

*From Pastor's Desk...*

### **Be still and know that God is in control**

It is said of Martin Luther that when he got discouraged and depressed at times, he would turn to his friends and say, come let us sing the forty sixth psalm. The hymn 'mighty fortress is our God', the battle hymn of reformation, is the result of his strong confidence and courage in God whom he trusted.

As far as I am concerned Ps 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble" is the most powerful verse in the scripture. The Oxford dictionary defines 'refuge' as shelter or protection from danger, trouble etc. The word 'strength' is defined as the ability that something has to resist force or hold heavy weights without breaking or being damaged. God's help comes when we need it the most.

The Biblical writers often used poetical language, portraying political or social chaos as a shaking of the earth and the seas. Though there are no clues to identify the specific historical crisis that prompted the writing of this psalm, it covers several kinds of conflicts; with nature (v.1-3), enemies (v.4-7), and the world (v. 8-9). Ps 46 testifies that Israel's security is in God's power to overcome warring nations.

God ends noisy battles as he demonstrates himself to be the ruler of the universe. The message is very powerful, "be still and know that I am God" (v.10).

How can we be still when everything seems to be out of control? Trust in God's faithfulness and living at the center of God's will enable us to gain confidence in life. There is no situation we will ever face that is out of God's control. God is our refuge even in the face of total destruction. He is not merely a temporary retreat; he is our eternal refuge and can provide strength in any circumstance.

Christians are being persecuted everywhere for their faith in Christ. Religious fanaticism is widely spread even in the places where Christianity has been deeply rooted. We cannot reckon any place on earth as a safe zone. We have a sure promise from God, "never will I leave you; never will I forsake you (Heb .13:5).

Let us confess our faith in Christ who is the lord of History and surrender our life for anointed worship, fellowship, witness and service.

God bless you.

In His Glorious Ministry,

**Rev. K. P. Mathew**

(Senior Pastor, IPC Hebron, Los Angeles)

### **A safe place**

Sowmya Mathew

What does the word "refuge" mean to you? Whatever it may be, we can all agree that a refuge is a safe place. When the Bible describes God as our refuge, it is saying that God is our safe place when we need protection from something. Knowing that God is our refuge enables us to trust freely in Him.

We should not fear situations or people that threaten our well being. There is no situation that is out of God's control; so the best place to be is right with Him, regardless of what we are going through. As the Bible says in Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe".

A question that we may have during our walk with God would be, "How can we make God our refuge?" It is very easy for us to picture "refuge" as a place of protection, but it can be hard for us to picture God, someone we cannot see, as our place of refuge.

David is a great example of someone who knew that God was their refuge. At many points in his life, David was on the run from people who wanted to have him dead, but he would always run to God and find safety in His arms. As David said in Psalm 62:7 "My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge." Like David, an easy way for us to make God our refuge in times of trouble is to simply go to God and "Cast all [our] cares on Him..." (1 Peter 5:7).

No matter the hardships, we must always remember God's promise "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6)

### **Hide in Him**

Jijo T. John, Sunday School Teacher

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. It's a bold declaration about who God is, and what He is like. It's a great verse for today and for each day and something to recall every morning.

Fear is a normal human emotion. We experience it almost daily to lesser and greater degrees. Our Good Shepherd never abandons His sheep, but always lovingly watches over them. The Lord is like a refuge; and is also our strength - the one who gives us power when we are weak.

The first thing that God promises to be to us is our refuge. What is a refuge? It's a hiding place. God, knowing our natural tendency to hide, tells us in His loving way that it's all right to hide, and He promises to be our hiding place. In other words, when you fear, call upon God and you will feel His Presence, and in that Presence, you'll feel safer than you've ever felt before. Who wouldn't feel safe in the arms of the One who created the universe and all that's in it? So, when we experience fear, the first thing we do is what is at the base of our instinct. We hide, but we hide in the Presence of Almighty God.

But God doesn't stop by just being our hideout. Next, it says that He is our strength. While we hide in Him, He begins to not only increase our strength but He becomes our strength. Before long, His strength makes us feel able to go back out and face our fears. We go in His strength. If we attempt to stand up to anything in our own strength, we'll be defeated. But with His strength nothing can stand against us.

When you need strength, look unto the Lord. He promises to be with His people. He is an ever present help in trouble