

Stop!

June 10, 2018

OPEN

Do you stop at stop signs? OK...do you really come to a full, complete stop?



It is hard to stop...with the rapid pace of our lives. But Psalm 46:1-11 provides us with a "spiritual stop sign". It calls us to deep consideration of AND participation in God's presence in the midst of our problems.

Psalm 46 is a "Song of Zion" sung while pilgrims went up to Jerusalem for worship. It divides into three parts (vv. 1-3; vv. 4-7; vv. 8-11) with a refrain which follows the second two sections.

DIG

Read Psalm 46. When you encounter a storm or disaster in your life, do you think of God as your shelter or refuge? Why or why not?

Consider the following psalms that speak of God as our refuge:

18:2 31:1 31:19 34:8 34:22 37:40 57:1 118:8-9

How is it that God who is beyond time and space, is available to aid us as an "ever present" help?

In what ways are the troubles mentioned in Psalm 46:1-3 being demonstrated in our world today?

Psalm 46 tells us that it is because of God's character that we do not fear the greatest trouble in the natural world around us. How do we practically enter into the protection of His character?

What are some of the social or societal disasters that concern you today?

What does the image of a river convey to us concerning God's blessing, peace, and healing? See verse 4

Do you experience true gladness in your spiritual journey?

How is God's authority over the nations emphasized in verse 6?

According to Psalm 21:1, how does God work out impossible political situations?

In the last few verses this psalm focuses on the personal and individual toll that disasters take on us. Do you find it easy to see the works of God in our world today? See verse 8a

Considering the command of verse 10 to "Stop" or "Cease Striving"...

...Do you know why to put the break on in your life?

Juliet Funt (CEO of WhiteSpace at Work) speaks of the "culture of insatiability". She states, "This loss of **time with no assignment** is one that has really hefty costs to our lives and our minds and our businesses." ([Global Leadership Summit notes](#)) Funt identifies four "Thieves of Productivity". Though these values are necessary to our lives and work, when they are taken to the extreme, they easily become corrupted.

- DRIVE can become overdrive
- EXCELLENCE can become perfectionism
- INFORMATION can become information overload
- ACTIVITY can become frenzy

...Do you know how to put the break on in your life?

Sometimes, as in Mark 4:39, Jesus speaks to the storm and commands it to cease. But the sense of this Psalm is that we are invited to **participate in God's sovereignty by stopping** even if the wind and waves do not.

Stopping is an active response to the character and purpose of God. God is in command and will be exalted – so there is reason for us to cease striving and struggling. We are talking about "**God Space**" not just "**white space**".

REFLECT

How has reading and pondering Psalm 46 impacted you? Are you faced with the importance of stopping? Do you appreciate the reason for doing so?

God promise to His followers is that He "**is with us**".

- What good would it be to know God's character if He were disconnected from my struggle?
- What good would it be to observe God's power and ability if I could not have access to it?
- What good would it do to see God's sovereignty if I didn't enter into it personally?

We can make a simple statement of our faith by prayer: "The purpose of prayer is not to convince God to change our circumstances, but to prepare us to be involved in God's activity." (Paul Duck, *MB Herald*, Winter 2018)