round about.
3. Thus, as we come to the passage it is important to understand that the context of the psalm is shaped by war and battle and its purpose is to depict the greatness of God as the Stronghold and Refuge of his people in times of Great Conflict, worry, stress, anxiety, etc.
4. For this reason the **Great Reformer, Martin Luther**, was moved by this psalm to write the famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."
 - a. It is said of Luther that "when he heard any discouraging news, he would say, come let us sing the 46th Psalm" (Matthew Henry) as a reminder of the greatness of God and who it is that is ultimately in control.

B. Structure of Psalm 46

1. There are 3 movements

- a. verse 1-3
- b. Verses 4-7
- c. Verses 8-11

2. Each of the 3 movements is punctuated by “selah”

- a. The meaning of the term “Selah” is normally intended to indicate either a Pause or Crescendo
- b. Selah’s purpose is to help the reader pause and consider, as well as, to build intensity and focus on the central theme of the passage.

3. Content of the Three Movements

- a. verse 1-3
 - i. Description of Tumult taking place in the midst of the created order
 - though the earth should change
 - though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea
 - Though its waters roar *and* foam,
 - Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride
 - ii. Almost unimaginable circumstances of catastrophe that cause great anxiety
 - iii. But for the people of God, there is no need to be alarmed because no matter how bad things look in Created Order – God is our Refuge!
 - v. It is as if the Psalmist is saying to us – “Even if the very ground upon which you stand should melt away beneath your feet and collapse... **NO FEAR! GOD IS OUR REFUGE!**”
- b. Verses 4-7
 - i. The Nations Rage but the city of God is calm
 - compare verses 4 & 6
 - there is a gentle river in the city of God and the city is glad
 - But the nations are in an uproar!
 - ii. The nations, on the other hand, make noise!
They boast, they fume, and they fight.
They Claim allegiance and seek to be exalted as the Super power to whom all others must bow.
And they rely on military supremacy to bring others into submission
 - iii. God’s city is firmly planted
 - and the reason is that God is in the midst (v. 5)
 - iv. It is as if the Psalmist is saying to us – “Even though all the nations should rise up in war against the people of God and attack with all their wrath... the very best they could muster is nothing compared to the Strength of our God!
The LORD OF HOSTS is WITH US! DO NOT BE ANXIOUS! GOD IS OUR STRONGHOLD!
- c. Verses 8-11
 - i. Behold God and what HE can do! (v.8)
 - ii. Wars? Come on man! “Come behold what our God can do!” (v.9)
 - ii. Compare the power of our God to the weapons of the enemy.

- God can make any desolation happen in all the earth!
- iii. The nations come with their weapons against this God???? REALLY?
 - God takes the major weapons of the day and mocks them
 - The bow – long range weapon – pffff
 - The spear – Snap!
 - The chariot – Hah! You got nothing!
- iv. No matter what the enemy hurls your way, God is not fazed, he is not in fear, he is not in doubt.
 - He is in total absolute command and He will win the day
- v. It is as if the Psalmist is saying to us – “Bring it on! **THE LORD OF HOSTS is the EXALTED GOD OF THE UNIVERSE! HE IS OUR STRONGHOLD!**”

C. Repeated Themes

1. “God is our refuge”

- i. The focus of each movement and the purpose of each verse is to draw our attention to God Himself
- ii. In 11 verses there are 18 direct references to God.
- iii. Note that in verse 1, 7, and 11 we see the repeated idea that God is the Refuge, the place of certain safety for the people of Israel.
- iv. . Bookends – Beginning and End of Psalm is meant to focus our attention not on the circumstances around us but on God himself.
 - The first word is meant to rivet our attention on what is most important
 - The last verse cements us on the person of God as main theme and primary comfort

2. “God is With us”

- i. Verse 1 – He is a present help
 - The Hebrew carries the meaning that he is close and abundantly available for help
- ii. Verse 5 – God is in the “midst of Israel”
- iii. Verse 7 – That God—the Lord of Hosts—is “With us”
- iv. Verse 11 – The Lord of Host is “With us” is repeated

3. “Therefore, we will not Fear”

- i. This idea is stated explicitly in verse 2
 - ii. But it is present throughout the psalm and is repeated using different words in verse 10
- *Which brings us to the key passage of our focus

Book #2 – Be Still! And Know I am God

A. First Person Exclamation

1. In this Context, then, you see the passages shift from Second Person Narrative to First Person Imperative
2. Based on all that has led up to this point God explodes forth this idea!
 - a. The language almost communicates the God cannot contain himself because the point is so important. He steps up to the microphone, pushes aside the MC, and declares the MOST IMPORTANT thing you need to know right now!

A. CEASE STRIVING!

1. Alternative Meanings
 - a. Attention!
 - b. Stop and consider
 - c. Ponder
 - d. Cease and Desist!
2. It is an imperative form of saying “Stop fighting and pay attention!”
3. Yo! CHILL!
 - a. God’s desire is to slow us down to take stock of our life, context, and hurry.
4. STORY: Alvin Reid and I were having lunch 10 years ago over in Appleby’s restaurant.
 - a. I am a younger man desperately trying to forward my career and establish myself in academic world, and Alvin kindly agrees to have lunch with me to discuss a writing opportunity.
 - b. I am getting worked up because I have something to say in writing and getting the opportunity to be published is very hard to break into.
 - c. My good brother looks at me and says.... “Will you just CHILL! God will work it out”
5. God is arresting us... Stopping us... it is a thunderous call to Sabbath in the sense of STOP!
6. The command can be seen as a bit of a parallel to **Jesus calming the Storm** in Mark 4:35-41
 - a. When the stressed out disciples wake him up in fear of the storm and their impending death He stands up and says “Hush, be still!” (v. 39)
 - b. And in calming the Storm... you almost wonder if he is really yelling Psalm 46:10 to his guys.
 - c. Note the disciples’ response—Humble quiet before the King of the Universe!
 - i. They realize anew that the boat is not the refuge, God is!
And he is in the boat!

B. “Know”

1. Wisdom vs. Knowledge
2. “Know” here is the Hebrew understanding of “know” not the Greek
 - a. A knowledge that is Experiential & Relational vs. knowledge that is information based

C. "I am God"

1. Two Senses

- a. It has the sense of both "do you know who I am?"
- b. "Get to know ME"

2. In one sense "do you know who I am?" is related to the PERSPECTIVE about the nature of the "Person of God"

- a. Become aware of who you are dealing with.
- b. This God is that being of which you can conceive nothing or no one higher!
- c. He creates the universe with a Word.

3. In the other sense "get to know ME" is related to the PERSPECTIVE of the importance of the opportunity of WHAT you are being invited into!

a. There is an intimacy about this statement

b. For the enemy of God, it is an intimacy in terms of a clear look and recognition of what you are about to face.

i. Seeing clearly... It is an "Uh OOH!" kind of recognition

ii. Example Illustration: I bought a house and we had some work done before we moved in I was hanging around the house and workers didn't know who I was (I subcontracted) I was dressed in work clothes so they carried on in their usual way. But then at one point they were asking a question about what the owner might want and the superintendent said to the guys: "why don't you ask him he is right there" and all of a sudden their attitude completely changed. They were nicer, worked harder, didn't use foul language. What was the difference? The only thing that changed was the knowledge of who I was.

c. For the Friend, there is an entirely different experience.

i. Example: This is like the time when you meet a really cool person like the president of the seminary or of the United States, and he invites you into his orbit and focuses on you. Afterwards it dawns on you. WOW, he took an interest in ME?

d. For the child of God, who has lost a bit of the luster of being a child of God, or has begun to take God for granted, this is like a "loving shake of the shoulders"

i. Or, like a raised voice of a father, not out of anger but to arrest attention
- Me sometimes with my Kids "Hey!" and the whole house stops.

- Inevitably, when that took place in my home, the kids would be shocked, they would stop, they would consider and they would then want a hug.

iii. This call is a reset or reminder.

iv. Jesus Comforting his disciples

John 14:1 - "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.
- I AM IN CONTROL! FRET NOT! DO NOT BE TROUBLED!"

D. Time and Effort- required – Sabbath!

1. In each case the knowledge requires TIME and EFFORT
 - a. Especially if you have been invited into a world of friendship and intimacy.
 - b. Any good relationship requires time. Any quality relationship takes TIME & EFFORT.
2. “Be Still”— Cease Striving
 - a. This is a loving invitation by God OUT OF the whirlwind of activity and INTO the closeness and wonder of relationship with God.
 - b. Properly understood, Sabbath, Rest, Ceasing, is not a burden... it is an invitation to wonder!
 - i. And here in this verse, God is willing to raise his voice to remind us of this!

IV. “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

A. “I will be exalted”

1. There is no Doubt: Regardless of You & your strivings, God will be exalted.

- a. **In one very clear sense, His glory in the earth is not dependent upon you!**
- b. He simply is God
- c. Habakkuk 2:14 – “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”
- d. Phil 2:10-11 – “So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - i. every knee will bow where I like it or not
- e. Rev. 5:7 – “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

B. Among the Nations and Earth

1. His exaltation is to be complete:
 - a. Among the “nations” (*goyim*) and in the whole “earth” (*’ares*).
 - b. These statements recalling the emphasis of the first two sections of the Psalm
 - i. If the world melts or nations rage – Have No Anxiety! I will be exalted there!
 - c. There is no place where things will not be clear!

C. Note the Implications for the Great Commission

1. We are giving a large task to reach the world with the Gospel

- a. God has commanded it.
- b. We are to be faithful and even aggressive in sharing the Gospel in all nations.
- c. To actively engage our lives in “Multiplicational” Discipleship of all nations.

2. Never mistake the call to “Cease Striving” as an excuse to not be busy in God’s work

- a. His Mission is clear!
- b. Jesus was very active and strategic in his mission.

3. But the mission, the battle is the LORD's & the moment we forget that, we are off course.

4. Sabbath, then, is crucial to effectiveness in the mission of God.

a. When the people of God STOP, and recognize who God is, draw near to Him, gain perspective on the final outcome of the universe....

b. ...Then we do not FEAR. (v.2)

c. God's people, not the giants of the land, are then 10 feet tall and bullet-proof!

5. God's Glory is and will be Revealed and Made Known when we are STILL before Him.

V. Look-

A. Be Still, Cease Striving, Have No Anxiety, CHILL! In and **Under the Word** so that you can know he is God and so that he can be exalted among the nations

B. Be Still, Cease Striving, Have No Anxiety, CHILL! In regard to your busyness and daily routine. **Take Time in quiet before God each day** so that you can know he is God and so that he can be exalted among the nations

C. Be Still, Cease Striving, Have No Anxiety, CHILL! In regard to your striving for **possessions and ambitions** so that you can know he is God and so that he can be exalted among the nations

D. Be Still, Cease Striving, Have No Anxiety, CHILL! In regard to your worry and anxiety about how **people view you** for God is your refuge and stronghold and he is for you who can be against you! Flee to him so that you can know He is God and he can be exalted among the nations.

E. Be Still, Cease Striving, Have No Anxiety, CHILL! **When you are Disciplined** because this is a method of God's love toward you to get your attention. Do not run from it! So that you may know He is God and so that he can be exalted through you to all the nations.

F. Be Still, Cease Striving, Have No Anxiety, CHILL! In regard to all these things so that you can Pursue **Character Development** that makes you more like Christ. And by His grace your life and ministry can become a beacon of light to a lost and dying anxiety riddled world and He will be exalted in you and in all the earth through you

VI. TOOK - Practice

Invite you to kneel. To come forward if you'd like. To be quiet. Just mediate on these verse. For 10 minutes.