



Psalm 46:1-3 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains

quake at its swelling pride." I try to imagine what it would be like to stay calm while witnessing mountains slipping into the sea—is it possible I can trust in God to the point my fear is erased? Is this what resting in Christ looks like? Hebrews 13:5 takes the idea of finding rest in God's presence a step further. "For God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never forsake you.'" But what if, in the midst of our chaos, we can't feel God's presence? How do we know we are in it? How do we know for sure He won't leave our side? **NOT A FELLING**

The Bible is filled with the stories of people who wrestled with faith and relied on God's faithfulness. **So, maybe discovering God's presence and resting in Christ are more about having faith than about feeling Him around us.** To put it another way: We must choose to believe God is present, even if our current situation and feelings suggest the opposite. Even if the mountains are slipping into the sea. Even if everything is going wrong and nothing seems right. **"HE WILL REVEAL HIMSELF TO YOU"**

Jesus said He will reveal Himself to those who love Him and obey His commands (John 14:21), so we must not only make sure to do so, but believe He will reveal Himself to us. Looking at faith this way, we understand we can find rest in God's presence by knowing Jesus and having faith He will do what He says—regardless of whatever else is happening. In the midst of our chaotic lives, and in this chaotic world, and in these chaotic times, God is present. "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Jesus reminds us that in the world we will face troubles. Those troubles can be extremely intense and hold great pressure. When pressure builds up, there needs to be a release. By finding shelter in Jesus there will be peace. "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

"KNOW THAT I AM GOD"

In the midst of our chaotic lives, and in this chaotic world, and in these chaotic times, God is present. What if, instead of giving into the stress of busy and hectic lives, we sought to find God in the midst of the trouble we sometimes cause for ourselves? What if we rested in God's promise to be with us in every moment and let it be enough to get us through the day? Verse 10 of Psalm 46 says, "Cease striving and know that I Am God...." Next to this verse we should write: I will cease **Striving. Cease. Stop. Rest. Know God.** *Happy New Year!*



On this New Year's, we look to the future—2016 and beyond. And we don't know what the future holds. But the message of the Eternal Date Line, the message of Christ's coming, is that you need not fear. The message of the angel on that first Christmas

night—"Fear not!"—is a message for you and for me today. Why? Because the One Who loves you, Who came to earth for you, Who lived and died for you, Who rose from the grave for you, Who now watches over you, is none other than the Lord of history, the God of all ages. Someone has stated: "**We do not know what the future holds. But we know Who holds the future.**" The One Who does so is God. That's good news for us who are His children. It's especially good news because not only does God hold the future in His hand, but He also holds us. He upholds us! He is for us, not against us! "**Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;**" (Isaiah 49:16)

The apostle Paul makes this abundantly clear in the words from Romans 8:31-34, "**What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He Who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God Who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the One who died—more than that, Who was raised—Who is at the right hand of God, Who indeed is interceding for us.**"

Think of what we've witnessed during the past year. On the national and international scenes, there have been war, crime, corruption, upheavals in politics and government, economic uncertainty, and moral chaos. On the personal level, you may have experienced problems with your job, family, and finances. Some of us in the past year have experienced unforeseen illness and tragic losses. God is on our side. He is for us, not against us. He has given His Son as proof of this. God now justifies us—He regards us as blameless—for the sake of Jesus. Thus we need not fear His condemnation. Christ is now interceding for us—He takes our side in the heavenly courtroom of justice. So we need not fear His rejection or judgment, now or in the future. God holds our future, and He promises to uphold us in the future.

"PLANS TO GIVE YOU HOPE AND A FUTURE"

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you...."

(Jeremiah 29:11)



"THE FATHER ALWAYS HAS HIS EYES ON YOU"



A storm raged on the Great Plains. The wind rushed fast and furiously. Tornado sirens were sounding. A father and his young son ran from their house to a nearby storm cellar. The dad opened the cellar door and lowered himself into the cellar. He

then held up his arms for his son to follow. But in the darkness of the cellar, the dad was not visible to his son. Terrified, yet hearing his father's voice, the boy exclaimed: "I can't see you, Dad!" In response, the father assured his son: "But I can see you! Jump!" The youngster did jump, landing in the strong arms of his dad. He did so because he trusted his dad. In the storms of your life and the uncertainty of your future, you don't know what the future holds. But you do know Who holds the future—your Savior and Lord. And He holds you safe and secure. We can face the future, not because we can see, but because we know we are seen by the God Who is for us.

This doesn't mean your future will be one on Easy Street. It doesn't mean that life in 2016 will be free of pain, loss, hardship, and suffering. This world is still broken. And we carry in our bodies the brokenness of our fallen humanity. In the coming year, you may experience sickness and suffering, injury and illness. We will make bad decisions and suffer the consequences of those missteps. But those problems will not prevail. God will prevail. And God's love will prevail. This is because God and His love are more powerful than all those hardships. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)

"NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD"



The apostle continues his bold confession of faith in Romans 8:35-39; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than

conquerors through Him Who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"WE FIND REFUGE IN THE NEVER-FAILING LOVE OF GOD"



The story is told that the great nineteenth-century preacher Charles Spurgeon was once traveling through the English countryside. He passed a barn with a weather vane on its top, and on the weather vane were inscribed the words "God is Love." Noticing this, Spurgeon rode

into the farmyard and addressed the farmer who was working there. Pointing to the weather vane, the preacher asked, "Do you think God's love is as changeable as that weather vane?" The resident farmer frowned and then replied, "Of course not! You miss the point. Those words are on that weather vane because no matter which way the wind is blowing, God is still love!" Indeed, no matter which way the winds of change blow, one thing will never change: the immutable and eternal love of God for His blood-bought children. You can count on His love now, in 2016, and into eternity. And it's all because of the One Whose life, death, and resurrection marks the Eternal date line of our lives. That is what makes sense of our times, now and in eternity.

"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken" (Psalm 16:8). By surrendering to God and placing Him first, He will be in control. God is greater than our problems and burdens. When we choose to control our own lives, we may steer it in the wrong direction to disaster. By placing God first, He will direct us on the right path to safety. God will be at our right hand to defend us through any circumstances; He will never reject or abandon us. God is our shelter.

"CHILDLIKE FAITH"



Without Jesus we can't do anything. God wants us to have that childlike faith, humility and dependence that allows us to fully surrender to Him. In God's shelter, He will guide us and help us to grow. He wants us to stay close to Him and build our confidence through Him. Matthew 18:2-4; "He called a child, whom He put among

them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."