

UNCERTAIN BUT UNSHAKEN

Over the last weeks as a praying church we have been journeying what it looks like to Stay at Our Posts. We have done this through prayer, learning practices to make space in our lives for stillness and sabbath that ultimately equip us for an intimate relationship with God. We have dug in to more of Matthew where we have seen that even with inadequate faith, motives and theology and in a world that everything seems uncertain, He still remains the same. Our Jesus, Our Savior, Our Lord.... HE REMAINS UNSHAKEN.

In prayer this week we are going to walk through Psalm 46. A Psalm that we can so well relate to but also be reminded to take courage and have hope from, a Psalm that acknowledges that that is uncertain and shaken yet grounds us in the truth of who God is. And that truth transforms us!

As we hit another week of lockdown you like me might have been hit by waves of confusion as to what the next weeks or even months may look like. Whether lockdown or simply just life and the waves that sometimes rather than us surfing, blindsides us with STUFF, with sickness, a job loss, depression, anxiety, grief, overload or pain.... WAVES, sometimes they seem to hit hard!

Yet again we remember that Jesus, He walked on the waves, He spoke to storms and who better to speak to when we feel hit by waves, than to HIM.

So before we read, reflect and pray let's be still, finding that walking + talking pace with Jesus.

PRAY

**Holy Spirit we invite you to come
You are so welcome
Open our ears to hear what it is you are saying and our eyes to see you at work,
To gaze upon your beauty and to know you more
Still our hearts to a rhythm of peace
That we will be still and know that you are God
In Jesus Name Amen**

READ THE PSALM ALOUD

Psalm 46

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.**
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,**

**3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.**
**4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.**
**5 God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at day break.**
**6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.**
**7 The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.**
**8 Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.**
**9 He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.**
**He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.**
**10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."**
**11 The Lord Almighty is among us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

Verses 1-3 talks, of Gods protection and because of this fact it goes on to declare 'we will not fear'

BE HONEST IN PRAYER - LAY YOUR FEARS AT HIS FEET.

Take time in stillness and bring to mind any areas of fear, uncertainty and anxiety, then pray aloud...

Lord, I renounce the lie that I need to be afraid (acknowledge what those fears are aloud to Him)
Instead I choose to believe the truth that there is nothing and no one more awesome than you.
I affirm that I now live with the power of the Holy Spirit within me and therefore I need not be afraid.
Whenever I feel fear, I will choose to believe your promises and your truth that you are a refuge, a safe place in the midst of all uncertainty. Your Holy Spirit is a dependable presence, your power is a reliable strength and in you I trust.
Fill me afresh with your Spirit that I may grow in confidence of who you are and that I will rest in courage knowing whose I am.
I am yours.

We see time and time again in the Bible how the Israelites in the midst of battles, running from an enemy, facing a sea, where tempted to flee back to

slavery, back to what they knew, as there's something about 'knowing' that lures us into a sense of security. We see that play right back to the garden in the beginning.....

But we can also see this play in our own worlds as we are tempted to accept the security of the past that never fully satisfied to begin with rather that journey – walk – talk and come to that place of knowing that HE IS ALL THAT IS SECURE.

It is in stillness that we acknowledge who is doing the fighting! That when we pray, we look up, we remember it isn't our strength, it is HIS. He is fighting for us.

Exodus 14:14

"The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still"

Pause and think of that!

God reminds us in this Psalm that His ways are higher, His thoughts are higher.

Isaiah 55:9

As high as the heavens are above the earth, so my ways and my thoughts are higher than yours.

Pause and think of that!

And as I read on a blogpost recently the perfect reminder of these truths being 'After all, the worst event to ever occur – the murder of his Son – became the most wonderful thing for us, securing our salvation and revealing the supreme glory of God.'

In times of uncertainty we must choose to walk, to run towards God not to what we feel is secure and steady.... WALK + TALK RUN! As He promises this

James 4:8

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

In verses 4-7 we read of the pleasure of God, the joy He supplies, a picture being painted of His Kingdom and the peace and protection of His presence. When we feel shook we can look up and remember that as His children, we are ultimately secure. It goes on to remind us of His power in the midst of a world in chaos, the very power of His voice causes the earth to melt! All He has to do is speak to win the battle, to create, to bring to life....

His Spirit within you, His voice within you carries power!

And prayer invites us further into the activation of the power in speaking out His life and light to the world.

Part of being a community that prays carries such beauty and individuality as God places unique passions, compassions, people and places on each of our hearts.

So in this time begin to talk to God about those areas that you see in the world around you, the headlines that you read, the reports, the diagnosis whatever is shaking and uncertain in the lives around you.....

PRAY INTO THE CHAOS AND SHAKING WE SEE IN OUR WORLD
ASK GOD AGAIN WHAT DOES HE SEE AND WHAT DOES HE SAY AND LET
THAT FRAME HOW YOU PRAY.

BEGIN TO SPEAK LIFE + LIGHT

Acknowledge the chaos

Speak the truth over it

Acknowledge who God is and how that does not change, His presence, His power, His provision, His peace.....

Pray boldly what God places on your heart

Verses 8-9 in The Message translation reads;

Attention, all! See the marvels of God!

He plants flowers and trees all over the earth,

Bans war from pole to pole, breaks all the weapons across his knee.

SPEND A FEW MOMENTS IN SILENT THINKING OF THAT, LET IT SINK IN AS
YOU LOOK OUT AND SEE NATURE.....

SIMPLY RESPOND IN THANKING GOD FOR WHO HE IS

PRAY ALOUD A DECLARATION OF BELIEF IN HIM

Lord You have always kept me safe in trials,

And now tried as I am, today I believe.

Lord, you have always marked the road for the coming day;

And though it may be hidden, today I believe.

Lord you have always lightened this darkness of mine;

And though the night is here, today I believe.

Lord you have always spoken when time was ripe;

And though you be silent now, today I believe

(Celtic Daily Book of Prayer)

It's through acknowledging the waves, that that is uncertain, but then walking + talking with God as we focus not on the waves but on the one who speaks and the world is created, It is in the looking at Him, laying fears at His feet that we then have the ability to read and act on the final two verses of this Psalm....

I love how we read in The Message;

“Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything.”

Oh how many of us in this season have literally stepped out of the traffic. Let us not waste this moment in time, but take that long loving look at God! Above politics, above everything!

The Passion Translation puts it this way;

Surrender your anxiety!

Be silent and stop your striving and you will see that I am God.

I am the God above all the nations,
and I will be exalted throughout the whole earth.

Here he stands!

The Commander!

The mighty Lord of Angel Armies is on our side!

The God of Jacob fights for us!

LET'S MAKE THIS A PRAYER

Lord I surrender my anxiety.

I look to you. Open my eyes to see you and to see what you see.

I wait. I be still. I know that you are God.

All that surrounds feels unknown, but I rest assure that you are secure.

BE STILL TAKE TIME AND PRAY

You are above it all.

Be exalted in Lagan Valley.

Be exalted in our land.

Be exalted across the world.

PAUSE AND PRAY INTO THIS

You are the Lord of Heavens Armies.

You are here among us.

In a time that seems uncertain you God are my fortress, you can not be shaken.

CLOSE IN YOUR OWN PRAYER

In stillness we can experience just what we read in our Psalm this week, Psalm 131:2

I am humbled and quieted in your presence.
Like a contented child who rests on its mother's lap,
I'm your resting child and my soul is content in you.
O people of God, your time has come to quietly trust,
waiting upon the Lord now and forever.

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. LIFE MAY BE UNCERTAIN BUT....HE IS UNSHAKEN!