

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
October 29, 2017
Psalm 46 EHV.
500th Anniversary of the Lutheran
Reformation



The King's Reign

Heading For the choir director. By the Sons of Korah.

According to *Almoth*. A song.

God is our refuge and strength, a helper who can always be found in times of trouble. That is why we will not fear when the earth dissolves and when the mountains tumble into the heart of the sea. Its waters roar and foam. The mountains quake when it rises. There is a river--its streams bring joy to the city of God, to the holy dwelling of the Most High. God is in her. She will not fall. God will help her at daybreak. Nations are in turmoil. Kingdoms fall. God raises his voice. The earth melts. The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is a fortress for us. Come, look at the works of the LORD. What a wasteland he has made of the earth! He makes wars cease to the end of the earth. He shatters the bow. He cuts up the spear. He burns the shields/(or carts – two wheel supply carts – not war chariots) with fire. "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted on the earth." The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is a fortress for us.

People of God-rescued by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Survivalists or preppers as they are called are not a new concept. Survivalists or preppers work to prepare for emergencies – disasters – catastrophes or calamities – from a disruption of the power grid to a complete breakdown of civilization and utter chaos! It's kind of a scary thought – how bad could it get? So survivalists – preppers are dedicated to preparing! They study emergency medical techniques – what to do if someone you love can't breathe. There has been more than one TV show – where they showed somebody performing a tracheotomy – what with a

knife and a pen. They study self-defense – judo and karate! They stock pile clean water and food – dehydrated chili – that is good for 25 years – just add boiling water and grab a soup spoon! They build shelters – sometimes deep underground – impenetrable – so they can survive the likes of a nuclear holocaust – and emerge to rebuild civilization! To be prepared – without becoming paranoid or worse – might not be all bad. The problem is – no matter how prepared you try to be – there are only about 10,000 things that could possibly go wrong. Prepare for 9,999 things – and won't it just be the 1 thing you missed that gets you? The fact is – the worst dangers are not physical. If only they were. Then we could band together with our generators – beef jerky and dehydrated casseroles and bottled water. The worst dangers are spiritual – the devil – this sin spoiled world – and very possibly the worst enemy of all – the enemy within – my own sinful ♥! It is from the danger of sin and eternal destruction that Jesus keeps us safe. This Reformation Sunday we give thanks to Jesus for his faithful humble servant Martin Luther – and for the fact that by grace alone we know:

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

I. The earth is shaken

II. Our Fortress is unshakable!

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on for Reformation Sunday is Psalm 46. What do you know about the Book of Psalms? Have you studied the book of Psalms – or pretty much just read a few – or maybe – when you have some free time – crack the book open and read whatever Psalm you hit? Did you ever wonder why – when they printed the EHV – the Evangelical Heritage Version they printed the New Testament and the Book of Psalms – not Genesis or Isaiah or Ezekiel – but Psalms? The Scroll of Psalms is divided into 5 books – 5 parts of about 30 Psalms each. Book II – where we are today is Psalm 42 through 72---42-72. The Psalms often talk about emotions – up and down – sad/repentant and forgiven and joyful. Psalms 42 and 43 go together. The subtitle – **An Exile's Prayer: Why are you cast down?** Perhaps you are familiar with the words, **"As a doe pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and appear**

before God? My tears have been food for me day and night, while people are saying to me all day, "Where is your God?" I am overcome by my emotions whenever I remember these things; how I used to arrive with the crowd, as I led the procession to the house of God, with loud shouts of thanksgiving, with the crowd celebrating the festival. We are celebrating today. We are celebrating the fact of the Lutheran Reformation! The Church – our Church – the Christian Church had lost sight of simple Law and Gospel! *The 1st Commandment: You shall have no other gods before me. What does this mean? We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.* Do we do that? I don't! I make mistakes all the time! We had our Circuit Meeting the other day. We meet almost every month to study God's Word – to study doctrine – to discuss very practical concerns – to encourage one another! Our meeting was just about to start – and I mentioned the fact that outside where we were meeting the signs all say two hour parking from morning to early evening – *two hour parking*. Our meeting was scheduled for 3 hours. You see the problem...or is it not really a problem? There were literally dozens of parking places outside. So what's the problem? 120 minutes – and then you need to move – *or* is it ok to be 180 minutes in the same place wrong? Again – compared to car jacking in Milwaukee and 563 murders near Uncle Terry in Chicago – 30 ministers' cars parked outside the ROC for 2 hours and say, 20 more minutes doesn't seem like such a big deal – does it? Does the fact that the Watertown Police Department is literally steps away make a difference? Or is the fact that we are ministers – I mean literally the "good guys" – give us skips? I mean I have never ever gotten a single speeding ticket – not one! I say that – and people are literally – superstitiously saying out loud, "*Knock on wood!*" *What does that mean?* And other people are literally saying, "Just watch! Before he makes his next sermon – his name will be in the *Watertown Daily Times* – police report – speeding!" Martin Luther would have moved his car – and 1 hour and 45 minutes into the meeting – I excused myself – went outside and moved the GOSPEL – across the street and onto the next block! I don't tell you this to justify myself – but to tell you – I make mistakes all the time. This one – was just one of the easier mistakes – sins – to avoid! Psalm 42 – thirsty like a deer!

Psalm 43 – a plea for vindication! Have you ever been accused – innocent – yet falsely accused? It's terrible! How do you prove you didn't

do something? How do you prove a negative? It isn't easy! **Psalm 43 Judge me justly, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation. Rescue me from the deceitful, wicked man.** Deceitful people. It's like when people start out by saying, "*With all due respect!*" I hate that! Because when they start out by saying, "*With all due respect...*" what's going to follow is anything *but* respectful! The fact is – in this world – we will be accused of being all sorts of bad things – judgmental – holier than thou – quick to judge – slow to listen and even slower to forgive! Again when Pastor Mueller was my Bishop he used to say people will find fault and accuse us no matter what! "*Shame on us – if we make it easy for them!*" We need to be very careful that what we say and how we say it – reflects Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the well – reflects Jesus talking to the woman caught in the act of adultery. **Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy** – said Jesus in the sermon on the grassy hillside.

Psalm 44 – **Past victory and present defeat!** That sounds sad, too, and so? **God, our ears have heard. Our fathers have told us the work you performed in their day, in days long ago. It was not their arm that saved them. It was your right hand and your arm, and the light from your face, because you took pleasure in them...Get up! Why do you sleep, O Lord? Wake up! Do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our misery and our oppression? For our souls bow down to the dust...Stand up! Help us! Redeem us because of your mercy.**

Psalm 46 **God is our refuge and strength, a helper who can always be found in times of trouble. That is why we will not fear when the earth dissolves and when the mountains tumble into the heart of the sea. Its waters roar and foam. The mountains quake when it rises.** Where do you put your hope? Where do you put your trust? There are lots of possibilities! Education? If we just get smart enough – we can fix everything! We could cure cancer! Wouldn't that be wonderful? We could prevent autism. Wouldn't that be wonderful? We can make these driverless cars. Punch in the address and push the "Go" button – and the car drives itself! They already have cars that automatically hit the brakes when there is danger! Cars that sound an alarm if you start to drift out of your lane! We can make it so there is income equality – everybody has all the "things and stuff" they need and want. Except that doesn't work either – because of sin in this

world – sin – the ♥ that is fatally flawed with wickedness and evil – from the moment of conception we are flawed!

Our ultimate problem is sin – our guilt and blame – and how we will stand before God on Judgment Day! The answer is Jesus' forgiving blood. If you watch TV at all – you hear the word **redemption** all the time. Redemption on TV means you failed in the past. You lost the competition maybe once – maybe more than once. This time – you vow – it's going to be different. This time you plan to win – you seek "redemption"! Jesus and only Jesus can redeem us. He died on the † to take away all our sins. You can't redeem – buy back yourself. Only Jesus could and only Jesus did! That's the good news of the Reformation we are saved by Jesus and not by our self!

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth. He shatters the bow. He cuts up the spear. He burns the *shield/two wheel supply carts with fire.* My best friend in grade school was named Gary Kiiskilia!

K*i*i*s*k*i*l*i*a – Kiiskilia! That's Finnish! During the winter of 1939 the former Soviet Union tried to take over a big piece of Finland! It didn't work. Was it because the Finns develop this thing where they would ski and ski and ski – and then fall down with these sniper rifles – and shoot the Russians – then ski and ski and ski – and then fall down with these sniper rifles and fight to save their country? They were safe because the LORD the Great I AM – had mercy on his country and kept her safe. On December 16th – 1944 – the Battle of the Bulge – it snowed. It snowed and snowed and snowed and snowed. And the mightiest armies the world had seen until then – ground to a halt! They couldn't see through the snow. They couldn't drive through the drifts. The LORD said, "Enough of this senseless killing! Enough! I will have peace and quiet right here – right now! Enough!" And for a time – it was quiet because the one who makes those soft little snowflakes makes wars cease. He can do that! And He can make peace – not just between nations and armies – but peace between our Holy Heavenly Father and sinful people like us!

"Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted on the earth." **The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is a fortress for us.** There is a cemetery – south/east of Watertown – called The Saint Stephen's Lutheran Cemetery. On July 26, 1936 there was a terrible crash – a horrific car/train wreck. 6 people were

killed. **Ralph was 10; Norma 16; Verna 20; Everett 22; Hilma 23; and Waldamar – 24!** Carved into Waldamar’s stone are three letters – that probably only mean something to you if you are theologically trained – the letters C.R.M. Latin for *candidate for the regular ministry!* Waldamar had just graduated from the Seminary and was waiting for his first call into the Pastoral Ministry! There is a powerful temptation to think that this is simply wrong! That the people who were in this accident should not all have perished in this senseless crash! The relatives – the people whose hearts were broken by this tragedy were concerned that people would come to this cemetery and see these 6 grave stones – **“DIED IN TRAIN AUTOMOBILE COLLISION AT OCONOMOWOC, WI JULY 26, 1936”** and be tempted to blame their Heavenly Father for doing something wrong. Blame their heavenly Father for at best permitting this terrible tragedy to happen. Where were the guardian angels? Where the guardian angels we talk about all the time? Why didn’t they wrap their wings around these people and save them – in spite of all the laws of physics – all the laws about mass and speed and the strength of the car – before seat belts and shoulder harnesses and air bags and blind spot flashers and glass that shatters into all sorts of little crumbles – not blades. The family didn’t want anyone to *misunderstand* what you can’t understand or explain. So they had this massive piece of stone etched. It simply says, **“Be still and know that I am God!”** Martin Luther would have liked that. **Be still and know that I am God!** *A mighty fortress is our God – so take they our life, goods, fame, child and wife let these all be gone. They yet have nothing won. The kingdom ours remaineth. Amen!*

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schatz

