

# Psalm 47

by Carl Armerding

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's sovereignty and control, and highlights the peace and serenity that can be found in His presence.*

**Duration:** 34:58

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:5, Psalm 46:1-3, Psalm 46:6, Isaiah 57:20, Matthew 8:23-27, Matthew 24:37, John 14:1

**Topics:** "Psalms"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal anecdote about a young boy who was fascinated by a particular object. The speaker then relates this story to the idea of putting our trust in God. He emphasizes the importance of believing in God and having faith in Him. The speaker also discusses the concept of finding peace and refuge in Jesus, and how being in His presence can bring serenity and calmness amidst the chaos of the world.

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## Transcript

The Lord's servant, our beloved Dr. Carl Armadine from Texas, was with us last year and brought such refreshing ministry to our hearts, and we're pleased to have him again for this week. I know you enjoy his ministry, Dr. Carl Armadine. Dr. Armadine.

Thank you, Henry. Shall we open God's Word with the book of the Psalms? Psalm 46. I'd like to say before I read the scripture, how much I appreciate the loving welcome I have received again.

I realize that even if the Lord's time is a while longer, it won't be very much longer. We passed the 79th milestone the other day, and now we can talk about being in the 80th year of our lives. And that's something, isn't it? I've been looking through the commentary a lot, written by a very celebrated Bible teacher, and he makes absolutely no reference to the Bibles, whatever.

But this Bible, I think, has some interesting things in it. First of all, you'll notice it says it's to the chief musician. And I always like to explain a little incident that took place in my boyhood days when our folks attended the Presbyterian Church.

And as a boy, I went to the minister and I said, Dr. Parker, who is this chief musician that's mentioned so often in the titles of the Psalms? Well, we sang nothing but the Psalms in that church. He said, well, your question has two answers. He said, we like to think when we sing praises to the Lord that the Holy Spirit is

directed and that he is the chief musician.

But he said, it is also said of our Lord Jesus in Psalm 22, and quoted again in Hebrews 2, where it says, in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee. We like to think, beloved, when we sing, as we did in an earlier meeting this morning, singing praises to our God, that it's under the direction of him who is the chief musician. Nobody can teach the heart to sing like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the second thing I noticed here, it's for the sons of Korah. And that encouraged me to take this Psalm, as well as a number of others of them. Because these sons of Korah had a rather unfortunate beginning.

We were hearing last night about that man Jabez, whose mother called him Jabez because she bore him a sorrow. Well, these sons of Korah had a rather unfortunate beginning. Their father came to an unhappy end, as we read in the book of the Numbers.

But that same book of Numbers says, Howbeit the children of Korah perish not. And here they are in the heavenly choir singing this lovely song. Then I noticed it says a song on Alamoth.

That word Alamoth is a Hebrew word for virgins. And it might refer to a choir of young women. Again, some think it may even refer to the name of an instrument.

But whichever way it is, we thank God that he is taking into account not only our unsavory beginnings, our unsavory past. As in the case of the sons of Korah. But it looks almost as though these virgins might stand for those who are born again.

Becoming all afresh to them of youth. Praise the Lord. Now let us look at the Psalm itself.

God is our refuge and strength. The very present health and trouble. Therefore will not be at the earth.

Though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters around roar and be troubled. Though the mountains shake with the swelling of all the sea life.

There is a river that streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her.

He shall not be moved. God shall help her in that right earth. For he who raged with demons will move.

He uttered his voice. The earth shall help us. The Lord of Hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge. Come behold the works of the Lord. What desolations he hath wrought and made in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth. He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in thunder. He burneth the chariot in the fire.

Be still and know that I am God. I'll be clothed among the heathen. I'll be clothed in the earth.

The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Freedom.

I know of no book, like the Bible, that maintains its up-to-date-ness like this one. I'm currently reading a book, Short History of the Far East by Kenneth Scott LaFerrette. And even though that book is probably

not over 20 years old, I find a great many things in it which sound very antiquated now.

Especially since the war in Vietnam has been going on. And we're becoming more and more familiar with the names of these places. But we seem to have forgotten the days that may not be far past, when that part of the world was known as French Indochina.

And we talked about Siam instead of Thailand and so on. So these books rapidly go out of date. But here is a book.

And here's what we like to reply to those who are always crying out for something more relevant and something meaningful. There is nothing more relevant than the Bible. There's nothing more up-to-date than the Bible and nothing more meaningful.

I remember some years ago down in the Republic of Guatemala, preaching on the first psalm. I didn't, I just quoted the psalm from memory in Spanish. I've been asked not to appear too religious, because the crowd was from the University of San Carlos.

And they might have been greatly prejudiced that they thought I was a minister to begin with. But I quoted this psalm from memory, and remarked that it was a piece of poetry written some 3000 years ago. One of the leading students in that group came to me afterwards and said, you need to say that that quotation you made tonight is 3000 years old.

I said yes. I provided the answer. Well it sounds like it's meant right for today.

I said that's exactly so. And that's true of the Bible. What could be more relevant than these opening words from our psalm this morning that God is our refuge and strength.

A very present health information. As a matter of fact, this psalm presents God to us in a threefold way. First of all, it tells us what he is.

Secondly, it tells us where he dwells. And thirdly, it tells us what he does. But first of all, we're going to see what he is.

I remember when I was just a little fellow, my father used to talk about God. I'd hear him speaking through God in prayer. And I'd say to him, Dad, I said, what is God like? And one day he answered me with these words, God is our refuge and strength.

A very present health. He thought, yes. And this is the way you get to know him, first of all, as a place of refuge.

And when you say refuge, of course, you're immediately suggesting that here's somebody that's evidently being pursued. Here's somebody looking for a hiding place. And that's exactly so.

The moment you and I discover that we're nothing but lawful ruined sinners in the presence of God, that moment we begin to look for a hiding place. That moment we begin to look for refuge. And how wonderful when we can say with one of the refugees, other refuge have I not.

Hang my helpless soul on thee. Leave, ah, leave me not alone. Still perfect in consciousness.

Yes. He's our refuge. He's a rock of ages.

To whom the sinner can preach. A place of safety. A place where the judgment of God will never reach him.

A place where even Satan can never overtake him. What a wonderful thing this is. And I address myself particularly at this moment to any present hearer for whom I hear these statements age to come.

If you've never known what it means to touch the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, oh I wish you could pause right now and think about this. What a wonderful thing it is to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is your hiding place. That you're safe within him of whom the scripture here says, God is our refuge.

The rock of ages of which Poplar he sang. Yes, rock of ages left for me. Let me hide myself in thee.

Yes, and he lets us hide ourselves in him. We recall the incident in old England some years ago. We were visiting there and we were getting ready to come back to the States.

A friend of ours who lived in Weston-super-Mare, just across the bay from where our brother's country is, Wales. He said, I would like to take you up to Cheddar Gorge before you go back to America. Well, when he said Cheddar Gorge, all I could think of was cheddar cheese.

I like it, mind you, but you get too much of it sometimes. Anyhow, I said, oh, all right, Mr. Campbell, we'll be glad to go. Well, we saw some wonderful sights.

Some of the most beautiful grottoes. And saying, coming from Texas and New Mexico, I have to be careful because the Carlsbad Taverns do rate high out there for their beauty. Well, when I think of those lovely little grottoes we saw in the Cheddar Gorge in England, they really surpassed anything I'd ever seen for their size.

Beautiful things. I thought, well, now we've had it. We started driving down the gorge, and suddenly the car stopped in a place where I didn't think there was anything of interest there.

My friend said to me, do you see that rock over there? I said, yes. He said, do you see that crack in the rock? I said, yes. He said, that's where a justice hot lady stood when he wrote those lines, that's for me.

Let me hide myself in these. I got out of the car, I walked over there, and sang those words. He came back, and my friend with a twinkle in his eye, he said, well, you as an American ought to be especially interested in that song.

I said, why? He said, it was written in 1776. So, whatever your date is to me, my friend, whatever your date is, you have a date. I have a date with the Lord.

Sometime that you can refer back to Him and say, that's the date when I learned to know Him as my refuge. Then the second thing you have here is, He's our strength. You know, we're not Christians very long before we discover how weak we are, and how impossible it seems to me to live the kind of life that a Christian ought to live.

I've told every honest soul of confessions. There are a few people in the world, of course, who claim to have reached that stage of perfection where they can't sin anymore. But I've been a Christian for over 60 years, and I can't say it yet.

But I'm going to be able to say it one of these days, When the Lord Jesus Christ comes, and this old nature is left behind, we will be with Him and be forever like Him. We shall see Him as pure, and we shall be pure like Him. Wonderful thing that.

But meanwhile, we need His help. And He's not left us without that help. The same one who saves us, keeps us.

We're saved by His grace, we're kept by His power. What a wonderful thing that is, isn't it? And one is glad to testify this morning, after all these years of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as a Savior, I'm here this morning, dear friends, not because of any strength in myself, but because He, in His wonderful grace and power, has preserved me for this hour. Oh, I can think of incidents, times I can think of them this morning, when my whole testimony would have been ruined.

The enemy had carefully laid a trap for me. But there's one prayer that I pray day after day, and sometimes even hour after hour. Oh, Lord, keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins.

Keep me from doing anything that would grieve Thy blessed Holy Spirit. And He's answered our prayers, and He's proven again that He is not only our refuge, but our strength. He's the one that keeps us.

And this is a great thought, as we go along the Christian pathway, that while we're walking to the glory of God, we're going into the strength which He Himself supplies. And then the third thing that we read out here is that He's a very present help in trouble. Yes, I'd like to paraphrase that for you.

I'd like to put it something like this. He's easy to get at. Easy to get at.

Not everybody's easy to get at. Especially in these days, when our public officials have to wonder what will be their last moment. What disgraces have come over our land in the way in which the Sassans have taken off one after another.

You don't wonder that it's difficult to get near them. I'm sure that if some of us were to go to Washington or down the LBJ Ranch, they're nearer to where I live. And as for an audience with the President of the United States, it wouldn't be easy to get it.

I'd probably be pricked several times before getting in there if I had got in. And the same would be true of some of the lesser offices of our government. But here is one who is readily accessible.

He's not like the man I knew out on the West Coast. I shall not name the city nor church. But it's a large church.

Thousands of members. And he had five secretaries. I said to him one day, I said, Five secretaries? What in the world do you do with five secretaries? Well, he said, you know, we have a lot of cranks out in our part of the world.

Every Monday morning after I speak, he says there's a whole crowd of them waiting to see me. He says they see Secretary No. 5, and if she can't shake them off, they get up to Secretary No.

4. And if she can't shake them off, they get up to Secretary No. 3. And by the time you get to Secretary No. 1, I'm out to lunch.

I'm glad I don't have to say that about the Lord. He's readily accessible. Oh, if we only realized this.

How much more we would come into his presence, even about the minutest details of life. But it's on the basis of this threefold code that we have in verse 1 that the psalmist says, therefore will not be fear. Look at those reasons.

This is perfectly logical. If this first verse is true, and it is true, that the threefold code which is not easily broken, a matter of fact, our Lord President says it's time to be broken. Therefore will not be fear.

These are days of fear. And one can appreciate that. We've already remarked about those who are taking human life so quickly.

And then people fearing what's going to happen to their estate, what's going to happen to their families, what's going to happen to their children, what's going to happen to themselves. Some people live in constant fear. And those of us who are older, we receive visits from these and telephone calls.

Here's a lady calls up, and you can tell from the very way she's talking that she's just scared to death. Therefore will not be fear. We point her to this.

This is the basis of our threefold confidence in the Lord. Enables us to say, therefore will not be fear, though the earth be removed. And I'd like to give you just another translation of those words.

We have in the Hebrew language only one word for earth and land. So that this might have been translated, though, the land. And the word removed is actually, according to one of the great Hebrews, it's a commercial term.

It means to change hands. Suppose I paraphrase it this way for you now, and say, therefore will not be fear, though our land change its hands. Oh, every patriotic American rises up and says, but it can't happen here.

I had a man say this in Texas one day. I said, yes, but it has happened here. As a matter of fact, they've got a show between Dallas and Fort Worth called Under Six Flags.

Texas has been under six flags. It's still under two, you know. But anyhow, it was under six different flags.

Six flags. It has changed, hasn't it? Can the titular France, the Spain, Mexico, yes, they've all come over this country. What would you think if a hammer and sickle were to fly over the capital of Washington? Oh, to somebody, that's treason.

Yes, I know it would be treason if I wished it. Thank God I don't. But I wonder sometimes if you've ever contemplated this.

What a shaking of our faith it would be, wouldn't it? But here's a psalm that says, I've got my eyes on God who is my refuge and strength, my very present help in trouble. Therefore will not be fear, though the land change its hands. Though everything is confusion as we have it here, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea and the waters are uproar and be coupled, though the mountains shake with a swelling rouse, everything is a confusion here.

The sea, as we know from the prophecy of Isaiah, refers to the nations in their restlessness. He says that the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, casting up fire and dirt. When has it ever been more true than it is today? You know, some people told us years ago that history could never repeat itself.

And yet the Lord Jesus Christ said it would. He said as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it always be. History will repeat itself.

And what does, what does the history in Noah say? The earth was filled with violence and corruption. Does it fit? It certainly does. I'll never forget a young brother down in New Zealand when we made our home there.

One morning I got hold of the newspaper and the New Zealand papers put the news in the middle of a classified ad on page one. You really have to fire the newspaper to see what's going on. So I opened up the newspaper and isn't that the way that you're looking at it? That's about it, isn't it? But anyhow, he was leaning over my shoulder and looking at what do you suppose he said to me? I wonder what the devil's been up to overnight.

You know I've never read a better commentary on the news than that. That's it. Just think of it.

I don't think I ever turn on the radio for a news report in the morning. After of course I've had my time with the Lord. I religiously observe that.

I will not listen to a news report till I've had reports from above. But when I listen to this, I don't think I've missed a morning in much. If they haven't reported at least one murder in the city of Dallas and sometimes a good many more.

And we were not even first runners in this case. Houston's way ahead of us in this. This is an awful thing, isn't it? It's enough to make anybody appraised if you had your eye on that.

But if we get our eye on this one, thank God, we can have a peace that the world knows nothing about. It's not the peace of indifference. It's not the peace of a graveyard.

It's the peace of knowing Him who is in full control of the whole situation. Well now let us move into His presence as we have it in the second part of our psalm. You notice beginning at verse 4 it says There is a river that springs forth from the glad to the city of God.

What a contrast between the swelling tides of humanity and this river in the presence of God. And God is in the midst of her. And all the peace and serenity of His holy presence is communicated to those who dwell there with Him.

Oh what a wonderful thing it is to get into the presence of a human being that can do that to you in the providence of God. This was my wonderful privilege for some 47 and a half years. To come home from a heavy day.

A day that was trying. A day when you felt that every nerve was just on edge. And she was watching for you to return because at about the time you're due.

Opens the door so that you don't have to unlock the door. Leaves you and says my you look tired. How about a cup of tea.

We go in and have a spot of tea for a little while and talk about things. And the very serenity of her presence. A half an hour of that.

Was wonderful. Yes. A half an hour of this.

Wouldn't that be wonderful. You know I want to suggest to you dear friends as an old man. I know of nothing that calms the spirit like this.

All the tranquilizers in the world will never do for you what this will do. To get into the presence of the God of peace. Spend a little time there.

God is in the midst of her. God shall help her in that right early. Or as it is literally in the Hebrew.

He's going to help her at the dawning of the morning. Yes and the dawning is not far off really. I don't believe that even I with my white hair.

Need look forward to be laid away in the cemetery. I'm waiting for God's son from heaven. Waiting for him to come.

A wonderful thing to be able to say in my morning devotions. Lord Jesus. Will it be today.

Will it be today. Oh to see the face of the once marred more than in man. Glowing with all the glory of God so lucid.

The glory that shines in the face of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful privilege beloved. Even now by faith as the apostle puts it.

In 2 Corinthians 3. With open faith. With unveiled faith. Beholding in the glass.

The glory of the Lord. To be changed into the payment. From glory to glory.

Oh this is the kind of thing. That makes even a chick man look healthy. You know.

People say how well he looks. I've got the finest make up in the world. God is the health of my countenance.

Psalms 42. Yes here it is. You come into the presence of God.

And how wonderful it is. Everything is calm and serene. It isn't because he's indifferent.

It isn't because he's ignorant. He knows all about it. He knows exactly how this thing is coming out.

And he can afford to be just as calm about it. As if nothing were happening at all. And you and I drinking in the peace of his presence.

Oh I love that description of him in the new testament. That he's a God of peace. Now he's a God of peace.

He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. That great shepherd of the peace. Who the blood of the everlasting covenant sown.

You know that. It's in that book. Yes.

But now just to close. Because I see my time is going fast. Let's assure you that we have been on solid ground in making the applications we have.

We've got a note of interpretation here in this psalm. Verse 6. That he who raged with evil will move. He who heard his voice the earth melted.

This I believe is a divine commentary of what we have in verses 2 and 3. And the time is coming when he's going to do exactly that. I wish our Lord Jesus Christ gave us an example and an illustration. When he was here on earth.

And he stood upon the vessel's prow there in Galilee and said to the troubled sea. Peace be still. And there was a great calm.

A very great calm. Yes. This is what it's going to be one of these days.

Meanwhile the world is on with its wars and getting ready for more wars. As we have it here in verses 8 and 9. Come behold the works of the Lord. What desolations or astonishments he hath wrought in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease. You say well how is he going to do this? Certainly not by the increase of armaments. Not that way.

That isn't the way he works. We've already said that the Lord Jesus just stood upon the prow of a vessel and said peace be still. And those waves just backed down.

And one of these days he's going to do this. To the raging waves of humanity. Well you say why doesn't he do it now? Good question.

And I think we've got an answer for you. It's because men are not yet tired of war. You say they're not tired of war? No.

Oh you may be and I may be. Because we have children involved in it. We know what it meant to go through those dark days of the second world war.

With an only son out there somewhere in the Pacific. And four months without a line from him. During this time he was going through some ten or eleven major naval actions.

Oh I wouldn't be surprised when you look at it all. These were some of the things that hastened the end of my beloved wife's life. Yes you know something about this.

But men are as a rule are not tired of war. There's too much prosperity as a result of war. A leading businessman on the west coast told me that if this war stops.

Three of our major cities are out here are going to be hard hit. They're depending on it. This is what's bringing in the millions of dollars.

And not only in our own country but I understand that some of them have tremendous investments in Vietnam. And when things are destroyed they actually make money on the replacement of those things. It's that statement that's true here friends.

It's horrible to contemplate but there it is. Men love it because this is a prosperous time. They never had it so good.

They never had so much money. They never had so many things. Oh I have to remember when we were glad to have one horse.

And then when we got a little old horse that was wonderful. But now two cars and a boat that's it. And mind you there's got to be two cars up on the upper brackets too.

You don't want any of these little things to run around with a bug. You want something that people will look at when you go down the road. This is the day of prosperity.

You just say well will they ever get tired of this? Yes they'll get tired of it one of these days. They'll be like a young boy we had when I was having a vacation up in Nova Scotia some years ago. We were taking off money.

Some of the cones were still unfinished and they were putting them in a pen by themselves. And this boy came up he was born in Boston. Don't hold it against him.

He said to my friend Mr. Stewart he said is that very expensive? No Mr. Stewart said you'd like to have some of it? He said yes I would. Help yourself. Took one little piece.

Oh goodness Mr. Stewart take more. Take all you want. So the last we saw him he had both hands full of unfinished comb honey.

He was really dripping down his hands in his bones. Slurping it up. Having a great time.

But at supper time Archie wasn't there. He wondered where he might be. Finally somebody discovered him and brought him into the dining room.

And Mrs. Stewart had so carefully provided wonderful hot biscuits and honey. Oh. The minute Archie caught sight of the biscuits and hot honey.

He turned on his heat and was gone. I'm not going to describe what happened. He'd had his fill.

And oh seriously that's it exactly. He's going to throw up our hands and say I can't Lord how much. And that thing applies friends not only to nations that applies to individuals.

When you and I get enough. Throw up our hands and surrender. That's the kind of thought from this.

I leave you with this thought in clothing. It's mentioned twice in this psalm in verse 7 and again verse 11. That the Lord is not only our refuge and strength in our very present health and trouble.

But the Lord of whom is with us. His companionship. The God of Jacob is our refuge for our high fortress.

As it might have been translated. Indeed Mr. Darby so translates it. Our high fortress is a different word than the one you have in verse 1. It suggests not only a place of safety but a place of observation.

Where one can take in the whole view of the world. Get a bird's eye view of the whole thing. To see the thing as God himself sees it.

We pass these thoughts on to you this morning because we believe the need for this. And I speak to you again my friend that you're here this morning. As one who's had a good deal of distress.

You're living in constant fear. Wondering what's going to happen next. What will happen tomorrow.

What will happen while you're away from home. So on. Oh put your trust in the living God.

These were one of the last words of our Lord Jesus when he said you believe in God. Believe also in me. He wants our heartfelt trust.

And so I just recommend it to you this morning as an old man. Who has found this. One of the greatest blessings of his life.

This constant hourly, daily, almost momentary. Dependence upon him. It's wonderful.

In keeping with that let's turn to hymn number 3 in our hymn book. Our firmest foundation. I'm sorry it doesn't have the tune that the Lord made but we'll sing it to this one.

Hymn number 3. Our firmest foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word. What more can he say than to you he has said to you who for refuge did Jesus have left. Would you like to stand as we sing.

Number 3.

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